

# WE HATE GROUP WORK

A post-graduate student perspective

Alis Iacob | [alis.iacob@dmu.ac.uk](mailto:alis.iacob@dmu.ac.uk)

Zakera Kali | [zakera.kali@dmu.ac.uk](mailto:zakera.kali@dmu.ac.uk)

Gabriela Folegato | [P1111111@dmu.ac.uk](mailto:P1111111@dmu.ac.uk)



**Alis Iacob**  
Senior Lecturer

School of Design  
De Monfort University  
Leicester | UK

e: [alis.iacob@dmu.ac.uk](mailto:alis.iacob@dmu.ac.uk)

**Zakera Kali**  
Senior Lecturer

School of Design  
De Monfort University  
Leicester | UK

e: [zakera.kali@dmu.ac.uk](mailto:zakera.kali@dmu.ac.uk)

**Gabriela Folegato**  
MA Student

School of Design  
De Monfort University  
Leicester | UK

e: [p1111111@dmu.ac.uk](mailto:p1111111@dmu.ac.uk)

**“I hate group work. There is always a ‘know-it-all’ who can’t shut the hell up and tells everyone what to do. Meet ups to collaborate are a nightmare, and some don’t pull their weight but get the credit for doing nothing” (Student)**

**Why do  
students hate  
group work?**

**Do we understand  
what they are  
going through?**

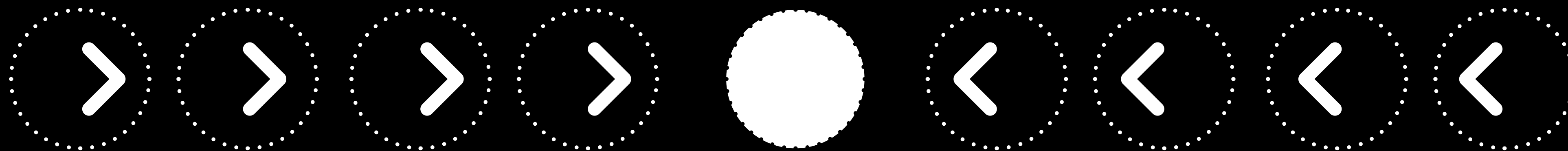
# TRAFFIC JAM

## Objective:

The goal of the game is to get **side A to side B** and **Side B to side A** all facing forward:

## Rules:

- No moving backwards
- A person can only move forward to an empty space
- A person can not “jump over” their own team mate
- Only one person may move at a time
- One spot per person, no sharing



SIDE A

SIDE B

**How was it?**

# **Intellectual vs Emotional skills**

**Task vs Process** O'Sullivan et al (1996)

# The complexity of emotional skills

emotional skills involve dealing  
with one's own emotion and  
establishing relationships with  
other people (Levin, 2005)

Assignment briefs

Group work

Assessment

working with new people  
feeling undervalued  
feeling unvalued (O'Sullivan, 1996)  
feeling angry (Levin, 2005)

# Working with new people

**“Most of the time, there is someone who wants a high grade and someone who doesn’t care. This leads to some people doing more work than others and in the end it just doesn’t seem fair”**

**(Student)**

# Feeling undervalued

**“It just never works fairly. The groups don’t gel often and personality clashes just make it suck so much. I was pushed to design pretty things. I was “allowed” to suggest research but on the whole, they kept me from trying anything. Just pretty graphics, for me!”**

**(Student)**

# Feeling unvalued

**“At first everything was ok, we were all friendly. However... after sometime I’ve felt like they don’t really like me. The others were quite outspoken. I felt as if they might not think that I can contribute enough.”**

**(Student)**

# Feeling angry

Terrible (Explicit language) idea if serious grading is involved. Two people have done absolutely nothing at all and they get to have the same grade as me?? They tell us “this is how it works in real life”, but no! That’s not how it works because in real life, when you go into a job, you will mostly likely end up with hard working people who actually give a (Explicit language).

(Student)

Another group member was never present for meetings, he never would respond on the Whatsup chat and only when things were due (like the same day) he’d be all in a rush to get everything done. He was doing the redesigns so we had a lot to depend on him for. I’m no good on the software that we used to do the design so I couldn’t do it myself. It was a complete disaster.

(Student)

It’s (Explicit language). I like to work on my own. Plain and simple. I don’t want anyone else to tell me how to do my job, and I don’t wish for the responsibility to tell people how to do theirs either.

(Student)



# Managing emotional these skills

INTERIOR DESIGN MASTERS/BBC IPLAYER

GROUP WORK **Workshop**

# Proposal

Developing  
Emotional skills

Understanding  
behaviour  
motivators & stressors



<https://for-managers.com/free-disc-test-professional/>

# DISCstyles™

## An Evaluation of Behavioural Styles

DISC is a simple, practical, easy to remember and universally applicable model. It focuses on individual patterns of external, observable behaviours and measures the intensity of characteristics using scales of directness and openness for each of the four styles:

Dominant, Inspirational, Stable, and Cautious (discgb, 2019)

feeling angry >

	Dominant	Inspirational	Stable	Cautious
<b>Tends to Act</b>	Assertive	Persuasive	Patient	Contemplative
<b>When in Conflict, this Style</b>	Demands Action	Attacks	Complies	Avoids
<b>Needs</b>	Control	Approval	Routine	Standards
<b>Primary Drive</b>	Independence	Interaction	Stability	Correctness
<b>Preferred Tasks</b>	Challenging	People related	Scheduled	Structured
<b>Comfortable with</b>	Being decisive	Social friendliness	Being part of a team	Order and planning
<b>Personal Strength</b>	Problem solver	Encourager	Supporter	Organizer
<b>Strength Overextended</b>	Preoccupation on goals over people	Speaking without thinking	Procrastination in addressing change	Over analyzing everything
<b>Personal Limitation</b>	Too direct and intense	Too disorganized and nontraditional	Too indecisive and indirect	Too detailed and impersonal
<b>Personal Wants</b>	Control, Variety	Approval, Less Structure	Routine, Harmony	Standards, Logic
<b>Personal Fear</b>	Losing	Rejection	Sudden Change	Being Wrong
<b>Blind Spots</b>	Being held accountable	Follow through on commitments	Embracing need for change	Struggle to make decisions without overanalyzing
<b>Needs to Work on</b>	Empathy, Patience	Controlling emotions Follow through	Being assertive when pressured	Worrying less about everything
<b>Measuring Maturity</b>	Giving up control	Objectively handling rejection	Standing up for self when confronted	Not being defensive when criticized
<b>Under Stress May Become</b>	Dictatorial Critical	Sarcastic Superficial	Submissive Indecisive	Withdrawn Headstrong
<b>Measures Worth by</b>	Impact or results Track record	Acknowledgments Compliments	Compatibility Contributions	Precision, Accuracy Quality of results

feeling angry >

# DISCstyles™

## Managing the emotional skills

D CHARACTERISTICS:	SO YOU SHOULD...
Concerned with being #1	Show them how to win, new opportunities
Think logically	Display reasoning
Want facts and highlights	Provide concise data
Strive for results	Agree on goal and boundaries, the support or get out of their way
Like personal choices	Allow them to "do their thing," within limits
Like changes	Vary routine
Prefer to delegate	Look for opportunities to modify their workload focus
Want others to notice accomplishments	Compliment them on what they've done
Need to be in charge	Let them take the lead, when appropriate, but give them parameters
Tendency towards conflict	If necessary, argue with conviction on points of disagreement, backed up with facts; don't argue on a "personality" basis

S CHARACTERISTICS:	SO YOU SHOULD...
Concerned with stability	Show how your idea minimizes risk
Think logically	Show reasoning
Want documentation and facts	Provide data and proof
Like personal involvement	Demonstrate your interest in them
Need to know step-by-step sequence	Provide outline and/or one-two-three instructions as you personally "walk them through"
Want others to notice their patient perseverance	Compliment them for their steady follow-through
Avoid risks and changes	Give them personal assurances
Dislike conflict	Act non-aggressively, focus on common interest or needed support
Accommodate others	Allow them to provide service or support for others
Look for calmness and peace	Provide a relaxing, friendly atmosphere
Enjoy teamwork	Provide them with a cooperative group
Want sincere feedback that they're appreciated	Acknowledge their easygoing manner and helpful efforts, when appropriate

I CHARACTERISTICS:	SO YOU SHOULD...
Concerned with approval and appearances	Show them that you admire and like them
Seek enthusiastic people and situations	Behave optimistically and provide upbeat setting
Think emotionally	Support their feelings when possible
Want to know the general expectations	Avoid involved details, focus on the "big picture"
Need involvement and people contact	Interact and participate with them
Like changes and innovations	Vary the routine; avoid requiring long-term repetition by them
Want others to notice THEM	Compliment them personally and often
Often need help getting organized	Do it together
Look for action and stimulation	Keep up a fast, lively, pace
Surround themselves with optimism	Support their ideas and don't poke holes in their dreams; show them your positive side
Want feedback that they "look good"	Mention their accomplishments, progress and your other genuine appreciation

C CHARACTERISTICS:	SO YOU SHOULD...
Concerned with aggressive approaches	Approach them in an indirect, nonthreatening way
Think logically	Show your reasoning
Seek data	Give data to them in writing
Need to know the process	Provide explanations and rationale
Utilize caution	Allow them to think, inquire and check before they make decisions
Prefer to do things themselves	When delegating, let them check procedures, and other progress and performance before they make decisions
Want others to notice their accuracy	Compliment them on their thoroughness and correctness when appropriate
Gravitate toward quality control	Let them assess and be involved in the process when possible
Avoid conflict	Tactfully ask for clarification and assistance you may need
Need to be right	Allow them time to find the best or "correct" answer, within available limits

# What's next?

**Can enhance students' cross-cultural capability and increase their sense of belonging** (HEA Report, 2011)

**Can be a useful life skills for when applying for jobs or working with global companies** (Levin, 2005)

**Effective tasks require interaction, collaboration and/or elicit multiple perspectives** (HEA Report, 2011)

**What's next?**

**No random groping**  
**Emotional skills**  
**Tools and rules**