

Homework 2

Bad/Good Apples and Group Success

DUE: Tuesday, Feb. 1 emailed as Word attachment to jeffPSU@yahoo.com before class; 10 points.

Overview: Freshman Inquiry involves a lot of work and discussions within groups. Humans being social creatures, this is also true of life in general (e.g. teams at work, families, groups of friends, etc.). Learning to effectively work within groups is an important life skill. Here we will consider the question of what makes groups work well (or not). We will listen to a short radio show presentation that discusses some recent research on this topic. This research focuses on what type of behaviors help or hurt group success. After listening to this audio segment you will write a short paper (~ 2 pages) reflecting on how your own behaviors have helped or hindered groups of which you have been a part. (See more detailed instructions below.)

Objectives:

- To have each of us reflect on ways in which we help and hinder group success as a first step in learning to become more effective and helpful group members.
- To better understand our fellow classmates and their diversity of perspectives and experiences in being group members.
- To practice our skills in listening, note taking, writing, editing, and giving constructive criticism.

Instructions:

- 1) Listen to a segment of episode #370 of the public radio show *This American Life* (first 12 minutes). We will do this in class (you can also stream this show from any internet connection if you wish to review it later:
http://www.thisamericanlife.org/sites/all/play_music/play_full.php?play=370).
- 2) Take notes as you listen, especially on the different types of behaviors identified by the researchers as being significant to group success.
- 3) Write a 2 page paper (+/- ½ a page) reflecting on your own behaviors in groups. These groups may be those in this class, other classes, or from other aspects of your life.
 - a. Assume your audience has not read this assignment. Be sure to include a brief introductory paragraph that helps the reader understand what your essay is about.
 - b. Be sure to briefly describe the harmful and helpful types of behaviors identified by the researchers in the radio interview.
 - c. Describe some of your own behaviors in groups including an example of where your behavior has been harmful and an example of where your behavior has been helpful to the group's success.
 - d. Be sure to reflect on how your own behaviors and experiences are related to the findings described in the radio show. How do your behaviors related to these types. Do you agree with their findings? Do they match your own experiences? Why or why not?
 - e. As always, double space your essay and use 12 point font and 1 inch margins.
- 4) Note that we will share our essays in mentor session. Be honest about your experiences within groups, but do not write anything you wouldn't want others in the class to read.