DESIGNING AND FACILITATING EFFECTIVE GROUP PROJECTS

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PIE/Fellows Society

ZOOM GUIDELINES

Mute	Please mute your microphone when you are not speaking.
Privacy	Be aware that other attendees can see you if your webcam is turned on.
View	If you are having trouble seeing our screenshare, try selecting the gallery view on Zoom.
Question	Try not to talk over other attendees if you are making comments/asking questions; please use the hand raising function or inform us in the chat that you would like to speak.
Notification	Please silence your phone/email as other participants may be able to hear notifications

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After completing this workshop, learners will be able to:

- Identify common problems that may occur with group projects.
- Employ solutions for preventing common problems that may occur with group projects.
- Analyze learners to determine group project structure needs.
- Select appropriate group project creation/facilitating techniques based on the needs of their unique learner groups.

ADDRESSING THE ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM…

? **Negativity?** ?

WHAT IS AN INTERNET MEME?

Definition from: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Internet_meme

“A **meme** (/miːm/ MEEM) is an idea, behavior, or style that becomes a fad and spreads by means of imitation from person to person within a culture and often carries symbolic meaning representing a particular phenomenon or theme. ... **Memes** spread through the behavior that they generate in their hosts.”

EVERY GROUP PROJECT

When it's group project time and you don't know anyone so you just sit there trying to look approachable

Group projects in school made me understand why Batman prefers to work alone

A FEW QUOTES I HAVE HEARD…

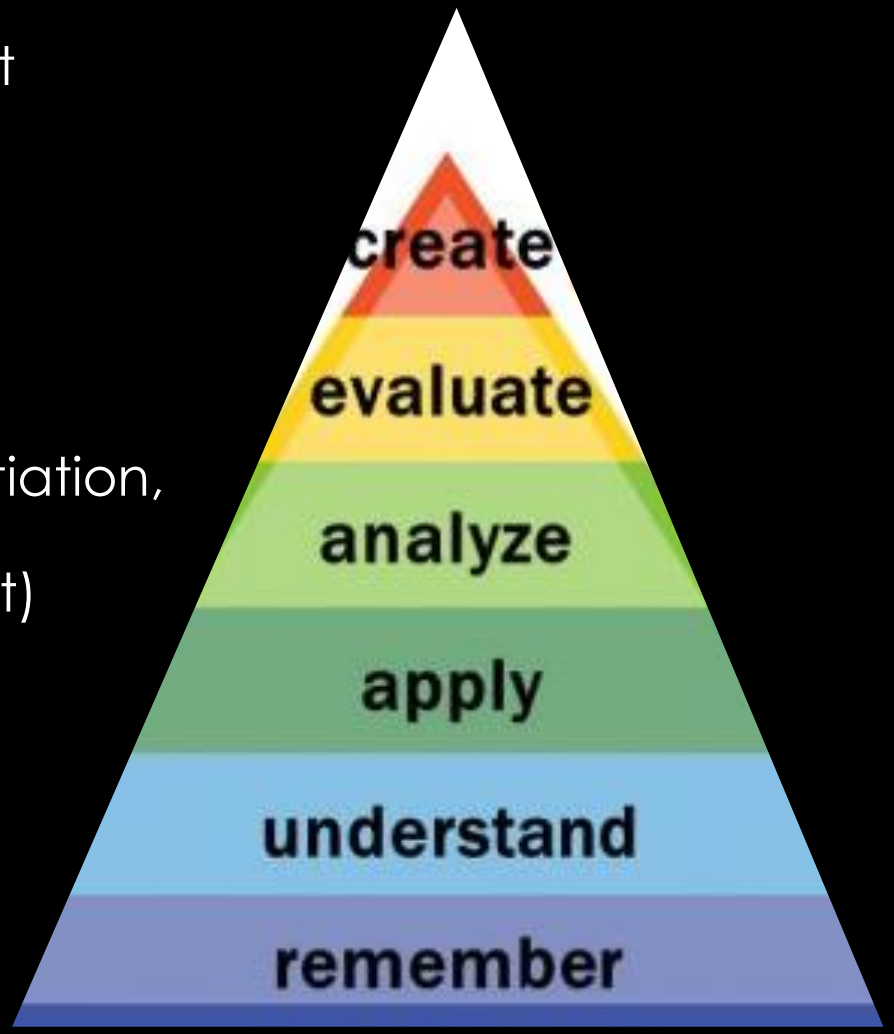
- “Group projects are designed to prepare students for future workplace teamwork.”
- “I don’t have time to grade that many individual assignments.”
- “The students are adults who should be able to learn how to coordinate.”
- “Some students like working with their peers.”
- “I like group projects because I don’t have to do as much work.”
- “I hate group projects because I end up doing all of the work.”

DESPITE THESE OCCURRENCES…

What are the positives of group projects?

BENEFITS

- **Some learners perform well with group projects**
  - Universal Design Principles: Different learner = Different preferences
  - Socialization
  - Networking
- **Teamwork practice**
  - Communication, coordination, professionalism, negotiation, delegation, planning, accountability
  - Potentially useful end-product (renewable assignment)
- **Large project work reduction**
  - Divide and conquer for students
  - Less grading for instructors
  - High level learning objective achievement



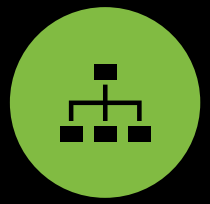
GOOGLE RESEARCH TEAM

Qualitative interview data on team effectiveness (Google, n.d.)

- 5 major factors:

Psychological Safety

Dependability



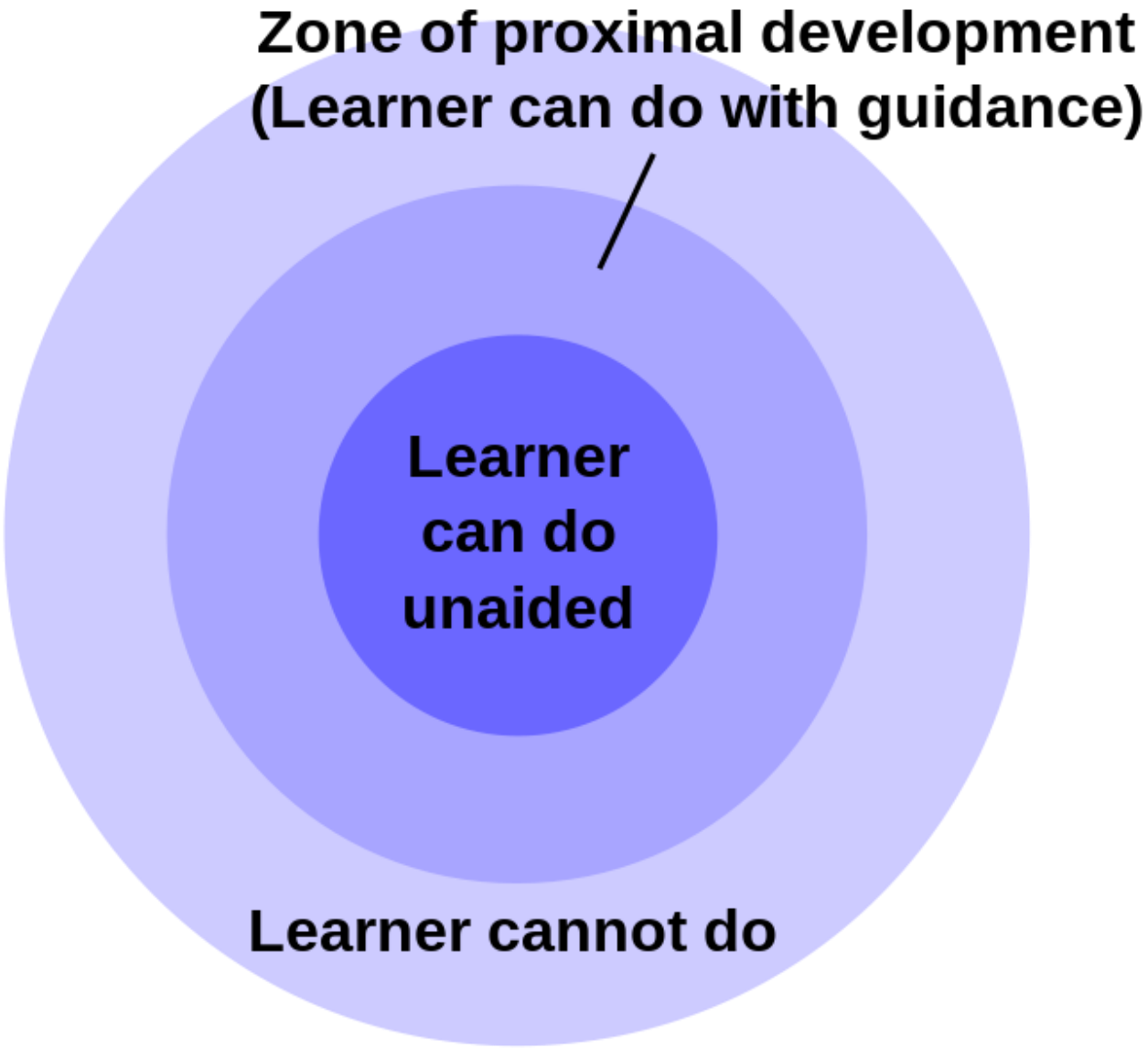
Structure/ Clarity

Meaning

Impact

TIP 1: KNOW YOUR LEARNERS

- **Scaffolding needs may differ across learners**
  - Optional group work resources
  - Pre-project assessments to gauge experience
  - Rigid structure vs. loose structure
  - ZPD (McLeod, 2019)

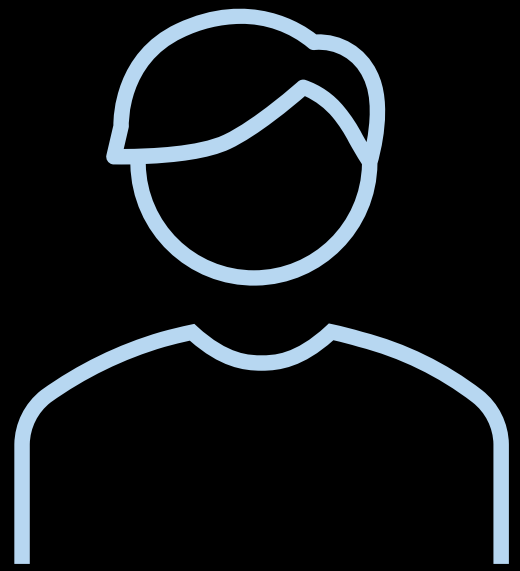


TIP 2: SET CLEAR GUIDELINES

Reduce as much vagueness for expectations as possible.

- When in doubt, write directions
- Provide clear steps, requirements, and grading criteria
- Rubrics
- Previous semester examples
- Ensure all directions/guidelines are prominent and easy to find in your course site

"The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place."
- George Bernard Shaw



HOW DO YOU SET UP YOUR GROUPS?

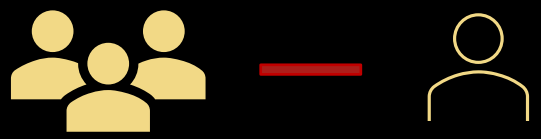
TIP 3: ESTABLISH ACCOUNTABILITY

Refer to ZPD for your learners

- Group contracts
- Options for setting groups
  - Self-selection
  - Random
  - By schedule
  - By topic interest
  - By project component
- Routine group evaluations
  - Once-a-week
  - Project phases
  - Post-Project

TIP 4: PREPARE CONTINGENCIES

Dysfunctional groups



Losing a group member

Flexible deadline space

Individuals with diverse needs

ACTIVITY!

- You will be split into several breakout rooms. This may simulate some of the in-class (or out of class) group activities your students may be doing.
- Read the scenario provided in the google doc.
- Once you have read the Google doc scenario, you may address the questions:
- Decide how you will answer the questions before we reconvene as a large group
  - Will you create a group consensus answer to each question and elect a person (or people) to answer each question? Will you designate a spokesperson to reiterate your answers? Will you divide-and-conquer the questions amongst your group members?
- Reflect on which approach you like to take as a team (e.g. group consensus, divide-and-conquer)
- Note: Each individual team will have a maximum of 1 minute to deliver your answers to the activity questions to the large group when we reconvene.

- Link: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1PFj1FVRSu_TBbjiFmZWPBXRfV7v4FF_KxpMeXeTQ4Kc/edit?usp=sharing

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