

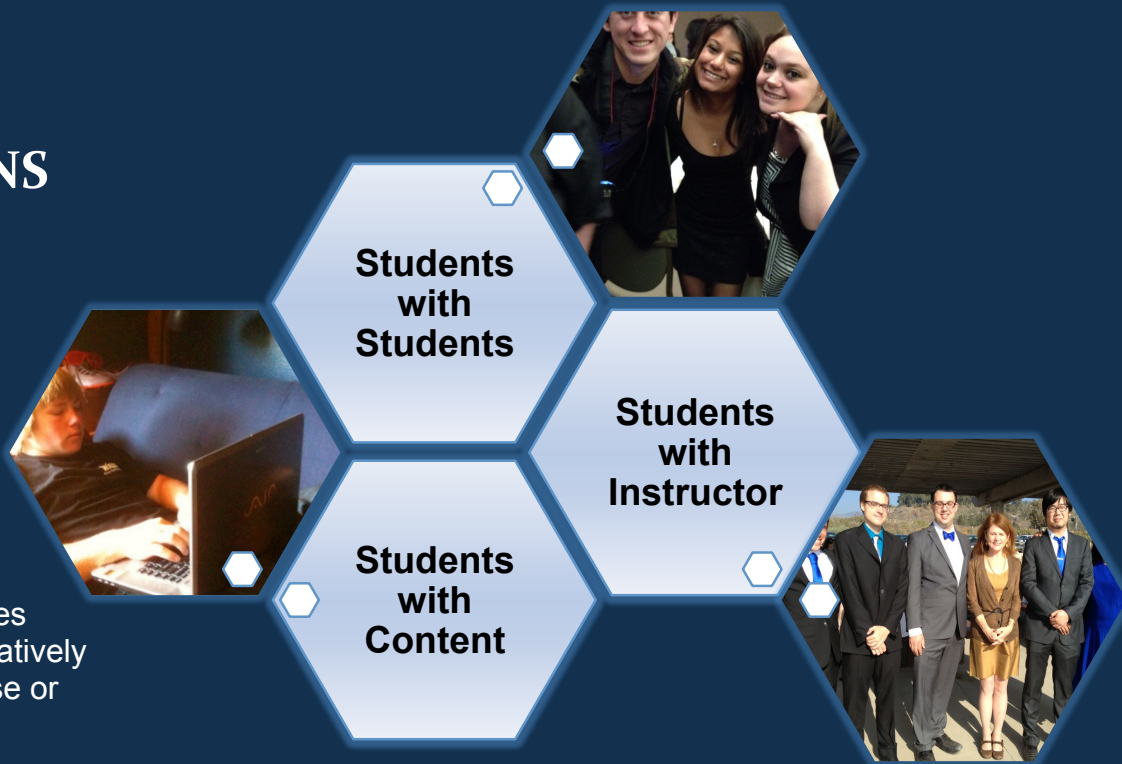
CHAOS AND CONNECTION IN ONLINE GROUP WORK



Joanna M. Miller, Ed.D. Pamela Yeagley, Ph.D.
Strengthening Student Success Conference
Oct. 9, 2014 10:30 a.m

CREATING CONNECTIONS ONLINE

Group work online requires students to work collaboratively toward a common purpose or objective with a graded assessment.



TODAY'S OBJECTIVE:

- To explore the value of group work and experiment with application to understand the what, why and how of collaborative student work online.
- Citation format:
- Where assertions have come from published studies, those citations are noted, and listed in references.
- Where findings are anecdotal or based on observations, no citation is present but the presenter will orally disclose.

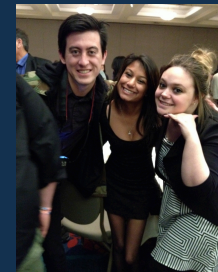
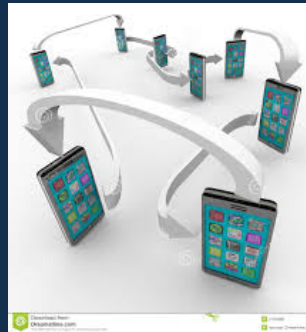
WHAT THOUGHTS COME TO MIND WITH THIS IMAGE?



Text to: 22333
1129787 (your word)

[https://
www.polleverywhere.com/
free_text_polls/
Jo4oKJvTo7E036](https://www.polleverywhere.com/free_text_polls/Jo4oKJvTo7E036)

WHAT THOUGHTS COME TO MIND WITH THESE IMAGES AS PARTICIPANTS IN GROUP WORK ONLINE?



- Text 22333
- 1129788
- https://www.polleverywhere.com/free_text_polls/FBKRchadxogwFA3

SOME STUDENTS HATE IT: FROM SUMMER 2014

- I also found it difficult working as a group. I would have much preferred doing everything myself, coordinated with a group and formulating a collective opinion that might not necessarily be your own or of interest to you is difficult with people who you have only met for a few minutes.
- The discussions were useful so that I felt a connection with my classmates although we would only meet once. With that said, I had a very difficult time with the group project. I felt my group to be very difficult to work with and I think that stems from the fact that we never really met in class.

BUT SOME LOVE IT TOO: SAME CLASS

- I enjoyed all aspects of this class, even the group work, which I was dreading.
- I was wary in the beginning because this is my first online class & it had a group project. You responded very promptly to emails & I feel that there was still a "human touch" to this class even though we primarily interacted with each other online.
- I liked how involved everyone was in the class. I really liked the Sunday Meetings and Discussions because it brought the class together. Overall I really enjoyed this class and I would recommend it to anyone.
- I love how Professor was super into the class. She really cared about her students and wanted us to do well. The fact that she met me at Starbucks to help me get back on track was really awesome!

MORE INSTRUCTOR TIME INVESTMENT

- Definitely in the beginning!
 - Setup of groups
 - Careful setup of assignment
 - Explicit directions
 - Frequent early monitoring and contact
 - Occasional intervention
 - Lots of exchanges with students through emails, online office hours, even an occasional Starbucks meeting!

SO WHY GROUP WORK ONLINE?

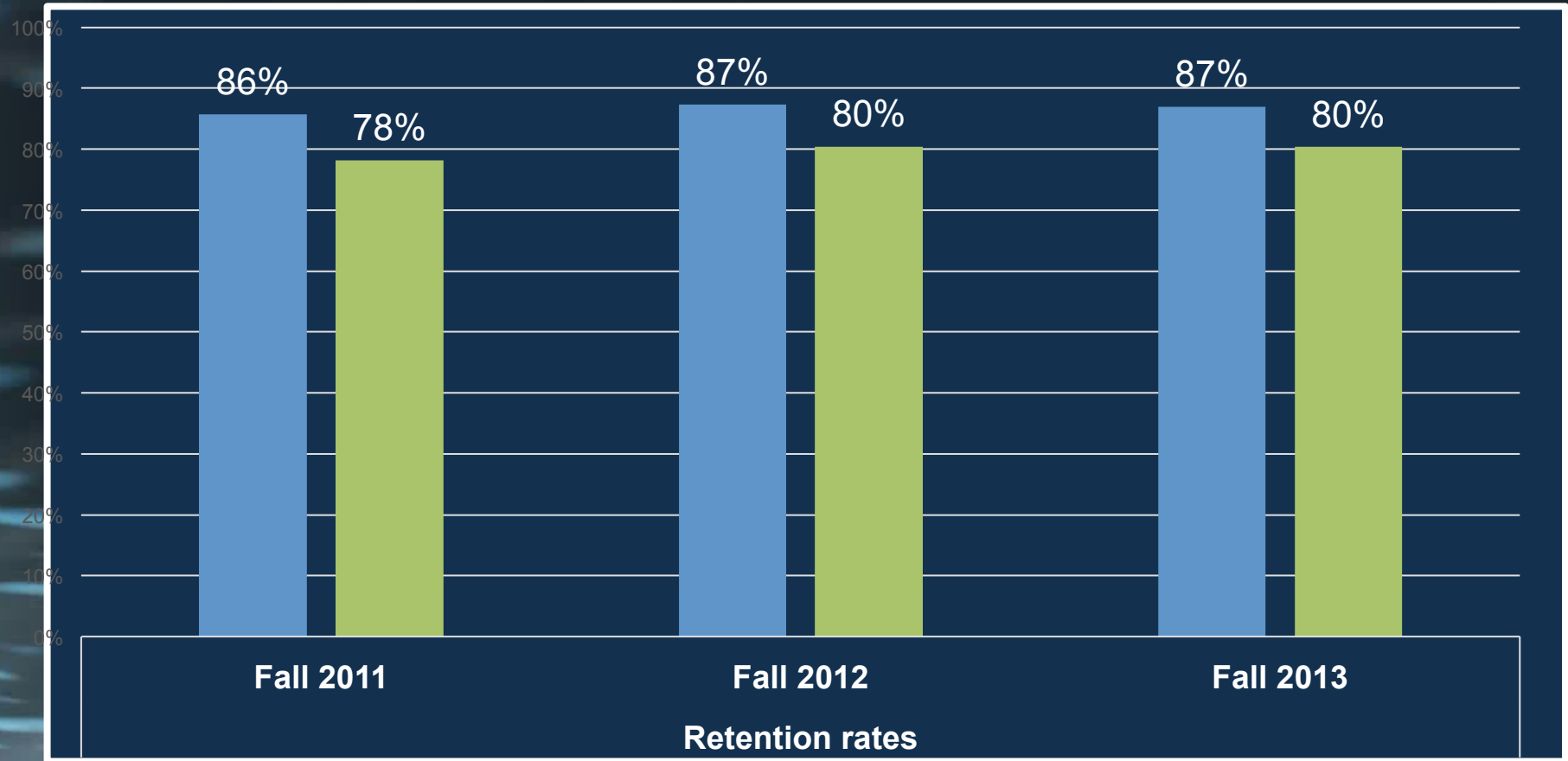
- Student engagement comes through connections
- Group collaboration as a learning outcome and valued real-world skill (Burning glass labor data; program advisory board)
- Governor's & legislative initiatives, spotlight on online education.
- "At the foundation of any quality instruction and educational process is the relationship between the instructor and student" (CCC Distance Education Report, 2013).
- Accreditation: Checking for 'regular and effective contact' with instructor and opportunities for student interaction (ACCJC Accreditation Standards, 2012)
- Student success – enough in and of itself!!!

WHY IS ENGAGEMENT ONLINE IMPORTANT?

- About 11% of enrollments in California are online
- One million course enrollments online in 2012
- One in every five students is now taking a class online
- Student Success rates (C or better) online are 11 to 14% lower than onsite.

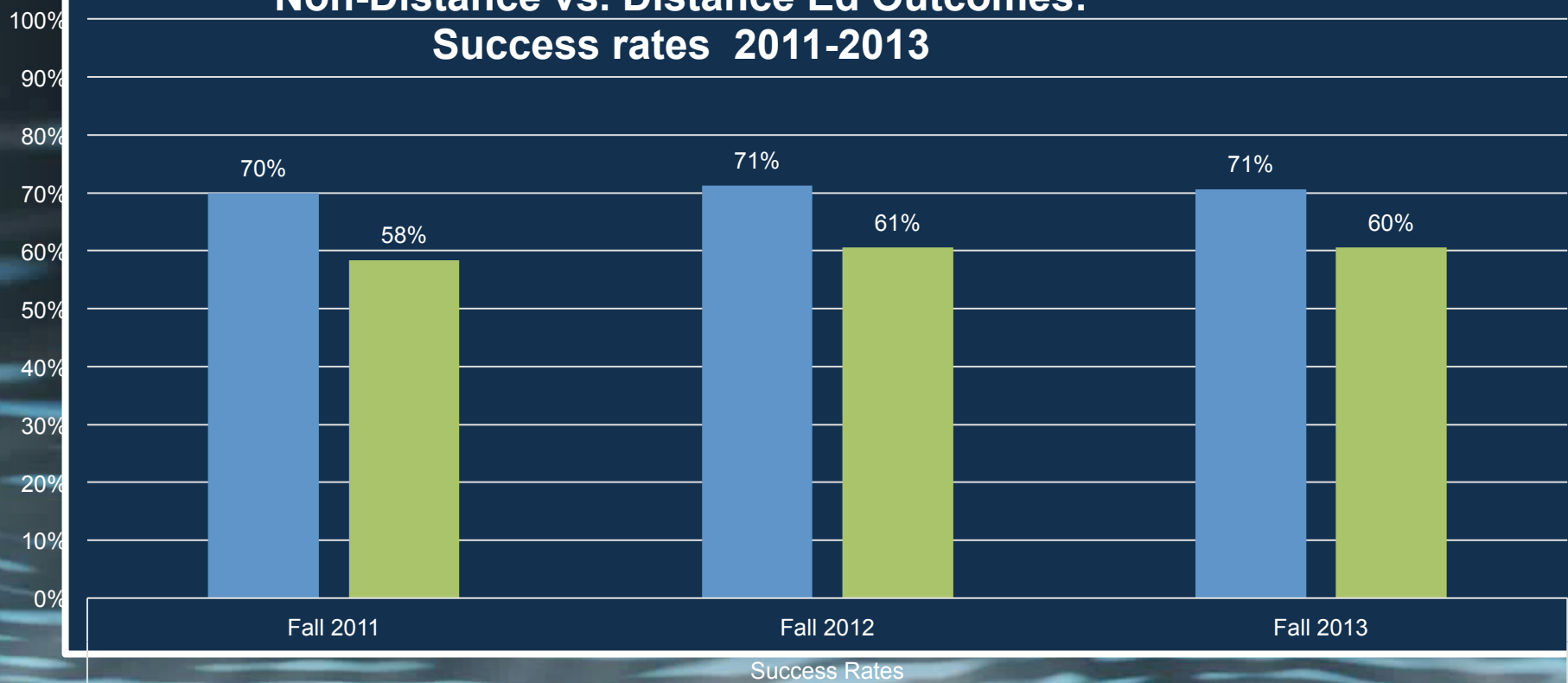
Public Policy Institute of California, 2014

Non-Distance vs. Distance Ed Outcomes: Retention Rates - 2011-2013



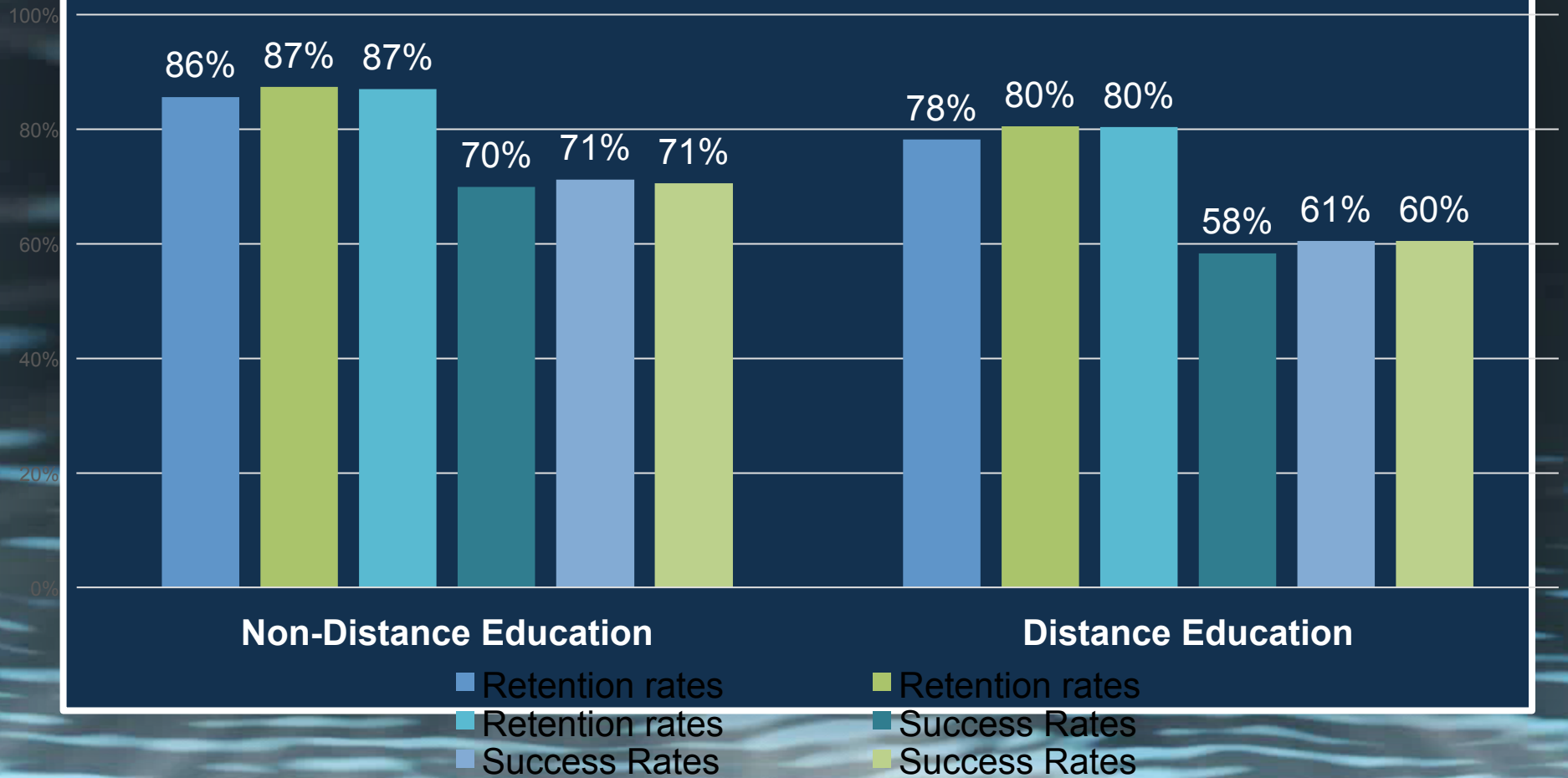
■ Non-Distance Education ■ Distance Education

Non-Distance vs. Distance Ed Outcomes: Success rates 2011-2013



■ Non-Distance Education ■ Distance Education

Non-Distance vs. Distance Ed Outcomes - 2011-2013



GROUP WORK, ENGAGEMENT, AND SUCCESS

Group work online was a statistically significant predictor for engagement and success in a 2012 study at a California community college.

Study included 570 individual students surveyed as well as 100 courses examined by the researcher, integrated and measured against institutional success rates by course and by individual. (Miller, 2012)

Numerous studies now in online group work point to greater engagement & **SUCCESS**. (Astin, 1997; Dixon, 2010; Swan et al, 2000; Thurmond & Wambach, 2004, Tello, 2010; Tinto, 1987, 1997, 2004, 2007).

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND SUCCESS

- The near-unanimous consensus is that students, whether seated inside classrooms or attending online, thrive on interaction with their instructors and fellow students, which encourages them to participate, engage and persist. Interaction and a sense of community are keys to completion and success.

– (Chickering & Gamson, 1987; Chickering & Ehrmann, 1996; Dixson, 2010; Fazioli, 2009; Tello, 2002; Tinto, 1993).

HOW TO PUT IT IN ACTION

- The practical:
 - A take-home electronic of:
 - Tips, Tricks and Trip-ups in Online Group work
 - Simulating today with CccConfer since we do not have an easy way to self-add into a demo course shell
 - Synchronous element not required for this group work

THREE BIG PRINCIPLES:

- Assignment
- Interaction
- Assessment

THE ASSIGNMENT

Groups:

- Self-select or assign?
 - Two schools of thought; more study needed here (Weimer, 2014)
 - Anecdotally, self-assignment is great for top-performing groups of students or those who know each other, etc. Works poorly for shy students, inexperienced, at-risk students.
- Preliminary discussion:
 - Let students get familiar before the larger assignment (Wise Consortium, 2014, Weimer, 2014)

Simple to start:

- Not the course's most complex assignment
- Clear instructions in multiple modes:
 - written overview, video instructions, step-by-step at intervals
- Divide work, possible roles, and show examples of work plan

INTERACTION AND INTERVENTION

- Monitor, manage, interact early on
 - Crucial to ensure no one feels abandoned, confused, or left out (Wise Consortium, 2014, Weimer, 2014)
 - Reassign to new group if needed
 - Less of this if group is self-assigned
 - Create group for those unresponsive and then reach out!
 - Graded participation in preliminary discussion (Dixson, 2010)



ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

- Grade weight
 - Group work does not outweigh individual work
- Group work assessment (Wise Consortium, 2014, Weimer, 2014)
 - Students evaluate self and others at conclusion (adds sense of fairness)

Group members (Select level 1-5, with 5 highest)	Level of contribution	Quality of contribution	Timeliness of contribution
Self (name)			
Name A			
Name B			
Name C			

YOUR ASSIGNMENT TODAY: SIGN IN, INTRODUCE, JOIN A GROUP!

- Please introduce yourself and say hello to your classmates.
- State one of your interests, or one interesting thing about yourself
- Example: Hi, Everyone. I'm Joanna. I love torturing myself with online group work! (jk) Or I love hiking, and yes, walks on the beach!
- Then, you'll be assigned to a room/ group with others.

HERE WE GO!

- Sign on to your BlackboardCollaborate app that you downloaded, or go to: CCCConfer.org
- **CLICK: TEACH & CONFER**
- Find our meeting:

Title: Joanna Miller - Chaos and Connection in Group Work Online
College: Moorpark College

<http://cccconfer.org/MyConfer/AllMeetings.aspx?Type=PR>

Passcode: 364700

GROUP ASSIGNMENT: APPLY THE CRITICAL PROCESS

- **FIRST: Choose an important issue** to critically analyze. For the purposes of time, your group has chosen:
 - The conference hotel food and beverages
- **NEXT: Divide up the work.** (example: Raphael does Step 1; Cynthia Step 2; Rhonna Step 3; Stephen Step 4. Raphael reviews final work before posting. All posts by in by 11:30.)

THEN: Start the Process: Go to <http://tinyurl.com/qhx7cq2>
(<http://tinyurl.com/qhx7cq2>)
to begin work on your Google doc

APPLY THE CRITICAL PROCESS

- Step 1: Describe: Describe the issue you have chosen. Without adding your opinion or values, discuss the issue, question or problem.
- Step 2: Analyze: Critically analyze the issue, question or problem. If you were to research this issue, what would be the factors you would consider? What are the pros and cons?
- Step 3: Interpret & Evaluate: State why this issue is important and add your opinion, with justification.
- Step 4: Engage: What should be done about this? For your engagement, write a comment, speak to a concerned party or post a note on your social media page about the event.

TIPS

- A tolerance for ambiguity; let the chaos happen, then reign it in.
- To choose or to randomly assign – Needs more study
- Multiple assignments or continuous groups – creates continuity
 - Start with a discussion to choose topic and establish work plan
- Manage and monitor early and often
- Discuss good practices or show example of dividing work
- Stress the value of teamwork as a necessary workplace skill
- Monitor groups- have a plan for those who lose or have inactive members
- Graded participation in preliminary discussion
- Let them present their projects and run the discussion
- Include a graded assessment of self and group members at the end of the assignment

TRICKS

- Create your group assignment dropbox with discussions attached
 - Saves time in not creating individually in some LMSs.
 - But think through the name ahead as all share that name
- Set up the Google docs yourself so that you have access and post the link
 - Also good for deans and accreditation since they want to see interaction
- After the Discussions are set up, add the Google doc link to each discussion when you comment; combines interaction with new info for students
- Always have a back-up plan!

TRIP-UPS ... OHHHH WHAT A LIST

- Chaos is fun when you control it; chaos is killer if the assignment itself is confusing or if there are glitches, an incorrect due date, students assigned to two groups, a server crash...
- Negative students can turn a group sour; be sure to respond and react quickly to these issues.
- Absent students can make others feel over-burdened or unvalued. Reassign those students.
- Deadlines: Too tight and students freak out. Too long, and they check out. For a simple assignment, one week to discuss and plan, one week to execute.

SUMMARY: CONNECTIONS COUNT!

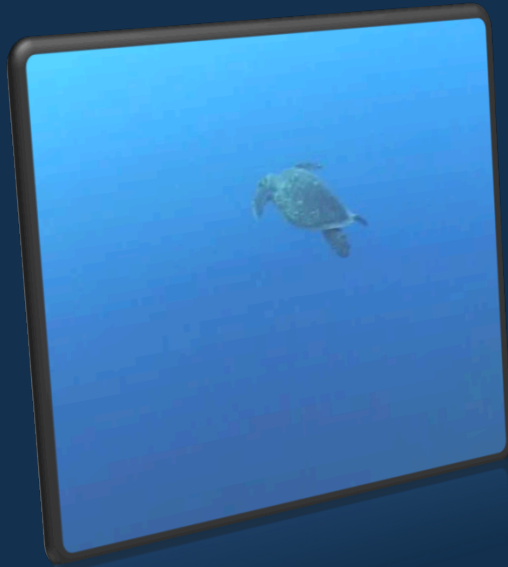


- Group work online can be chaotic
- Group work online connects students with content, instructors, each other
- Intense for instructor at first; afterward, students help students.
- Connections lead to engagement
- Engagement leads to student success!

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**COMPUTERS DON'T CONNECT PEOPLE;
PEOPLE CONNECT PEOPLE**



“For questions, comments, references, please
contact JoannaMiller@Vcccd.edu”