

Session: The psychological aspects of belonging to groups (online part)

Aim of session: Get knowledge why humans have a fundamental need for belonging to groups and how it can be used to enhance student experience.

Material needed: attachments 1, 2, 3 as presented below

Time of session: 2,5-3,30 hours (1st task – 30-45 min., reading – 1 hour, 2nd task 30- 45 minutes, 3rd task 30-45 minutes)

Description of session: Self-study, reading, quiz, writing task (1 exercise in written form, reading, 2 tasks in written form/quiz)

During that activity the focus is on benefits of being a member of a community. People feel more secure when they know that they have others around them who share their goals and care about their progress. That is one reason why it can be so stressful for students to make decision of applying for student exchange programmes and move to a different country for mobility. It is important to remember how hard it is for students to be far away from the formal and informal groups they belong to every day. For the same reason, it is a fundamental task for the administrative staff and teachers to give students opportunity to belong to the groups and feel as a part of the group in our universities.

The first task (attachment 1) is a warming up exercise, during which each participant has to write and then share with others their experience of being a member of formal and informal groups as a teenager compared to the present time.

The second task consists in reading the article – The Psychology of Groups by Donelson R. Forsyth (Donelson R. Forsyth, a social and personality psychologist, holds the Colonel Leo K. and Gaylee Thorsness Endowed Chair in Ethical Leadership at the Jepson School of Leadership Studies at the University of Richmond. A fellow of the American Psychological Association, he researches and writes about ethics, groups, and related topics).

Read the article about the psychology of groups and answer the following questions (write down you answers as they will be discussed during physical training): As human beings, are we able to exist without belonging to a group/community? How important is it for you to be a part of your group/community? As you compare different periods of your life, which group(s) do you find the most important for your well-being?

The third task is a writing activity, during which the participants give examples of activities from their universities that help building the group identity between incoming students from different countries and cultures. Results of that exercise participants should publish on the platform (attachment 2).

The fourth task comprises a short quiz checking the knowledge of the participants after reading the article (attachment 3).

The participants will get knowledge why belonging to the group is so important for us as human beings and why it is so important for students to become aware of their status of group members during the

mobility time. During the physical training, the knowledge from readings will be systematized and also used for discussion and summary. The quiz will be evaluated by the participants themselves, however, the facilitator should also make a short summary of the correct and incorrect answers from participants.

Other notes:

During the physical training there should be a session held with the purpose to make the summary of the tasks from that online activity. The task is needed as an introduction to other panels during physical training and to show the participants how important it is for the exchange students to have a sense of group membership.

ATTACHMENT 1

Task 1 - During our lives, we are members of different groups and communities. As a warm-up task to the topic “The psychology of the group”, please fill out the template below describing two periods of your life – TEENAGE YEARS and NOWADAYS.

TEENAGE YEARS	NOWADAYS
<p>Below write groups to which you belonged/belong. Next to the name of group in bracket please put “F” if the group is a formal one*</p>	
<p>1 2 3 4 5</p>	<p>1 2 3 4 5</p>
<p>Please put the groups which you wrote above in the order from the most important.</p>	
<p>1 2 3 4 5</p>	<p>1 2 3 4 5</p>
<p>Analyze the groups you belonged/belong and shortly in 5-8 sentences describe what decided that you putted them in above order. From psychology view why belonging to those groups was/is important for you (you can focus on the most important group for you).</p>	

*

	Formal Group	Informal Group
Meaning	Groups created by the organization, for the purpose of accomplishing a specific task are known as Formal Groups. Formal groups are the ones that are created as per official authority, so as to fulfill the desired objective.	Groups formed by the people as per their likes, interests, and attitudes.

ATTACHMENT 2

Task 3 - Please describe, in 5-7 sentences, one example of an activity from your university thanks to which you can support group identity building among incoming students from different countries and cultures. Give us 3 strong and 3 weak sides of that activity from your point of view.

ATTACHMENT 3

Task 4

- 1) Match correct explanation to the name of group development stages
- 2) As you can see two descriptions are missing, try and describe the missing stages in short

Group Development Stages and Characteristics

“Adjourning”; “Forming”; “Norming”; “Performing”; “Storming”.

- 1) The group focuses its energies and attention on its goals, displaying higher rates of task-orientation, decision-making, and problem-solving.
- 2) Disagreements about procedures and purposes surface, so criticism and conflict increase. Much of the conflict stems from challenges between members who are seeking to increase their status and control in the group.
- 3) Once the group agrees on its goals, procedures, and leadership, norms, roles, and social relationships develop that increase the group’s stability and cohesiveness.