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Comm 406

Mt. Everest Reflection

The Mt. Everest simulation was both extremely educational and enjoyable to partake in as a student. At first, going into this simulation I did not know what to expect, and I was not overly excited. Looking back now I realize that I really learned a lot from it. After arriving at the library's computer lab and joining with my group the simulation began.

As the photographer I had very different goals then the rest of my group. I was supposed to spend two days in each of the first two camps to take photos. I quickly realized that even though it would be better for me to stay and take photos, I would not be able to reach the summit in the given amount of time. This was the first major decision that I faced in the simulation. I decided that although my personal goals are important, my overall group goals should come first. I remained at one of the camps for two days and then continued on with my group further up the mountain towards the summit.

As we continued to the next camp in the simulation, things became more exciting. One of our group members had an asthma attack on the mountain. Although she was easily treated with an inhaler, we recognized that it could have been avoided if she told us all of the information that she had. This is when we began utilizing a smarter strategy of information pooling. We learned about information pooling both in class and from online readings, but we got to put it to use in this simulation. Once we began openly sharing all of our information with each other things were running smoothly and we were quickly approaching the summit.

At the final camp before the summit we were at our last crucial decision, how to ration out the oxygen. Me and one other group member began calculating and dividing the tanks between the group and we were left with just one tank. The group decided that either the marathoner or I should have it, and said that the two of us should decide who gets it. I had calculated that I had enough oxygen because it was stated that I was a good climber who had already reached the summit in the past. He wanted me to have the last tank because he already had more tanks then me, and I was a photographer not a marathoner. Despite my completely contrary information he insisted that I take the last tank, and that is what we did. This is where we experienced an example of cognitive bias and its effect on the group. When we moved on to summit and we saw that everyone made it except the marathoner.

In conclusion, the Mt. Everest simulation was extremely beneficial, fun, and helped me better understand some of the concepts from class in a real situation. I learned that working together with a group can make monumental task much easier or even possible. I also noticed that when working in a group it is important to work on personal goals while working towards the overall groups goals. When working in a group problems can occur if you withhold information so information pooling techniques should be used to get everything out on the table. Finally, I found out that cognitive bias can have devastating effects on the success of a group, so it is important to take everyone's argument into consideration instead of just holding on to your own personal preferences.