

Activity 1.4 Understanding Your Identity in Collaboration¹

Description

Thinking about identity can be complicated. There are many different kinds of identity ranging from personal to social or perceived to ascribed. This activity encourages participants to think about what type of person or identity they bring to a discussion and what type of identity they would ideally like to personify in a discussion group.

Learning Goals

- Recognize that all discussion participants bring and withhold parts of their identity.
- Identify the characteristics that one would like to put forward (or hold back) in group discussion.

Practice (50 minutes)

Step One	<i>Share the following prompt with participants:</i> Imagine that you have the opportunity to live on another planet with an alien population. The interview process requires that you pack 5 items into a capsule that best represent you as a person. You decide which 5 aspects of your identity are most important and how you might represent them as objects in the capsule. Write down your answers.	10 min
Step Two	<i>In small groups or pairs, share and explain your capsule items.</i> Explore how these identity traits show up (or don't show up) in how you participate in the group discussions. When are they most present and when are they held back in reserve?	20 min
Step Three	<i>In a large group, look at these items as a collection and debrief.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do these items work well together or complement one another? When might there be tensions between the characteristics or	20 min

¹ **Citation for this activity:** Shannon Hartman (2023). Understanding Your Identity in Collaboration. In Hartman, Britt, & Byrd (Eds). *The Interactivity Foundation Collaborative Discussion Toolkit*. Retrieved from <https://www.collaborativediscussionproject.com/module-1-introduction-to-collaborat>

	<p>traits that these items represent?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How do we know which parts of our identity we want to put forth in a collaborative discussion and which parts to hold back? Under what circumstances do we feel safe to put forth more of ourselves?	
<p>Tip: this discussion can lead into discussing best practices within a collaborative discussion experience. It can be used with activity 1.3 Anticipating Conflict and Forming Group Guidelines</p>		

Reflection

- After hearing from other participants, what did you learn about what aspects of their identity are most important to them? How might you revise your capsule now that you have had the benefit of thinking about this with others?
- We hear that it is important to show up as our “authentic” self, but under what circumstance is that safe or ideal? Under what circumstances might you hold back and share only part of yourself?

Practice Journal

This week, observe your own participation in a group discussion or in a group activity. What person do you share with others? Which identity traits do you share and which ones do you hold back? How does this affect the experience (for you and for others)?

Dive Deeper: Additional Resources