

5.6: Summary

In this chapter, we have explored problem-solving in groups. We have identified steps that groups can use to attack and solve problems, as well as several methods of reaching decisions. We have considered the nature of group creativity and reviewed how brainstorming may contribute to creative problem-solving and decision-making. Finally, we have identified methods that can be used to facilitate the problem-solving and decision-making behavior of task-oriented groups. Following systematic, sequential processes can help groups communicate in ways that resolve problems and lead to appropriate decisions.

Review Questions

Interpretive Questions

1. In what 2–3 ways has your view of problem-solving or decision-making changed as a result of reading this chapter?
2. Under what circumstances, or with what kinds of group members, do you feel brainstorming is most likely to produce better results than other methods of generating creative ideas?

Application Questions

1. Call the office of a state senator or representative. Ask the person who answers the phone to provide you with a list of five creative ideas the legislator has put forth to solve problems facing his or her constituency. If you wanted to expand on the list, who else would you consult, and what process would you use to generate more ideas?
2. Pick two historical figures who you believe made it easy for people they lived or worked with to achieve shared goals. Find two or three descriptions of episodes in which those figures took action demonstrating that capacity. Identify someone leading a group of which you're now a member and share the information about the historical figures with that person. What is the person's reaction? What do you feel might have made the leader's response more positive?
3. Look up the phrase "group decision support system" online and locate 4–5 software programs meant to assist groups with decisions. List the advantages and disadvantages of each and share your conclusions with your classmates.

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