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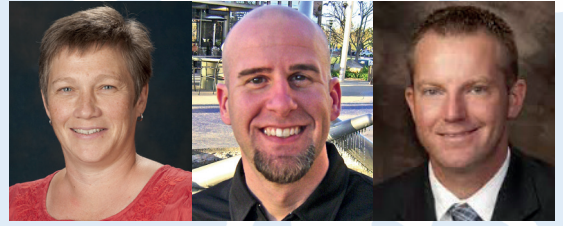


SPECIAL EDITION

Cooperative Learning

The seven papers in this special edition show **WHY** Cooperative Learning should be considered as a powerful pedagogical approach to learning in health and physical education and **HOW** it can be used in HPE programs.

Group Processing in Cooperative Learning: Using the Sunday Afternoon Drive Debrief Model



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Group processing is integral to the successful implementation of Cooperative Learning and is the central element or fulcrum for the four other key elements proposed by Casey and Dyson (2012). The purpose of group processing is to provide an opportunity for reflection on behaviors that were helpful or unhelpful during group work and which behaviors they will continue to use or change (Johnson & Johnson, 1999). Engaging in group processing also aids in promoting “students’ sense of self-determination and empowerment” (Villa, Thousand, & Nevis, 2010, p.33).

The research on Cooperative Learning has indicated that group processing has facilitated beneficial outcomes for both individual students and the group as a whole (Dyson, Lineham & Hastie, 2010). Specifically, group processing has demonstrated a positive effect on students’ perceptions of self-worth and belonging (Strahm, 2007), self-esteem (Johnson & Johnson, 2009b), positive student relationships (Putnam, Rynders, Johnson, & Johnson, 1989), and group achievement (Johnson, Johnson, Stanne, & Garibaldi, 1990; Yager, Johnson, & Johnson, 1986). Notwithstanding the recognition of the importance and established benefits of group processing, it is often the first element that is sacrificed during the implementation of Cooperative Learning both in general and physical education (Villa et al., 2010; Casey, Dyson, & Campbell, 2009; Antil, Jenkins, Wayne, & Vadasy, 1998). The exclusion of group processing can occur due to time constraints, mistaken assumption that reflection is inherent within the activities, or the lack of teacher knowledge to facilitate the process. In light of these points, a student-centered, deliberate approach for group processing is recommended.

Our work in Adventure-based Learning (ABL) has led us to assert that facilitating a meaningful student-centered debrief (analogous to group

processing) is difficult for novice facilitators. The research we have conducted over the past ten years with undergraduate Kinesiology students and pre-service physical education teachers has produced evidence indicating the need for systematic training of novice facilitators (Sutherland & Stuhr, 2012; Sutherland, Ressler, & Stuhr, 2011). This work has led to the development of the Sunday Afternoon Drive Debrief Model.

Sunday Afternoon Drive Debrief Model

We have developed a model based on Kolb’s (1984) Experiential Learning Cycle which helps novice facilitators deliver a student-centered reflection process within the time constraints of a physical education lesson. The *Sunday Afternoon Drive debrief model* (Sutherland, Stuhr, & Ressler, 2012; Stuhr & Sutherland, 2013) provides a framework for conducting a student-centered reflection session to allow all students to understand the interpersonal and intrapersonal dynamics of participation in group work (Figure 1). The facilitator has a destination for the drive based off the lesson plan for the day but supports the route chosen by the students as the “facilitator follows the various rhythms, feelings, power, and aesthetics of the road (i.e., the group) as they negotiate the

journey” (Sutherland et al., 2012, p.6). The ultimate goal of the model is to provide novice facilitators with the necessary tools to help students transfer or apply the newly constructed interpersonal and intrapersonal understanding to future group work or other situations in their lives beyond the classroom.

The *Sunday Afternoon Drive* debrief model (Sutherland et al., 2012) was developed over the course of two years and three separate research projects. The initial model comprised of seven key components which related to the phases of reflection, generalization, and application in the experiential learning cycle. The seven features of the *Sunday Afternoon Drive* were: *Facilitator as Co-pilot*, *Choice of Vehicle*, *Start the Car*, *Follow the Road*, *Nearing Final Destination*, *GPS Recalculating*, *Final Destination - Are we there yet?* We then conducted a study to determine the credibility of the model (Stuhr & Sutherland, 2013) and made the following two changes to the model based on this research. The role of *Facilitator as Co-Pilot* moved to a more prominent position in the process as it is present in the reflection, generalization, and application phase of the model. *Who Sits Where* was added to the reflection phase of the model to indicate the importance of using a circle or similar group formation where all students

can see each other and feel part of the conversation. This addition to the model also highlighted the importance over time of the *Co-Pilot* fading out of the conversation to allow the students to facilitate themselves through the process, with facilitator input only as needed. This is an important characteristic of Cooperative Learning where the teacher does less and the students do more in a student-centered environment.

Sunday Afternoon Drive in Action

Without the opportunity to demonstrate how we would conduct a group processing session using the *Sunday Afternoon Drive* (Figure 1), we provide you with the following vignette illustration to highlight the process. To place this vignette in context, we begin with a teacher who was concerned with the pattern of negative communication (e.g. students not listening to each other, talking while others are talking, talking loudly or shouting to be heard, and ignoring suggestions from some students) she had observed during previous lessons with her class. She has decided to design a lesson to help facilitate more effective communication skills.

The social goal of the lesson is centered on enhancing students' communication skills through Cooperative Learning. Reflecting on how the students both individually and within their groups enhanced

their communication skills is the focus of the group processing session. To start the group processing session the teacher selected groups of three or triads as her *Choice of Vehicle* to allow for more face to face discussion where all students could be engaged in the process. In previous lessons she had used large group discussion as her *Choice of Vehicle* and found that the same confident students had dominated the conversation, with the majority of the class taking a less active verbal role in the process. As her *Start the Car* activity, the teacher then asked each student to choose a small toy that represented how they individually communicated within their group and/or how their group communicated together during the lesson. The toys provided were a variety of small plastic or rubber children's toys. Once the students had each chosen a toy they were asked to briefly discuss in their triads how their toy represented individual or group communication within the lesson. The teacher then asked for volunteers to share how their toy represented communication in the lesson with the whole class, allowing the conversation to move from the triads to the class as a whole. During this part of the process, the teacher is listening to the student responses and chooses to *Follow the Road* based on what the students are sharing that will lead to a fruitful conversation about effective communication. For example, one student shared how their group did

not communicate well in the tasks as they were all talking over each other trying to get their ideas heard, another student shared how they all tried to listen to each other's ideas before deciding what to do, and a third student shared how their group only listened to one person and did what they said. Having noticed in previous lessons that the class as a whole seemed to not listen to everyone's ideas the teacher chose to *Follow this Road* first, as it was at the heart of some of the problems the students were having in her class. She asks the class for volunteers to share what it felt like to not have your idea heard or what it felt like to have your idea heard and valued. She followed up by asking the students to think about how this may have affected how they worked together on the task.

The teacher then asked the students to discuss in their triads for a few minutes what they think helps and/or hinders effective communication within their group. We have found that framing the *Nearing the Final Destination* stage with what facilitates or hinders success on the topic chosen in *Follow the Road* helpful as it allows the students to focus on specific strategies they can gain from the experience, which can be transferred beyond the lesson. Within the time constraints of a lesson, this process allows the teacher to guide the students in constructing concrete strategies from their experience. The teacher then asked for volunteers to share the strategies they discussed again allowing all students to learn from each other. At the end of this part of the process, the teacher asked for a volunteer to summarize the strategies the class had raised and she stepped in to make sure that none were forgotten. It is important to understand that if at any point the discussion dies down, stops, or gets off task then the group has reached a road block and the teacher uses *GPS recalculating* as a way to steer the conversation back onto the topic of communication either by asking a different question to spark the conversation or by choosing to follow a different road from the initial conversation.



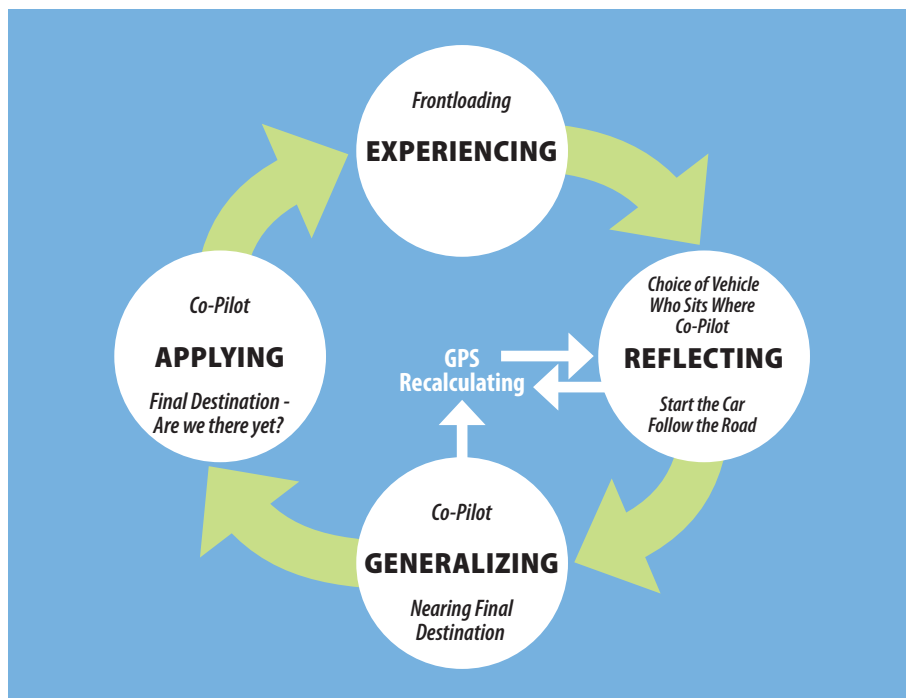


Figure 1: Sunday Afternoon Drive Debrief Model (Sutherland, Stuhr, & Ressler, 2012; Stuhr & Sutherland, 2013)

The Final Destination – Are we there yet? is used as a way to help the students to understand how to use effective communication strategies in their own personal lives. It is also used to help the students to recognize what can hinder effective communication both at an individual or group level. This stage of group processing is essential to allow for the transfer of learning beyond the lesson. We have found in our work with students that sharing a personal story about how we have used some of the strategies in our own lives help students to think about transferring their learning beyond the gymnasium. To help the students to understand how to apply their learning the teacher shared the following brief story:

Sometimes in group situations I am so excited about the activity and what I can do to help the group that I don't always listen to the ideas of others. Instead, I want to make sure that everyone hears my ideas. In the future I can help my group and myself to be more successful by actively listening to everyone, make eye contact with the person talking to show them that I am interested in what they are saying, asking questions about other's ideas, summarizing what they said to make sure that I understand, sharing my idea when asked, and showing that I am interested in what someone is saying with my body language.

The teacher then asked the students to discuss in their triads what they can do to improve their communication during the next physical education class, when talking with their siblings or parents/guardians, when working in groups in another class, with their teammates, or any other situation they can think of. To close the group processing session, the teacher asked for volunteers to tell the class what hinders effective communication and conversely what promotes effective communication (i.e., *a take home message* that students can go and apply in future life experiences).

Final Thoughts

The *Sunday Afternoon Drive* model is an effective framework for conducting a student-centered reflection session within Cooperative Learning. The model provides a destination without teacher directive, emphasizing student voice through seven components rather than a teacher directed closure. Providing sufficient time in the early stages of learning to use the *Sunday Afternoon Drive* model is important for both the teacher and the students. As the class develops in their understanding of the model, a full debrief where all students are actively engaged in the process, and are able to generalize and apply their learning to other areas of their lives, takes less time and can ultimately be facilitated by the students.

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