Activity/Exercise

Title, Abstract & Keywords

Title: Student-Team Selection Using a 'Speed-Grouping' Process

Abstract:

Many courses use student-team based learning. An early semester challenge is setting up the teams. Typical options include students self-selecting teams or instructor-assigned teams. Both have benefits and challenges. The 'Speed-Grouping' Process is a modified Speed-Interviewing/Dating technique which blends instructor-assigned teams with students self-selected teams. Both the instructor and students have a say in the team member selection decision making process, which can improve the students' team engagement. Session participants will gain the information and experience for using this mixed-method process for student team selection.

Keywords: group-member selection, team-based learning, active-learning classroom

Introduction

An early challenge in a Team-Based Learning (TBL) course is the group-member selection process. "A Guide to Teaching in the Active Learning Classroom: History, Research, and Practice" (Baepler, Walker, Brooks, Saichaie, & Petersen, 2016), identifies four general categories for forming student groups for a course. They are identified as random, instructor-generated, self-selected, and mixed. Prior research has investigated group-member selection from both the instructor-generated verses student self-selected groups (Hilton & Phillips, 2010), which found that the group's behavior was influenced by the instructor decision on the group composition, which was countered by the opportunity for self-selection bias with student self-selected groups.

The Speed-Grouping Process is a variation of the Speed-Interviewing technique which evolved from the Speed-Dating concept. The students are paired up in a series of quick three- to five-minute rotating interviews. The Speed-Grouping Process combines the benefit of immediate comparisons between candidate group members of Speed-Interviewing with the mutual evaluations of Speed-Dating. A different variation of the Speed-Dating concept has also been applied to "Enliven and Improve (farmers' market managers) Conferences and Workshops" as speed mentoring. (Lev, 2003)

Within the area of mixed-method group selection, several techniques have been used. They range from a simple extension of the random count-off method with an instructor selected ordering for the lineup then counting off by the number-of-teams approach to using a selection being based on certain characteristics with a computer algorithm forming the groups using multiple student characteristics (Moreno, Ovalle, & Vicari, 2012). The Speed-Grouping Process as a mixed method for forming student groups which permits the instructor to influence the group

composition while reducing some self-selection bias and with opportunities to improve group diversity and engagement.

The Speed-Grouping Process can be used for undergraduate and graduate courses.

Theoretical Foundation/Teaching Implications.

The benefits of group-based learning verses students taught using traditional teaching methods has been studied and analyzed with many research studies. (Oakley, Brent, Felder, & Elhajj, 2004). As Oakley, Brent Felder & Elhajj state "These benefits are not automatic, however. Being part of an ineffective or dysfunctional team may well be inferior to independent study in promoting learning and can lead to extreme frustration and resentment." Some of the frustration can be reduced by the students participating in the group member selection process.

The Speed-Grouping Process helps improve student group engagement by having the students actively participating in group member selection while balancing it with an instructor's desire to have groups with diverse members. When students participate in selecting their group members, they have an increased personal responsibility for the function of the group. The Speed-Grouping Process takes a few steps and can be completed as part of the first two classes in the semester.

Learning Objectives.

The students will improve their skills and gain knowledge of:
- Short interviewing others while concurrently being interviewed
  - This can help students who will be interviewing at a job fair or "open-house"
  - Students in a Human Resource Management course should develop an increased understanding of the importance of preparation prior to an interview.
- Decision making with incomplete information (bounded rationality)
  - The experience can be referred to later in the semester if the concept of bounded rationality in decision making is discussed.

Exercise Overview.

The Speed-Grouping Process requires time within 2 different class periods at the beginning of the semester. (Appendix B provides a visual overview of the process.) Part of the first class is used to obtain some student demographics, for the instructor to use to create the quasi-homogeneous groupings. By the end of the Speed-Grouping, no two members from the same quasi-homogeneous groupings should be on the same student team. Table #1 is an overview of the class and preparation to use the Speed-Grouping process.
Table #2 details the specific class which the interviews and the selection of group members occurs.

Class Sequence		
When	Objective	Forms/Materials
Preparation for the 1st class	- Review/Modify "Information Sheet" for the 'Getting to know you' portion of the first class. - Print copies for the students to complete.	- Information Sheet (See Appendix A)
1st Class	- Have students complete the "Information Sheet" to obtain the background information for the quasi-homogeneous groupings. - Inform the class they will be going through a group selection interview process in the next class and to come to class with 2 key questions they will ask potential group members.	- Information Sheet
Preparation for the 2nd class	- Group the students into quasi-homogeneous groups. - For a class with 32 students which will be divided into 8 teams, create four quasi-homogeneous groups. - Write each student's name on the colored index card for their quasi-homogeneous groups.	- Package of 3x5" Colored Index Cards [- Use a different color for each quasi-homogeneous group. - Typical Index Card Colors: Blue/Violet/Canary(Yellow)/Green/Cherry(Red)]
2nd Class	- 'Speed-Grouping' Day (See Table #2 for details)	- Organized colored index cards with students' names on them & bring some spare cards - Envelope/Hat with group numbers. (used to random draw group numbers.) - Group Sign-up Sheet
Follow-up from 2nd Class	Organize and publish 'Speed-Groups" with group members names and group numbers on LMS.	

Table 1- Class Sequence for 'Speed-Grouping'

Note: The sequence within the above table only relates to the portion of the classes which are related to the Speed-Grouping Process.

Sequence - Speed-Grouping Day		
What	How	Time
Organizing students into the quasi-homogeneous groupings	-Explain what will be occurring in today's class -Pass out the individual colored index cards with the students' names -Organize the seating so all students with a like-colored are sitting in the same row. In the row in front/behind are all students with another colored card. (See Appendix C) -Remind them to write down their 2 key questions they will ask potential group members,	5 to 10 minutes
Interviewing	- Have students interview each other. (See Appendix C for the interview rotation sequence) -Note: Some students may experience information overload prior to the last round.	12 to 16 rounds, 3 minutes per round. Approximately 35 to 50 minutes
Pick your group members	- Students should reflect & identify other students from other quasi-homogeneous groups who they could work with as group members - Based on their interviews, students pick their group members - Each group will have 4 students, each with a different colored index card. (Green, Blue, Red, & Yellow)	8 to 12 minutes
Sign-up	- Select group number by random number drawing - Fill out group member names on the instructor's sign-up sheet & return index cards as a group	4 to 8 minutes
Contact info	- Students exchange contact info - Students discuss how the group will work on collaborative documents	Remainder of class

Table 2- Speed-Grouping Class Sequence

Session Description.
The session will walk-through the preparation and execution of the Speed-Grouping Process to equip the participants with information to use the process for student group-selection for a course.

Proposed timeline for the session is as follows:

- Introduction and Overview   5 minutes
- Steps in the Speed-Grouping Process   10 minutes
    - First day of class
    - Second day of class
- "Be the students" in the Speed-Grouping Process   15 minutes
    - Workshop participants will participate in shortened Structured Speed-Interviewing.
- Collaborative Dialogue   5 to 10 minutes
    - Q & A, plus suggestions for improvement
    - Workshop participants shared experiences and past lessons-learned

Works Cited

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Appendix A – Sample Information Sheet

<div align="center">Please complete and return this form during the first class. Thank you!</div>

Name _____ How would you like to be addressed? _____

Where are you from? _____

E-mail Address (Please print) _____

Current degree program(s)_____

Which section are you registered in?   □ Section -01 M/W 10:00- 11:45 am

Your reason for taking this course: _____

Views of Learning

What are your strengths as a learner?

_____

_____

How useful do you think this course is in helping you reach your career/learning goals?
- □ Very Useful
- □ Useful
- □ Not Useful
- □ Uncertain

How do you describe your learning preference?
- □ Like to learn alone
- □ Like to learn with others
- □ Both are fine

What are your weaknesses as a learner?

_____

_____

How confident are you speaking in front of others?
- □ Very confident
- □ Confident
- □ Somewhat confident
- □ Not confident

How do you feel about learning in groups?
- □ Like it
- □ It's OK
- □ Don't like it

On average, per course, how many hours do you study per week? _____

Please provide your current overall GPA: _____

On a scale from 5 to 1, with 5 being the highest, please answer the following 3 items -

- ➢ Please rate your overall writing skills   5   4   3   2   1
- ➢ Please rate your overall presentation skills   5   4   3   2   1
- ➢ Please rate your overall mathematics skills   5   4   3   2   1

How many credit hours are you enrolled in this semester? _____

During the semester, about how many hours a week do you typically work on a paid job? _____

During the semester, about how many hours a week do you typically work on a volunteer job? _____

EMPLOYMENT - ORGANIZATION INTERESTS

Size of organization ☐ Small (up to 100 employees) ☐ Medium (100 to 999 employees) ☐ Large (Greater than 1000 employees)	Culture of Organization ☐ CREATE - "Do things first" ☐ COMPETE – "Do things fast" ☐ CONTROL – "Do things right" ☐ COLLABORATE – "Do things together"
Profit Prospective ☐ Non-profit ☐ For-Profit	Reach of organization ☐ Domestic ☐ Multinational ☐ Global

PERSONAL INTEREST

Please specific your goals or interests in rank order for each of the categories listed below:
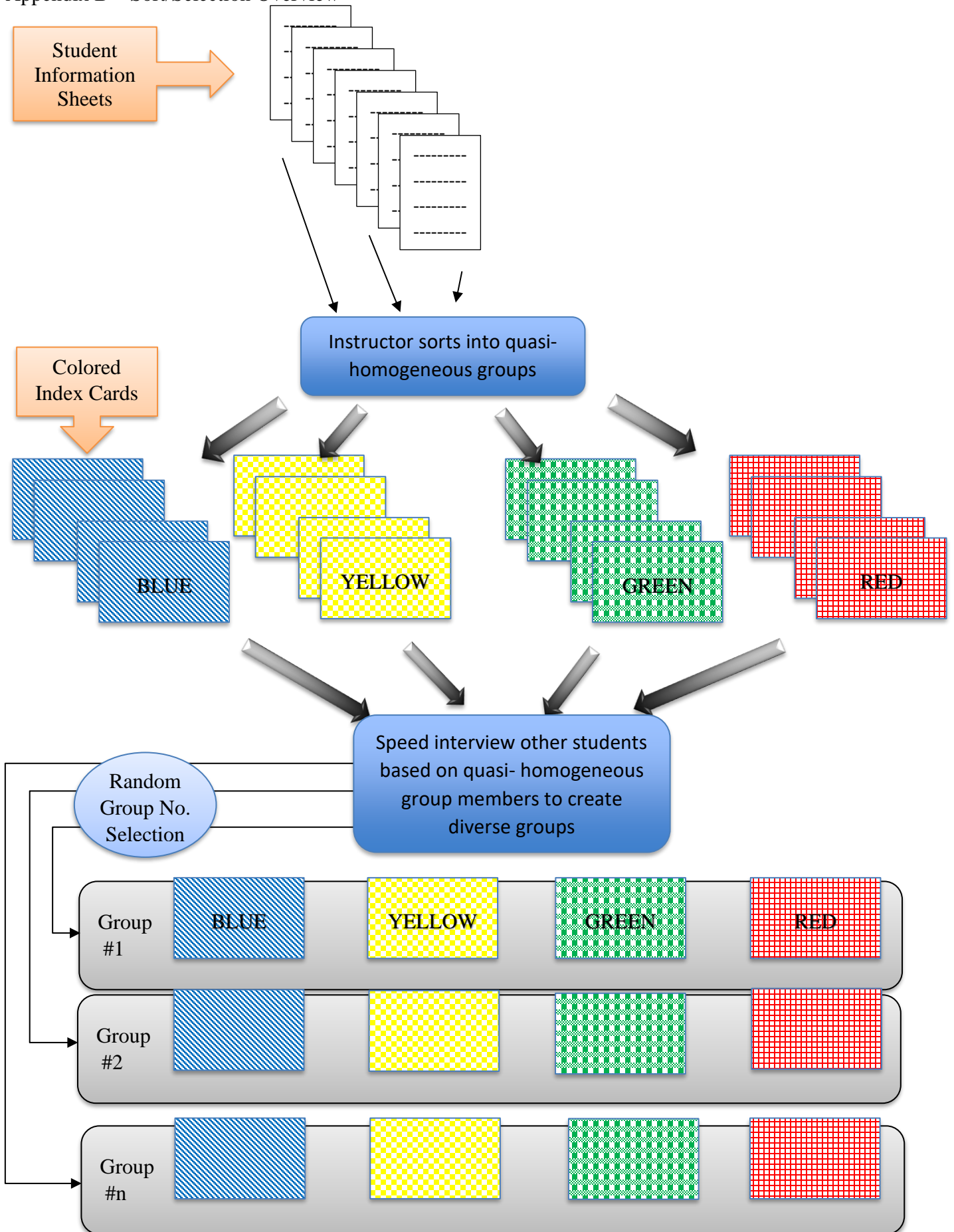
Rank Order	Most Interesting College Courses	Hobbies (includes sports)	Career Goals
1			
2			
3			

Describe a time when you have been in contact with an organization's human resources group:

 _____

_____

_____

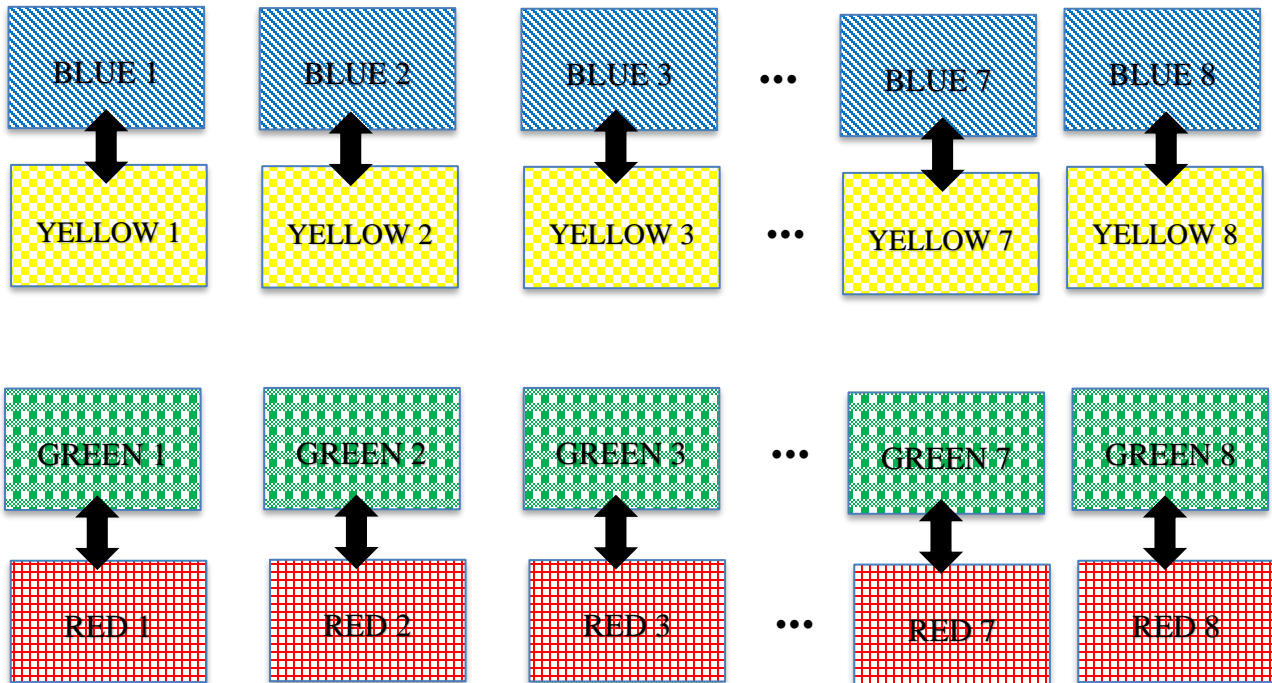An interesting "fun-fact" about yourself: _____

_____

_____

Other initial comments _____

_____

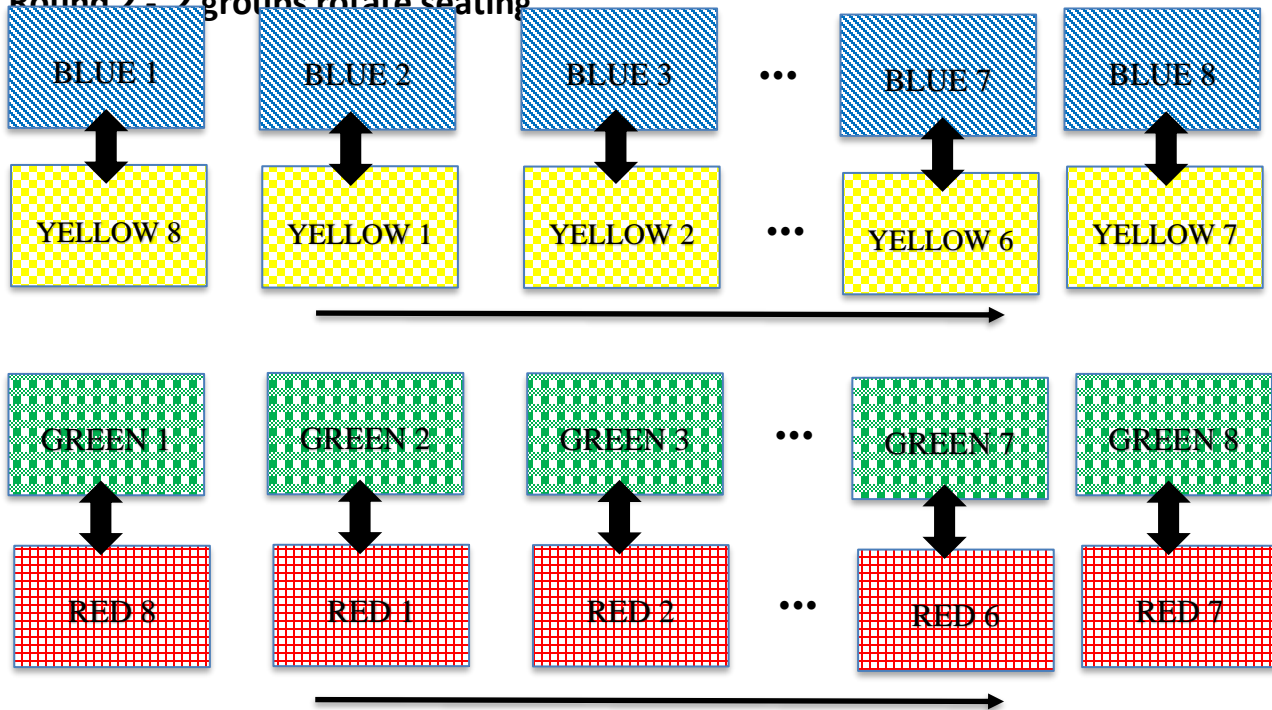Appendix B – Sort/Selection Overview

Appendix C – Interview Rotation Sequence

Round 1

Round 2 - 2 groups rotate seating

Round 3 & beyond - 2 groups continue to rotate seating for each interview round

Appendix D – Sample Group Sign-up Sheet

Index Card Color -->	Red	Green	Blue	Yellow
Group #				
1	_____	_____	_____	_____
2	_____	_____	_____	_____
3	_____	_____	_____	_____
4	_____	_____	_____	_____
5	_____	_____	_____	_____
6	_____	_____	_____	_____
7	_____	_____	_____	_____
8	_____	_____	_____	_____

Course _____   Term _____

Print names legibly