

Course Syllabus for  
HDDR 6319 TEAM BUILDING: THEORY AND PRACTICE

Dr. Robert Barner

Spring Term Jan 22 – March 28, 2013

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Office Hours: (by appointment only) Thursdays & Fridays; 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

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**Please Note: There will be no class on Tuesday, January 22. Instead, a make-up class will be offered on THURSDAY, February 21<sup>st</sup>.**

## Course Overview

*Team Building: Theory and Practice* introduces students to a team performance model, and exposes students to research regarding the structural and interpersonal factors that can affect team performance.

Within this course students learn how to manage interventions that can strengthen team performance. They discover how to identify team performance issues, and link those issues to underlying dysfunctional team dynamics. Students also learn how to manage team interventions through the application of a five-step model that includes consultation, contracting, education, assessment, climate setting, and intervention. Students are also introduced to a variety of skills for helping to expedite team problem solving, and for addressing performance challenges within and across work teams. They also review studies that explore alternative methods for team building, including the use of group metaphors and narrative analysis.

## Course Content

### **Session 1: An Introduction to Team Building**

**Date: January 29 6:00 -10:15 pm**

#### **Pre-work:**

- *Intervention Skills*, Chapters 1 & 7

#### **Course Content:**

- The emerging role of the team building consultant
- A model for team assessment and intervention: linking team problem solving, intervening mechanisms (interventions), and task performance
- Core competencies required of team building professionals
- Exercise: Self-assessment in terms of the competency model
- Introducing process observation
- Task and maintenance processes
- How process norms evolve within teams

## **Session 2: Contracting for Team Interventions**

**Date: Feb 5 6:00 -10:15 pm**

### **Pre-work:**

- *Intervention Skills*, Chapters 3&4
- “What happens to the team during teambuilding? Examining the change process that helps to build a team” Rosemary Bushmer
- “The Team that Wasn’t” Suzy Wetlaufer
- “What Kind of Team are You Building?” C.R. Parry & Robert Barner

### **Course Content**

- Conducting the initial contracting interview
- Factors to consider in staging the contract
- How to prepare a contract
- Understanding the flow of team process consultation: contracting, education, assessment, climate setting, and intervention
- Managing stakeholder expectations
- Addressing the issue of ‘team leader as team dysfunction’
- Guidelines for implementing three techniques for team assessment
  - a. Interviews
  - b. Survey data
  - c. Process observation
- Consolidating data into a team building assessment report

## **Session 3: Using team interviews in analysis**

**Date: Feb 12 6:00 -10:15 pm**

### **Course Content:**

- An interview protocol for team assessment
- Case: applying the protocol to a hypothetical team
- How to integrate interview data

## **Session 4: Obtaining Team and Stakeholder Commitment to Change**

**Date: Feb 19 6:00 -10:15 pm**

### **Course Content:**

- Addressing ‘parking lot’ issues that lie outside the scope of the team building project
- Conducting the ‘go-forward meeting’ with the team and team leader
- Using the ‘go-forward meeting’ to surface areas of concern and plan for the team building session
- Adapting team building assessments to multi-team interventions
- Planning: how to use the data gathered in the team assessment and go-forward meeting to create a planning guide for team interventions

## **Session 5: Three Avenues for Diagnosing Team Development Issues**

**Date: Feb 21 [THIS IS A MAKE-UP CLASS] 6:00 -10:15 pm**

### **Process Observation as a Vehicle for Team Self-Reflection**

#### **Course Content:**

- Process observation and its application for 'real-time assessment and intervention'
- The process observation model (Shultz)
- The use of real-time feedback as an intervention mechanism

### **Understanding the Impact of Language in Analysis: metaphors, framing, and social Constructionism**

#### **Pre-work:**

- "The dark tower: Using visual metaphors to facilitate emotional expression during organizational change" Robert Barner
- "Reframing metaphors in business and educational teams" Patricia Ann Marcellino
- "Metaphor and meaning: An intercultural analysis of the concept of teamwork" Christina B. Gibson & Mary Zellmer-Bruhn

#### **Course Content:**

- Verbal and visual metaphors as clues to team norms and processes
- The impact of language in framing team expectations for change
- The use of narrative analysis in team assessment

### **Understanding the Impact of Language in Intervention**

#### **Pre-work:**

- "Organizational change as shifting conversations" Jeffrey Ford
- "Appreciative Inquiry with Teams" Gervase R. Bushe

#### **Course Content:**

- Team assessment from a social constructionist perspective: how the questions asked and the language of the assessment changes the interpretive frame for the goals of team building and the mindset of team building participants
- Appreciative inquiry and the framing of team expectations and goals

## **Session 6: The Team Intervention Process**

### **Knowing When & How to Apply Team Interventions**

### **Applying Team Building Interventions to the Issue of 'Future Direction'**

**Feb 26 6:00 -10:15 pm**

#### **Pre-work:**

- *Intervention Skills*, Chapters 5, 6, 8. And 9
- *Building Better Teams*, Chapters 1-4, 5

#### **Course Content:**

- Types of team interventions: choosing interventions by type, focus and intensity
- The use of specialized team intervention techniques

- Shifting from team review to team action planning
- How and when to conduct a follow-up team review (check-in process)
- Adapting team building interventions to multi-team interventions
- Handling unsuccessful team building interventions

### **Session 7: The Team Intervention Process**

**Date: March 5 6:00 -10:15 pm**

#### **Applying Team Building Interventions to the Issue of 'Fostering Team Innovation**

Prework:

- *Building Better Teams*: Chapter 6

### **Session 8: The Team Intervention Process**

**Date: March 12 6:00 -10:15 pm**

#### **Applying Team Building Interventions to the Issue of 'Managing Change'**

Prework:

- *Building Better Teams*: Chapter 8

### **Session 9: Team Intervention within Complex Organizational Settings**

**Date: March 19 6:00 -10:15 pm**

Pre-work:

- *Intervention Skills*
- Article: "Managing Complex Team Interventions" Robert Barner

#### **Course Content:**

- Organizational and environmental changes that are increasingly the complexity of team performance
- Managing team interventions to address three issues of complexity: a) when team building involves interventions within multiple, nested teams, b) when a variety of overlapping and interdependent team performance issues are present, and c) when team building is initiated within the backdrop of large-scale organizational change
- Intervention strategies for managing through complexity

### **Session 10: Final Exam**

**March 26**

#### **COURSE TEXTS**

*Intervention Skills: Process Consultation for Small Groups and Teams* W. Brendan Reddy, Jossey-Bass, 1994. ISBN: 0-88390-434-9

*Building Better Teams: Strengthening Performance Within & Across Teams*. Robert W. Barner & Charlotte P. Barner. 2012. John Wiley & Sons. ISBN 978-118-12726.

## GRADING PROCESS

50% of the final grade will be based on a final exam, covering the core topics reviewed in the class.

50% of the final grade will be based on the written evaluation (12 -16 pages) of a case study. Cases are evaluated on eight factors: clarity of problem definition, the degree to which causal factors are clearly identified from the facts of the case, the development of preventive and corrective actions that are supported by the facts of the case, style and format, clarity of organization, depth of analysis, and completeness (the degree to which the case questions posed by the instructor are fully addressed).

**Cases are to be submitted electronically to Kay Barclay no later than 4pm, CT, March 19, 2013. No papers will be accepted after this deadline. To support impartiality in grading, all grades are performed 'blind', with all papers submitted anonymously. Accordingly, please do not put your name on the paper or the electronic file. Instead, use your student ID numbers. Do NOT submit papers directly to Dr. Barner.**

During the first class session students are provided with a written handout summarizing grading criteria. The grading scale for papers, exams, and cases is as follows:

94 – 100 = A	84 – 86 = B
90 – 93 = A-	80 – 83 = B-
87 – 89 = B+	77 – 79 = C+

## Academic Policies of Special Importance to Students

Academic Integrity and Ethical Conduct as an SMU Student:

Students are reminded of the SMU Honor Code as referenced in the Student Handbook. Intellectual integrity and academic honesty are both the foundation and the goals for this program. Please reference and review the university policies on the responsibilities, policies, and penalties regarding academic honesty.

[http://www.smu.edu/studentlife/PCL\\_05\\_HC.asp](http://www.smu.edu/studentlife/PCL_05_HC.asp)

Religious Observance:

Religiously observant students wishing to be absent on holidays that require missing class should notify their professor in writing at the beginning of the term, and should

discuss with them, in advance, acceptable ways of making up any work missed because of the absence.

**Disability Accommodations:** Students needing academic accommodations for a disability must first contact Ms. Rebecca Marin, Coordinator, Services for Students with Disabilities (214-768-4557) to verify the disability and establish eligibility for accommodations. They should then schedule an appointment with the professor to make appropriate arrangements.

**Class Decorum:**

To foster a good learning environment for yourself and your fellow students we ask that you adhere to the following guidelines during class:

- Please turn off (or set on vibrate) all cell phones or pagers.
- Do not read newspapers, books for other classes, or other outside reading material during class.
- Walking into class late is disruptive as is leaving early. If you have to leave early, make arrangements before class begins, and then, when you leave, do so quietly.
- Professional respect and courtesy for your fellow students is imperative at all times.
- Please do not “surf the web” during class time. Students who do so will be counted absent for that class session.

Key Learning Objectives	How Achieved
1. Students will learn how to assess team performance issues in terms of a team building model that links team problem solving, intervening mechanisms (interventions), and task performance	Given a case description of a dysfunctional team, students will be asked to develop a graphic model of the team, depicting how the team's current problem solving approach, and the intervening mechanisms that are employed by the team, influence it's task performance.
2. Students will learn how to identify the five stages of a team intervention model (education, assessment, contracting, climate setting, intervention), and describe the consulting challenges that are typically encountered in each of these stages.	Given a case study describing a team building scenario, students will be able to describe the current intervention stage and indicate both the next required stage in the consulting process and (using the facts within the case) the most likely challenges that the team building consultant will face in directing this stage of the process.
3. Students will learn to apply narrative analysis to identify critical themes regarding how the team view's it's strengthens and potential areas of dysfunction.	Given a detailed transcript of an interaction involving members of a hypothetical team, students will be able to point to repetitive patterns in the narrative flow that reveal how the team views it's strengthens and areas of dysfunction
4. Students will be able to identify structural and interpersonal factors that impact on team success.	Given a case study describing a work team that is experiencing significant performance issues, students will be able to identify structural and interpersonal factors that appear to be directed related to the onset of those issues. Students will be expected to substantiate their conclusions in term of current research on team performance.
5. Students will learn to apply process observation skills to the real-time review and assessment of team development issues.	Given an opportunity to observe a mock team engage in discussion, students will be asked to compare the conclusions on team performance that they've drawn from their their individual process observations. Students will then use a feedback chart provided by the instructor to perform a self-assessment of their process observation skills.
6. Students will learn to create a planning document that helps them construct 'work arounds' to potential roadblocks to a team building intervention.	Students will incorporate the feedback that they receive through the completion of objective 5 into a team planning document that will be reviewed with fellow students and the instructor.

<i>Rubric for the Team Building Case</i>			
<i>Grading Components</i>	<i>Grading Factors Related to Case Content</i>		
<b>Background Information</b>	<i>1-3 Points</i>	<i>4 -7 Points</i>	<i>8 -10 Points</i>
<p><i>In this section you will be asked to provide a brief description of those key factors that provide a contextual framework for understanding the underlying causes of the team building issue.</i></p> <p><i>This section is typically ½ - 1 double-spaced, typewritten page.</i></p> <p><i>This section counts as 10% of the total grade for this assignment.</i></p>	<p><i>The background information is largely incomplete, providing only a cursory and vague description of the case.</i></p> <p><i>Example: “This case concerns a request for team building assistance by Carlos Hernandez, a IT manager.”</i></p>	<p><i>The case contains some of the relevant detail on the client(s), but lacks detail relating to critical events that led up to the presenting problem.</i></p> <p><i>Example: “Example: “This case concerns a request for team building assistance by Carlos Hernandez, Director of Software Development within the IT department of Acme Corp. Carlos is a relatively new manager, having joined Acme only six months ago.”</i></p>	<p><i>All relevant contextual background information on the client or client company is accurately described.</i></p> <p><i>Example: “Example: “This case concerns a request for team building assistance by Carlos Hernandez, Director of Software Development within the IT department of Acme Corp. Carlos is a relatively new manager, having joined Acme only six months ago. Carlos replaced Carol Smith, the previous director who had been with Acme for over 15 years, and who was well respected by her work team. The team’s primary responsibilities are...The team structure has recently changed...”</i></p>

<b>Problem Definition</b>	<i>1-3 Points</i>	<i>4 -7 Points</i>	<i>8 -10 Points</i>
<p><i>In this section you will be asked to provide a summary of the team building assignment, as described by both the team manager and members. Please keep in mind that your problem definition should be restricted to an objective description of the initial team building opportunity or issue.</i></p> <p><i>This section is typically ½-1 double-spaced, typewritten pages.</i></p> <p><i>This section counts as 10% of the total grade for this assignment.</i></p>	<p><i>The team building issue is vaguely defined, or contains assumptions regarding the underlying causes of identified teambuilding issues, or proposed solutions.</i></p> <p><i>Example: “The problem was that Carlos was viewed as being a micromanager and he didn’t understand the company.”</i></p>	<p><i>The team building assignment is carefully defined and avoids statements that imply a proposed solution.</i></p> <p><i>Example: “The initial problem involves complaints from team members regarding the high degree of direction and control that Carlos is exerting over the team.”</i></p>	<p><i>The team building assignment is carefully defined, avoids statements that imply a proposed solution, and identifies key events leading up to the proposed problem. The statement also ties the team dynamics to key performance factors.</i></p> <p><i>Example: “The initial problem involves complaints from team members regarding the high degree of direction and control that Carlos is exerting over the team, and Carlos’ perception that his team is not meeting the tough performance standards on quality and timely response that have been recently set for his group.”</i></p>
<b>Causal Factors</b>	<i>1-7 Points</i>	<i>8 - 14 Points</i>	<i>15 -20 Points</i>
<p><i>In this section you will be asked to identify those key underlying</i></p>	<p><i>Identified causal factors are only vaguely described, and may include as</i></p>	<p><i>All relevant causal factors are clearly described and are supported by the</i></p>	<p><i>All relevant causal factors are clearly described and are supported by the</i></p>

<p><i>causal factors that were within the control of the client(s), and which were shown to be related to the onset and development of the team building opportunity or issue.</i></p> <p><i>This section is typically 2-3 double-spaced pages in length.</i></p> <p><i>This section counts as 20% of the total grade for this assignment.</i></p>	<p><i>causal factors, broad environmental circumstances that were outside of the client's control.</i></p> <p><i>Example: "One major causal factor was that the company was encountering an economic downturn."</i></p>	<p><i>facts of the case. In addition, only those factors that were within the direct control of the client were listed. However, the student does not refer back to specific events or incidents mentioned in the case to substantiate the importance of these causal factors.</i></p> <p><i>Example: "Carlos had only been on board for three months and had come from a company that had a completely different organizational culture. These factors contributed to the difficulties that Carlos continued to encounter in balancing the performance demands of his new organization with the need to build good work relationships with the members of his work team. In addition, during this period the team's structure has changed radically, with members attempting to redefine their relationships within new roles.</i></p>	<p><i>facts of the case. Only those factors that were within the direct control of the client are listed. In addition, the student the student mentions specific events or incidents in the case to substantiate the importance of these causal factors.</i></p> <p><i>Example: "Carlos had only been on board for three months and had come from a company that had a completely different organizational culture. These factors contributed to the difficulties that Carlos continued to encounter in balancing the performance demands of his new organization with the need to build good work relationships with the members of his work team. In addition, during this period the team's structure has changed radically, with members attempting to redefine their relationships within new roles.</i></p> <p><i>Examples include...</i></p>
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<b>Recommended Corrective Actions</b>	<i>1-7 Points</i>	<i>8 - 14 Points</i>	<i>15 -20 Points</i>
<p><i>In this section you will be asked to identify the most important actions that the team and team leader could take to resolve or correct the team building issue, once it is underway.</i></p> <p><i>This section is typically 2-3 double-spaced pages in length.</i></p> <p><i>This section counts as 20% of the total grade for this assignment.</i></p>	<p><i>Recommendations are not supported by the facts of the case, or a 'grocery list' of recommendations is provided with no attempt to organize these recommendations into coherent themes. Recommended actions are incorrectly categorized as either preventive or corrective actions.</i></p>	<p><i>Recommendations are highly supported by the facts and are organized by coherent themes. Appropriate distinctions are made between those actions that are preventive in nature, and those that are corrective.</i></p>	<p><i>Recommendations are highly supported by the facts and are organized by coherent themes. Appropriate distinctions are made between those actions that are preventive in nature, and those that are corrective.</i></p> <p><i>In addition:</i></p> <p><i>Key recommendations are separated from supporting recommendations.</i></p> <p><i>The student notes the relative tradeoffs (effectiveness, time required for implementation, scale of change required) that are required to implement different courses of action.</i></p> <p><i>The student mentions, where relevant, the risks entailed (financial, risks associated with bringing about extensive change, etc.) in a particular course of action.</i></p> <p><i>The student gives careful attention to the most appropriate <u>timing</u> of each action.</i></p>

<b>Planning the Facilitation Process</b>	<i>1-7 Points</i>	<i>8 - 14 Points</i>	<i>15 -20 Points</i>
<p><i>In this section you will be asked to develop a suggested plan for facilitating the team building session.</i></p> <p><i>This section is typically 4-6 double-spaced pages in length.</i></p> <p><i>This section counts as 20% of the total grade for this assignment.</i></p>	<p><i>Recommendations lack detail, or fail to take into consideration relevant contextual factors.</i></p> <p><i>Examples:</i> <i>Failure to adapt the session to the needs of a virtual team, or power inequities within the team.</i></p> <p><i>Reference to facilitation intentions, with no mention of specific tools used. [“As a facilitator I would make use of techniques to aid the team in decision making”]</i></p>	<p><i>Recommendations are detailed and address all relevant contextual factors.</i></p> <p><i>Recommended team building tools are both identified and their use within the session is detailed.</i></p> <p><i>Example:</i> <i>Early in the session the team wants to focus on how to make more effective group decisions. The techniques that I would use to support this would be the ‘traffic light technique’ and the ‘decision matrix.’</i></p>	<p><i>Recommendations are detailed and address all relevant contextual factors.</i></p> <p><i>Recommended team building tools are both identified and their use within the session is detailed.</i></p> <p><i>The author goes further to identify any unique potential roadblocks or challenges that they might face as a team building facilitator, and how they would address these challenges.</i></p> <p><i>Example: “Given that a large part of the issues facing this team involve members’ relationships with their team leader, I would need to meet with the leader in advance of the session to....”</i></p>

<b>Team Building Contract</b>	<i>1-7 Points</i>	<i>8 - 14 Points</i>	<i>15 -20 Points</i>
<p><i>In this section you discuss those team building features elements that would be most important to include in the client contract.</i></p>	<p><i>Only a vague reference is made to unique contract requirements.</i></p> <p><i>“I think that it would be important to be sensitive to communication issues in the</i></p>	<p><i>Unique contract requirements are identified.</i></p> <p><i>“Given the fact that the client’s organization is undergoing massive layoffs, it would be important to make</i></p>	<p><i>Unique contract requirements are identified, and linked to specific recommendations regarding the consulting contract.”</i></p> <p><i>“Given the fact that the client’s</i></p>

<p><i>This section is typically 2-3 double-spaced pages in length.</i></p> <p><i>This section counts as 20% of the total grade for this assignment.</i></p>	<p><i>contract.”</i></p>	<p><i>certain that members’ participation in the team building session is not used as a factor in their annual performance reviews.”</i></p>	<p><i>organization is undergoing massive layoffs, it would be important to make certain that members’ participation in the team building session is not used as a factor in their annual performance reviews. Accordingly, I would need to include a statement regarding this in the contract, as well as specific guidelines for how team building assessment feedback would be disclosed or used by the team leader.</i></p>
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