

Academic Team Challenges

Debrief and Reflection Guide

“We do not learn from experience...we learn from reflecting on experience.”

~ Dewey 1938

When planning for an Academic Team Challenge, be sure to allow 10-15 minutes at the end for a whole group debrief and reflection. Have students sit in a circle where they can see, listen to, and respond to each other.

Debriefing questions should always be connected to both the behaviors observed and goals of the group. The following topics and sample questions are intended as guidelines. Choose and adapt a few questions to meet your needs. Keep in mind that the most important thing is that students leave with an understanding of how they contributed as an individual, how they worked as a team, what others thought and felt during the activity and how this activity is relevant to their lives.

What? *Lead with questions about the actual facts about the experience.*

About the Success of the Team

Were you successful?

How do you know?

What does (success/not being successful) look like, feel like, sound like?

About the Planning

How well did your team plan?

Did everyone understand the plan? How do you know?

Did the group practice the plan?

Was the plan carried out or did you change it as you went along? Why?

Concerning Communication

Did your team communicate well? How do you know? What did good communication look like, feel like and sound like?

Did everyone feel that his/her ideas were heard? How do you know?

Were there any disagreements? How were they handled?

Involving Teamwork

Did the group support one another in achieving the goal?

How did the group use each other's skills?

Did your team have any problems? How did the team handle the problems?

About the Observed Group Dynamics

Use your observations of group dynamics to foster improved cooperative group behavior. Some of the barriers to look for that get in the way of productive groups are:

- ▶ Students who are left out or took themselves out of an activity
- ▶ Students are not listening to each other or being open to other's opinions
- ▶ A student is expected to "know" all of the answers
- ▶ A student thinks that they "know" all of the answers

Possible questions to ask:

Did everybody feel like they were really a part of their team and that they were listened to?

Did everyone feel like they had an opportunity to share all of their ideas?

Did anyone notice that maybe everyone was not participating, contributing, being listened to?

So What? *Participants discuss their feelings, ideas, and analysis of the experience.*

How did doing this make you feel? Why?

Why do you think we did this?

What did you learn from doing this activity? What did you learn about yourself? What did you learn about others?

What did you like about learning this way? Why?

Now What? *How will they think or act in the future as a result of this experience?*

If you had a chance to do this activity again, what is one thing that you would do the same? What is one thing that you would change?

What else could be learned this way?

What did you learn or do today that might help you in some other part of your life?

If time allows it is helpful and productive to have the group redo the activity with their "new learning/understanding."