

## How Can Understanding Group Dynamics Lead to Better Group Work?

Presented by:

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# Our Objectives



- Define “group dynamics”
- Describe the findings of studies on group dynamics and group work
- Discuss how to use free online assessments and activities to teach group dynamics



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# Typical Group Work



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## Group Work: Ideas, Anxiety, and Annoyance



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## Group Dynamics Defined



*“The interactions that influence the attitudes and behavior of people when they are grouped with others through either choice or accidental circumstances”*

*Dictionary.com*



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# From the literature



- As instructors, we are trained as SMEs but not how to improve or leverage group dynamics (Omatsu, n.d.)
- Tuckman & Jenson's (1977) theory of group dynamics had 5 key areas, including the importance of "internal development among group members in the forming stage."
- Coers et al. (2010) showed that students need to understand there is a process to team development
- Coers et al. (2009) found students need foundational basics in group dynamics for group work to be successful
- Basic understanding of a group's dynamics are key to successful group work (Rusticus & Justus, 2019)



- Students' comfort in groups leads to greater success; in fact, more than working with friends (Theobald et al., 2017)

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# Online Assessments and Exercises



- [Jung Typology](#)
- [DISC Assessment](#)
- [VIA Character Strengths](#)
- [Compass Points Activity](#)



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# Jung Typology



- Based on the work of Carl Jung, measures personality along four dimensions
- Uses same 4-letter codes as the Myers-Briggs
- Start with this one: students are familiar... or think they are!
- Share results to report out qualities of each code pair (E/I, S/N, T/F, P/J)



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# DISC Assessment



- Based on research of William Moulton Marston; students tend to be unfamiliar with it
- Choose the statement in each set that is most like you and least like you
- Measures tendencies and categories into 4 types: Dominant, Influential, Steady, or Conscientious
- Compare/contrast the results to Jung typology to help with validity of their results on both



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# VIA Character Strengths



- Shares with you what your strengths are so that you can leverage them in your work
- Compare with Jung and DISC findings



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# Compass Points Activity



- Helps students to develop empathy and emotional intelligence, as well as see their preferences about working in and with groups
- Starts with asking them to recall a very positive or negative group work experience
- Ends with having them revisit that experience and if what they learned about different types of people helps them make sense of why that was so good or bad
- Compare their findings here with the Jung, the DISC, and their Strengths



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## Compass Points: Choose a Direction



- North/Acting: "Let's do it!" Likes to act, try things, plunge in.
- East/Speculating: Likes to look at the big picture and the possibilities before acting
- South/Caring: Likes to know that everyone's feelings have been taken into consideration and that their voices have been heard before acting.
- West/Attn. to Detail: Likes to know the who, what, when, where, and why before acting.



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## Compass Points : Recognizing Each Other



1. What are the strengths of your style? (3-4 adjectives)
2. What are the limitations of your style? (3-4 adjectives)
3. What style do you find most difficult to work with and why?
4. What do people from other "directions" or styles need to know about you so you can work together effectively?
5. What's one thing you value about each of the other three styles?



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## Small Group Debriefs (FTF)



- Use a flipchart or pad where students record their results
- Each assessment/exercise also requires a personal written reflection on the results
- Have students make name cards (cardstock folded over) with their names and their results, and put them on their desks as they choose groups
- Before they start the group work, allow students time to talk about how their group will work with the personalities and strengths at the table as they assign roles



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## Moving Debriefs Online



- Use the LMS blog or discussion board
- Use a tool like Padlet or Flipgrid



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# Students Say....



- They learn about themselves
- They enjoy getting to know classmates—and their instructor (share results)
- They enjoy group exercises and projects more



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Thank you!

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