Decision Making Structures

No Structure
- Rugged individualism
  • "We all trust each other"
  + Sounds nice
  + Free of rules and penalties
- Often chaotic
  - Often hidden decision-making and domination by the few (often aggressive males)
  - Most people grow dissatisfied and leave

Hierarchy
- Chain of command
  + Fast — good for crises, war, etc.
  + Clear responsibility and accountability
  + Explicit structure
  - Bossism
  - Encourages competition and pandering
  - Not egalitarian or representative
  - Many views not heard
  - Underlings often do not understand or accept decision
  - Little commitment to carry out decisions

Majority Rule
- Voting
  • Most people are experienced with it
  + Works with any size group
  + Usually fast
  - Splits the group into winners and losers; losers often leave
  - Fosters competition and factions
  - Encourages attacks against opponents
  - Polarizes group; losers often angry and have no commitment to the decision
  - The decision contains the bad parts of the winning proposal and lacks the good parts of the losing proposal

Parliamentary Process
- Robert’s Rules of Order
  + Allows antagonists to work with each other in a reasonably orderly fashion
  - Confusing; only a few really know what is happening
  - Encourages tricky maneuvering
  - Hinders real communication

Consensus
- Explore solutions until the best one for the group emerges
  + Mutual search for a solution
  + Reach a decision which all can accept
  + Synthesizes all ideas into one
  + Brings conflicts into the open
  + Minority opinions and concerns are heard and considered
  + Decisions are thoroughly thought out
  + Encourages cooperation
  + Promotes solidarity; all are winners
  + Minimizes domination
  + Promotes commitment to carry out decisions
  - Usually takes more time
  - Sometimes frustrating
  - Requires good listening skills
  - Requires cooperation and mutual concern
  - One person can block a decision

Autocratic
(one-person rule)

Consultative
(one-person rule with advice)

Oligarchic
(elite or experts rule)

Military or Business

Unanimity
- Everyone completely agrees
  + Good when it occurs
  - Almost impossible to achieve with more than two people

From the Vernal Education Project (www.vernalproject.org)