

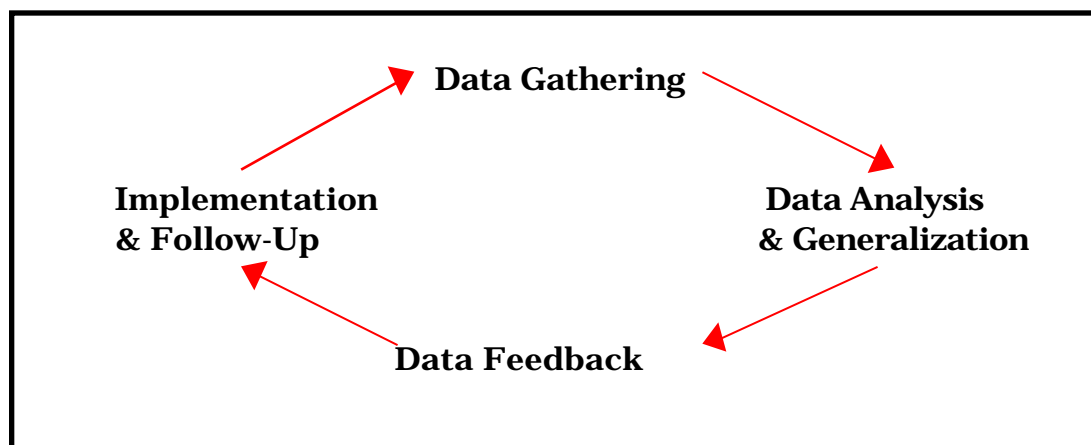
**The Reflective Practitioner:
Consulting, Conflict, and Change in
Organizational Settings**

PPA 730-2 Spring 1997

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Effective administrators and managers need to be able to work and function as facilitators of purposive organization change. The role of the consultant in this process is critical. This course will focus on the role of the internal/external consultant in assessing the health of an organization and assisting in addressing and solving the communication, structural, and organizational issues and conflicts that stand in the way of productivity, efficiency, and workplace satisfaction.

At the center of this course is an off-site field work experience. Class participants will become members of 3-5 person consultation team which will engage in an consultation experience with an organization. The action research/process consultation intervention consists of the four primary steps as diagrammed and outline below.



Explanation of “Four Steps”

1. Stage I: Data Gathering

- Involves conducting an assessment of the current situation through data gathering. Data gathering is conducted through individual one-on-one interviews or combined with surveys that are confidential and non-threatening.

2. Stage II: Data Analysis and Generalization

- The data gathered during Stage I is analyzed and generalizations are formed. Findings and recommendations are documented in an oral and written report for presentation to the client during Phase III.

3. Stage III: Feedback

- This session is facilitated by the process consultant(s). Findings are reviewed with participants and issues are addressed or resolved. The outcome of this phase is to remove obstacles preventing the group from achieving its desired outcome. A communication problem-solving process is used to develop action plans to achieve desired outcomes.

4. Stage IV: Implementation and Follow-Up

- This stage concludes the process with the implementation and evaluation of action plans agreed upon by the group.

Throughout the consultation, participants will examine the political, strategical and ethical implications of their work, and assist clients with understanding change possibilities. The primary outcomes of this course are the development of essential knowledge, skills, and attitude of a “reflective practitioner” and the ability to use this experience to assist groups and organizations to meet their work objectives.

Central to the success of the organizational intervention will be the forming and functioning of effective consultation teams. Participants will be expected to actively engage in cooperative learning exercises to assist in team development and team effectiveness.

In addition to the field work experience and cooperative learning exercises, the methodology of the course includes lectures, skill demonstrations, skill practice, readings, and discussions.

Course Structure

The course is designed as a *temporary system* which functions as a *Consulting Firm*. The faculty, Neil and Mike, will serve as the firms *Senior Partners* in this temporary system. Students are *Consulting Associates*, professional staff “employed” by the firm. Associates will be formed into *Consulting Teams* on the second week of class.

Senior partners are available for consultation to consulting teams during the course to provide assistance regarding process and content of the consultation and the teams dynamics. The tasks of the senior partners are to enhance the learning of the consulting associates, support team building, and to assist the team in providing quality services to the client system. *Senior partners do not however, consult directly to the client system.*

Course Objectives

1. Investigate and explore role and requirements of the internal/external consultant in working successfully with organizational conflict and change.
2. Assess ones own skills/abilities to be an organization change agent.
3. Acquire essential attitude, knowledge, and skills to be an effective “reflective practitioner”
4. Develop an understanding, expertise, and appreciation for action research/process consultation.
5. Work effectively and successfully as members of consulting team to service the client and to support one’s own learning.
6. Work in collaboration with client and client system to meet their improvement needs within confines of process consulting and the time framework of the course.

Course Expectations

1. To attend *all* in-class and out-of-class meetings.
2. To complete all assigned readings by due date.

3. To actively participate as valued member of consulting team.
4. To share responsibility for work and success of consulting team.
5. To willingly assess/evaluate.
6. To conduct oneself in a responsible and professional manner at all times with client system.

Course Requirements and Grading Procedures

1. In and out-of-class meeting attendance and active participation at all times.
2. Completion of readings and ability to apply insights from readings to discussion and consultation.
3. A learning journal—to help you to reflect upon and learn from your experience and assist the staff in charting your effort and progress.
4. A group paper on your consulting experience.
5. An individual paper/exam to integrate your learnings and insights.
6. A team presentation on your consulting work.
7. A peer evaluation of your team members contribution to the success of the consultation.

- *More details on each of these will be distributed in class.*

NOTE: APPROXIMATELY ONE HALF OF YOUR FINAL GRADE WILL BE DETERMINED BY YOUR WRITTEN WORK (group paper, paper/exam, and journal) AND ONE HALF BY YOUR CLASS PERFORMANCE (attendance, participation, and quality of contribution to class, team, and client).

Material To Obtain At This Time

1. PPA 730-2 Class Workbook and Reader (Obtain from instructors).
2. The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think In Action, by Donald A. Schon (Basic Books).
3. Small Group Trainers Survival Guide, by Birge Reichard (Jossey-Bass).
4. An 8 _ x 11 Notebook for in class and field notes—valuable aid for paper and journal.