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Title of Tool
Group Charter for a Live Brief Group Project
Category of content
Delivery
Summary
Facilitating effective group work is critical to the success of a live brief group project. The development of a group charter is a valuable way to help students to identify barriers to participation, articulate individual needs, value diversity and co-create a document that sets out expectations of group members. This tool is multi-purpose and easily adapted to different contexts. The educator can use it to raise awareness of inclusive recruitment practices and parallels can be drawn between the value of diversity in a university project team and teams in the graduate workplace.
Learning
Through collaboration
Learning Outcome(s)/What is the change expected?
• Identify your own needs in relation to working successfully in a group. • Articulate those needs and expectations to your group and tutor. • Identify group processes, behaviours, and attitudes that will enable you to fully participate in the live brief group project and module. • Negotiate group processes, behaviours, and attitudes that meet the needs and expectations of all members of the group. • Practice creating a well-structured, well-articulated and useful document.

In-Person	Online	Hybrid	Small Cohort (<25)	Medium Cohort (25-75)	Large Cohort (>75)	Fixed learning space	Flexible learning space	Synchronous	Asynchronous
✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	

Required resources:

- Online or in-person teaching space.
- Digital space for disseminating teaching materials pre and post activity, enabling the sharing and review of individual work, collaboration on a group charter, and ongoing access to the final version.

Preparation in advance for educator

Facilitating a live brief group project process is demanding; there are many moving parts, some of which are out of the control of the educator. Contemplating the learning design and creating an inclusive learning environment will scaffold the group charter activity. The output, the group charter, will scaffold the group project experience.

Learning design:
- Choose activity learning outcomes appropriate for your context before planning the learning design for it.
- Decide if the tool will be used as a standalone activity where a charter is produced and evaluated in one session, or if the activity will be spread over a few sessions.
- Plan how the activity will be introduced, how much private reflection and group collaboration time students will be given, when and how the final document should be submitted for educator review, and how it should be used to keep the group on track.
- Provide a template of charter categories to add group statements to if student contact time is limited. If time allows, consider running the activity with no template. Asking students to agree what categories are

important to them might reveal previously unconsidered concerns. Requiring students to plan and create a document creates a rich opportunity for formative feedback relevant to the production of a final project report.

- Facilitate the activity in a small group environment. Allow adequate time to reflect privately on what group behaviours, attitudes and processes might reduce anxieties about group work and drive sustained engagement.
- Developing the activity in line with the principles of Universal Design for Learning (CAST, 2018) will further support the suggestions for creating an inclusive learning environment below. Providing students with multiple means of engagement with the activity, making supporting materials available in a range of formats, and allowing students to express themselves in multiple ways will impact the learning design. This approach is worthy of exploration as a stand-alone topic.

Creating an inclusive learning environment:
- Allocating students to mixed experience and ability groups might have the unintended consequence of further reinforcing the divide between those who have been able to access professional level work experience and those who have not. Students who have developed confidence and competencies through such experiences might gravitate towards team leadership roles, take on proportionally more work, or 'carry' the group in other ways. Allocating students to groups based on similar levels of prior experience and educational attainment might feel risky where there is a live brief sponsor expecting receipt of a project deliverable. However, creating an environment where there is both the space and need for inexperienced students to move out of their comfort zones can level the group playing field.
- Decide how to create a safe space for students to speak freely. Pre-preparing rounds of discussion points that move students from sharing light-hearted fun facts, to experiences, and then feelings works well.
- Leading a factual discussion about which students have part-time jobs can surface socio-economic inequality and potential barriers to full participation in the group project.
- Querying what students like and dislike about group work can surface potential charter ground roles.
- Sharing individual strengths and experiences can be a useful way for students to identify who might be well-suited to specific group roles. Inviting students to discuss tasks they enjoy doing can be more inclusive than directly asking students to name their strengths.
- Ask students what being inclusive means to them, what invisible barriers there might be to participating in a group project, and what a psychologically safe space for student-led discussions might feel like.
- Reflecting common themes and observations from each round of discussions can help students to appreciate different perspectives and diversity and notice mutual values and preferences that could inform the selection of charter points.
- Review individual student support plans that detail required reasonable adjustments if they are available. Ensure that the learning design for the activity will enable all students to participate. Speak privately to students who might need additional support. Explain how the charter could make the group experience more inclusive by design and reduce the need for formal individual adjustments.
- Reassure students that there is no requirement to share information about themselves that might later leave them feeling vulnerable. Emphasise the value of reflecting on and articulating individual needs and preferences through charter statements rather than a potentially exposing group conversation.

Preparation in advance for students
- Ensure that students are given adequate personal reflection time prior to each group work stage.
- Invite students to discuss concerns or questions privately.
- Make links for students between graduate recruitment activities that require a group to come to an agreement about something.
- Explain the value of practicing articulating needs in a safe space at university in preparation for initiating reasonable adjustment conversations in a graduate employment context.
- Provide a timeline that states what should be done by when, how individual and group outputs should be shared, and what digital spaces or tools should be utilised.

Prerequisites for this to have impact, if relevant

- Students need a group activity to participate in. The tool can be adapted to any type of group experience.

Step by step approach

The tool has been used with students in the following way:

- Deliver taught content about what a group charter is, and what categories are typically included. Ask students to reflect privately on what charter points they might want to propose.
- Create a subsequent opportunity for project groups to participate in a tutor-facilitated group forming conversation that progresses to discussing potential charter categories.
- Ask students to draft and share their own lists prior to meeting as a group to agree a group charter and then submit it for educator review.
- Provide formative feedback and test group consensus at the next group meeting.
- Build in required reference to the charter throughout subsequent teaching sessions.

Graphic - what image is being associated with this tool, if applicable

Links to Relevant Resources (both within the toolkit and outside)

CAST (2018) UDL Guidelines. Available at: https://udlguidelines.cast.org/ (Accessed 28/02/2024)