Affinity Research Groups

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Meet three other individuals and find out their research interests.
WORKSHOP GOALS

- Teach the basic components of ARG
- Explain the differences between an ARG and traditional research groups
- Create an awareness of how ARG activities are implemented
BRAINSTORMING

• Each group member, in turn, contributes or passes.
• The recorder writes down each contribution on a flip chart.
• Brainstorming ends when each person passes.
• Generate as many ideas as possible.

Guidelines
No discussion during brainstorming. Every idea is a good idea. Scaffolding is encouraged.
QUESTION

• What challenges do you face when running a research group or being in a research group?

• Time: 10 minutes
ROLE ASSIGNMENTS

• Recorder
• Timekeeper
• Direction giver
GOAL OF AN ARG

Develop students’ skills and engage students in experiences that will provide them the ability to be successful in their current and advanced studies, research, and the workforce.
An ARG is a non-hierarchical model that promotes:

- Collection of best practices
- Cooperative group interaction
- Deliberate and intentional development and practice of skills
- Support structures

Expand participation by recruiting students who may not normally be involved in research.
ESSENTIAL ARG ELEMENTS

Core Ideology
Student Connectedness
Deliberate Practice of Skills
CORE IDEOLOGY

Core Values:
Set of three to six simply stated principles that guide the group’s actions.

Core Purpose:
Reason for the group’s existence
CORE VALUES OF AN ARG

**Student Success:** An ARG values the deliberate development of skills in each student to ensure success.

**Cooperation:** An ARG values cooperation in all interactions, including mutual respect of opinions and ideas of all members, promotive interaction, positive interdependence, and individual accountability.

**Excellence:** An ARG values excellence and strives to achieve it in all its actions.
Students build connections among members of the group.

Students support other students in their development as a researcher.

ARG practices build student connectedness.
Do not assume that students join a research group with the necessary skills to be successful.

- Teach skills.
- Practice skills in an intentional and deliberate manner.
- Promote establishment of cooperative teams.
SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

- Cooperative team skills
  - Ability to ask probing questions
  - Active listening/participation
  - Summarizing discussion
  - Resolving conflict

- Research skills
  - Setting goals and objectives
  - Research plan development
  - Literature survey
  - Poster presentation

- Team management skills
  - Defining tasks and activities
  - Defining timelines
  - Setting meeting agenda
  - Documenting meeting minutes

- Communication skills
  - Oral
  - Written
  - Constructive critique
AFFINITY RESEARCH GROUP CORE COMPONENTS

Annual Orientation
- ARG Philosophy
- Team building
- Basic group and research skills

Core Purpose Connectedness Skills Develop.

Workshops
- Deliberate Development of Skills

Regular Group Meetings
- Problem solving
- Domain expertise
- Skills practice
- Accountability

Project Mgmt.
- Clear Goals and Objectives
- Defined activities
- Defined Deliverables
COOPERATIVE TEAM SKILLS
Basic Elements

- Positive interdependence
- Face-to-face promotive interaction
- Professional skills
- Individual accountability
- Group processing
A. Break into groups of three. Assign a number 1-3.

B. Group individuals assigned the same number. Tasks:
   — learn the assigned material
   — plan how to teach the material to the other members of your group

C. Come back to your group prepared to:
   — teach material to the other members of your group
   — learn the material being taught by the other members

A. Create triads

B. Prepare in groups.

C. Return to original triad.
PREPARATION

Time Limit: 10 minutes to prepare

Note: You will have 2 minutes to teach to your group.
• Look for examples of how elements of cooperative learning are incorporated.
• In your group, come to consensus of which elements are demonstrated in the clip.
CHALLENGES

• Getting everyone to work together
• Time Management
• Finding everyone’s strength
• Organization (project planning)
• Communication skills (different styles)
• Building community
• Time commitment

• Student professionalism
• Dealing w/ varying skill levels
• Mutual respect
• Balance b/w independent and collaborative research
• Finding good resources
• Generational conflict
• Optimizing knowledge distribution
Design:

- Mixed methods design incorporating interviews, surveys, participant observation, and document analysis.

Analysis of interviews explicate how:

- Students become members of ARGs
- Group identity and cohesiveness are formed
- Members participate in larger professional communities
- Participants identities are transformed.
EVALUATION-2

- 72% of ARG students felt that their research experience had influenced their intentions to pursue graduate school.
- ARG students have also authored or co-authored journal articles at twice the rate (13%) of a large, diverse national sample of REU students (n = 500).
- ARG students have presented a paper or poster at a national conference at three times the national rate (51%).

Note: Differences are statistically significant at the 0.05 level.
CONTACT INFORMATION

WEBSITE: HTTP://CAHSI.ORG
HANDBOOK: CREATING AND MAINTAINING PRODUCTIVE RESEARCH TEAMS AMAZON BOOKS

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