

2-2. Structured Observation.

Instructions. Measure the patterns of communication among members or study the content of a group's discussion. Find a group to observe, such as a classroom discussing a topic (but not a classroom listening to a lecture), a meeting of a governmental group, a meeting at your place of work, or even a group featured in a television program or movie. Next, study the group's communication patterns and the content of the discussion.

1. *Communication analysis.* Document who speaks to whom using a chart like the one shown below to help you keep track of the information flow. When, for example, Erick speaks to Kelley, record the interaction in the Erick-to-Kelley box. At the end of the meeting compute the percentage of contributions of each member and general speaking patterns. If the communication rate is not too great, you can also record how long each member speaks and turn-taking exchanges (who speaks after who). Use the data you collect to draw conclusions about the group's structure and process.

	To						
From	Audrey	Erick	Jon	Pat	Kelley	Group	Total
Audrey							
Erick							
Jon							
Pat							
Kelley							
Total							

2. *Content analysis.* Analyze the content of the discussion by classifying each remark using a structured coding system such as the Bales's Interaction Process Analysis, SYMLOG (Bales, Cohen, & Williamson, 1979), or a system that you personally devise. The categories of the Interaction Process Analysis (IPA), for example, are shown below. To use the system develop a chart like the one shown below. Each time an individual makes a remark, classify it into one of the IPA categories and record who said it by marking the appropriate column on the form. If, for example, Erick says "I don't think that is such a good idea," then mark the gives opinion box. Use the data you collect to draw conclusions about the group's structure and process.

IPA Behaviors	Member					
	Audrey	Erick	Jon	Pat	Kelley	Total
Seems friendly						
Dramatizes						
Agrees						
Gives suggestion						
Gives opinion						
Gives information						
Asks for information						
Asks for opinion						
Asks for suggestion						
Disagrees						
Shows tension						
Seems unfriendly						
Total						