

Various Forms of Peer Learning

You will recognize the various forms of peer learning listed below. They are common to many of us – so common that the power of these forms of learning has been taken for granted.

The following peer-based models are popular forms of group (two or more people) activities in which learning can occur intentionally or unintentionally.

Table III:3 – Common Types of Peer-Learning Models

Model	Common Uses	Typical Role of Learning
Action learning groups	Small groups of people organized to work on real-world priorities	Intentional
Committees	Groups of people organized toward a common purpose or goal	Unintentional
Debates	Convince people of one point of view over another	Unintentional
Dialogues	Deepen understanding, and especially meaning, around a topic or question	Intentional
Discussion	Share comments and opinions to make a decision or enhance understanding	Often unintentional
Self-help groups	Groups of people organized to personally benefit each member	Intentional
Study groups	Groups of people organized to learn a common topic or skill	Intentional
Teams	Groups of people organized toward a common purpose or goal	Unintentional

There are a variety of other forms of peer groupings that are less common in training and development, for example, clearing committees, communities of practice, elder circles, peer mentoring and peer review groups.

Any of these can be powerful forms of learning during consulting projects, particularly if they are integrated with frequent opportunities for reflection and inquiry to identify new learning. Many of these forms can be integrated into project activities, as well.