High-Impact Educational Practices' Influence on the Emerging Values Model: Group Work Impact

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Abstract. This research examines the impact of various high-impact educational practices integrated in different group elements (groups course, in-class group activities, and a learning community) on student perceived group work experience related to the Emerging Values model. The Emerging Values model found academic group work to be beneficial for students, specifically associated with peer value and group work values. Different types of high-impact educational practices related to groups are examined using the Emerging Values model. Implications for teaching group work and personal and professional growth in group work are examined. The integration of group work in the higher education classroom and application to professional environments is discussed extensively.

Keywords: group work, high-impact practices (HIPs), values model

Teaching faculty are persistent in their efforts to determine the most effective methods to help students gain knowledge and skills towards their profession. Many have found high-impact educational practices to benefit students learning (Finley & McNair, 2013; Kinzie, 2010; Kuh, 2008). Research has also found that students report benefits to participation in group work, resulting in the Emerging Values model (Williamson-Ashe & Ericksen, 2017). This research considers various group high-impact practices using the Emerging Values model as a lens. Do certain types of group high-impact practices result in more values associated with the EV model? Do different HIPs create different outcomes related to the EV Model? What is the impact on students' personal and professional development?

It is apparent that various educational methods are used to teach social work including experiential activities, journals, small-group activities, and lectures (Strozier, 2008). Group work is often used in the classroom as a teaching tool to enhance a students' academic achievement and experience in group socialization (Kolb, 1984; Humphrey, 2014). Group work is an essential skill for the practicing social worker and noted in four of the nine competencies required for social work students to master (Council on Social Work Education, 2015). Educators are responsible for guiding students in the knowledge and understanding of group application, so they become effective professionals. Social work students need to obtain the necessary group work skills to become proficient group facilitators.

High-Impact Practices

High-impact Practices (HIPs) have been found to be beneficial for student success (Carini et al., 2006; Kinzie, 2010). Educational practices with high-impact include engaging environments and practices such as internships, learning communities,

undergraduate research, collaborative projects, service-learning, and capstone projects (Kuh, 2008). Finley and McNair (2013) found high-impact practices greatly benefit underserved populations and Cohen (2010) reported the use of experiential learning in the classroom to be an effective method to teach group process and development. The high-impact practices in learning communities enhance social justice education for social work students (Ericksen & Williamson-Ashe, 2019). Incorporating these and other high-impact practices in the classroom can benefit student learning.

In-class group activities have been demonstrated to enhance comprehension about the group process (Humphrey, 2014). Poort et al. (2020) assert trust between group members is essential for group functioning and performance. Incorporating group activities within the class setting has been found to be effective in cultivating impartiality and supporting work with diverse group members (Ericksen, 2019). Results with STEM students demonstrate the inclusion of structured team related course assignments lead to students' confidence in various non-academic professional skill development (Cruz et al., 2020). Likewise, cooperative learning and problem-based learning contribute to a team approach that is transferable to many professions (Michaelsen et al., 2014).

Emerging Values Model

The original Baylor College of Medicine Value Teams Research found the instructional method of team learning as highly appreciated by students within the psychiatry discipline (Levine et al., 2004). Specifically, Levine et al. (2004) determined that team learning is beneficial for communication, problem solving, and student engagement. Levine et al. (2004) suggested an examination of different disciplines would be beneficial, leading to the subsequent research with social work students (Williamson-Ashe & Ericksen, 2017; Williamson-Ashe & Ericksen 2019). Williamson-Ashe and Ericksen (2017) distributed the Amended Values Team Survey (VTS) to social work students which demonstrated emerging themes related to students' perceived value from participation in group work. These findings resulted in the development of the Emerging Values Model (EV) (see Figure 1) (Williamson-Ashe and Ericksen, 2017). The Emerging Values Model (EV) represents how academic group work was beneficial to students, specifically asserting merit associated with *peer value* and *group work value* (Williamson-Ashe & Ericksen, 2017). The EV Model was developed based on graduate student participation in group assignments (Williamson-Ashe & Ericksen, 2017) and was recently validated for the peer and group work values reducing the categories from four to three, specifically *peer values* related to *skills category (SC)* and *collaboration category (CC)* and *group work values* related to *decision-making and problem-solving category (DP)* (Williamson-Ashe & Ericksen, 2019). The EV Model asserts group participants report several *values* from their group experiences.

Figure 1

The Emerging Values Model (EV Model)
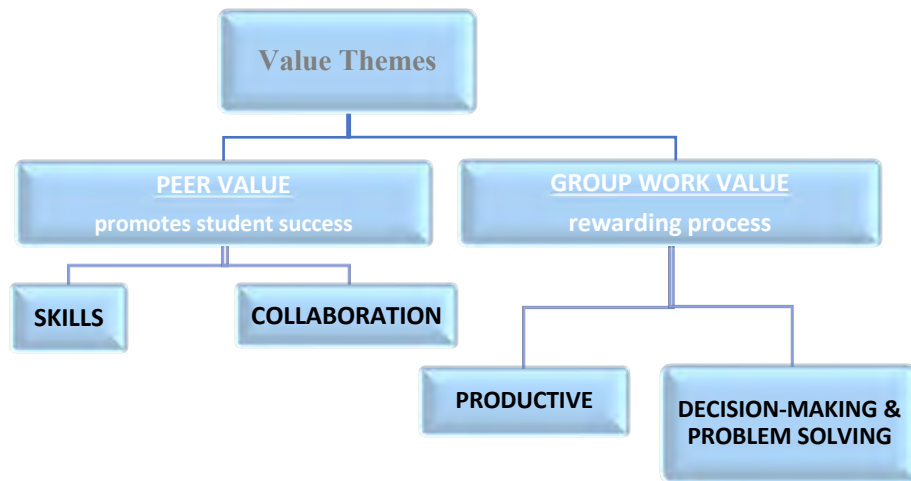
As the Emerging Values Model (EV) suggests, student participants reported *peer values* and *group work values* through their involvement in course group assignments. Students included specific skills they gained and the value of collaboration with their peers as valuable in their success as students. Additionally, student participants found group work to be valuable in decision-making and problem solving (Williamson-Ashe & Ericksen, 2019).

Context: Group Work Course Elements Application to the EV Model

This research was conducted to examine the impact of various types of high-impact education group work practices (ranging from an entire group course to integrating group activities within a course) on the Emerging Values model in the classroom. Various group work high-impact educational practices were implemented including, specific group work content, in-class group activities, group assignments, and class group experiential activities outside the classroom. These results can inform educators about any connections between the implementation of HIPs and specific group work values related to the EV Model.

Methods

Sample

The participants in this research included students attending a minority-serving four year institution in the southeastern part of the United States with a student

population of approximately 5,500 at the time of this research. The convenience sample included students enrolled in three different social work courses: Applied Social Work Skills with Groups course (a graduate level advanced groups course), and two different sections from the undergraduate sophomore level core course Human Behavior and the Social Environment I (one regular class and one learning community class in which students with common interests participated in activities together, outside the classroom, related to the course content). The selection of these courses was based on the intention to examine the outcomes across curricular programs (graduate and undergraduate courses) and different high-impact educational practices (specifically different group elements present) in each class and application to the Emerging Values Model. Each of these courses offered varying degrees of exposure to group work concepts/elements and application. All students enrolled in these sections of the courses were invited to participate voluntarily in the research (56 students invited) and provided with a consent form approved by the Institutional Review Board for the campus. Students were informed their participation was voluntary without repercussions.

Amended Value Teams Survey

The Amended Value Teams Survey (VTS) was administered as a pre- and posttest to those students willing to participate during the second week of classes (after the course drop date) and during the final week for the course. The Amended VTS included the original 14 statements with 5 point Likert scale responses ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree and incorporated demographic information and three descriptive questions (including group knowledge level and one benefit and one challenge related to group participation based on this course).

Data Collection

Data were gathered from the three separate cohorts, representing different integrations of high-impact educational group work practices (group course cohort, in-class group activities cohort, and a learning community group cohort). Together the total sample, from 56 invited potential individuals, included 43 (77%) participants whose self-reported demographics were as follows: 4 males (9%) and 39 females (91%) and 36 African American/Black (84%), 3 Caucasian/White (7%), and 4 individuals (9%) who declined to share their race/ethnicity. There were 19 graduate students (44%) and 24 undergraduate students (56%). The Applied Social Work Skills with Groups course (group course cohort) contained master's level students in social work, and 19 of the 20 students participated in the research. Undergraduate course attendance was a challenge which impacted the ability to gather data from these courses. Several students notified the professor they were ill and not in attendance the date the posttest was administered in class. For the in-class activities course cohort, 20 students completed the pre-test while only 16 students participated in the posttest (out of a potential 22 students). Eight students in the learning community group cohort completed the posttest compared to the 10 who completed the pretest (out of a potential 14 student participants). This resulted in the 43 total student participants.

Treatment: High-Impact Practices

Each cohort was exposed to different high-impact group work practices.

In-class group activities cohort

The Human Behavior and the Social Environment I (HBSE) course incorporated in-class group activities. The sophomore undergraduate students in this core required course discussed the dynamics of systems and impact on the development and well-being of humans from preconception through childhood. Throughout the semester, these students participated in three specific in-class group activities. These activities required small group discussion and application of the course material during class time. The first in-class activity included the review of a case study with group discussion and analysis of the possible interventions using the concept approaches/models examined in class. The second course lecture specifically focused on the impact of the community and the importance of group work including the development/facilitation of class rules as a demonstration of group development. The final in-class activity examined the impact of trauma on childhood development, including a small group discussion (4-5 people) to determine potential trauma-informed care interventions for a specific case.

Learning community cohort

The Human Behavior and the Social Environment I learning community course (Learning Community Cohort) included all of the in-class group work engagement mentioned above in the regular non-LC section of the HBSE course with the inclusion of two additional co-curricular activities outside the class to enhance the classroom content. Cocurricular activities consisted of a daylong visit to the General Assembly (the state capital) and meeting with elected representatives to advocate for a particular area of need and participation in a de-stress on-campus bowling activity. Students prepared for the visit to the General Assembly in small groups, developing a political issue to research and practicing a 30-second elevator speech that was delivered during the group meeting with the state delegate. The learning community faculty participated in the casual de-stress bowling event located at the campus bowling alley the week before final exams.

Groups course cohort

The Applied Social Work Skills with Groups course (Groups Course Cohort) was a graduate level advanced groups elective course. Students participating in this graduate course had taken a general introduction to group work course as a prerequisite. The content for this elective course focused on the assessment, synthesis, and application of group work with a special emphasis on at-risk populations. All graduate students completed a course assignment that entailed participation in a task group for planning and delivery of a student determined event to celebrate social work month. The overall course emphasis was group work, student engagement in group assignments, and a group simulation experience each

week with both facilitation and participation in a group. Although students were not expected to pretend to be a part of the presented population (e.g., alcoholics, children of divorce), they engaged in the group activities however they related to the content with processing following their participation (both during class and through journaling). For example, if the group activity was designed for the population of grieving parents, students were expected to participate in the experiential group and relate to the content the group facilitator shared such as the emerging theme "loss."

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed to compare qualitative (narrative data responses) and quantitative results (pre-post test results for the Amended Values Team Survey) to determine differences within group participants scores (Amended Values Team Survey pre-post scores) and between the different groups (groups course, in-class group activities, and learning community). A paired-samples *t*-test was conducted to compare all three cohorts pre-post self-ratings following participation in the respective course. The participants' responses to the survey/inventory were compared with the narrative data responses to determine any similarities and differences. As Rubin and Babbie (2017) suggest, comparative analysis of the qualitative data included coding of the data and identification of emerging themes with patterns. Initially, open coding was used to analyze the data while axial coding followed to examine any reoccurring patterns and determine the emerging themes from the data (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Findings/Results

The Amended Values Team Survey Likert scale items and open-ended responses indicated an impact from participation in the various high-impact practices and courses (group course cohort, group activities cohort, and learning community cohort). The EV Model constructs and the matching prominent high-impact practice results are discussed below.

Quantitative Findings

EV Model Construct, Peer Value: Collaboration

Both qualitative and quantitative data support the EV model construct, peer value: collaboration. The related Likert scale survey question on the Amended Values Team Survey was "The ability to collaborate with my peers will be necessary if I am to be successful as a student" (Question #1, Amended Values Team Survey). This survey question was found to be the only question significant for all three cohorts (experiential learning, learning community, and in-class activities).

Specifically, a paired-samples *t*-test was conducted to compare all cohort group pre-collaboration rating and post-collaboration rating after attending the respective course. There was a statistically significant difference in the total combined cohort scores for pre-collaboration rating ($M = 4$, $SD = .857$) and post-collaboration rating

(M = 4.512, SD = .436) following participation in their respective course t(43) = -3.078, p = .01. The total combined cohort results from the survey question indicated there is a statistical significance in the pre- and post-collaboration rating scores for the self-reported ratings. In addition, a paired-samples t-test was conducted to compare each of the cohorts separately for pre-collaboration rating and post-collaboration rating after course attendance. There was not a significant difference in the learning community cohort scores; however, there was a significant difference in the group course cohort scores for pre-collaboration rating (M = 4.05, SD = .576) and post-collaboration rating (M = 4.47, SD = .46) following participation in the graduate level course t(19) = -1.80, p = .09. For the in-class activities cohort, there was also a significant difference in the scores for pre-collaboration rating (M = 3.85, SD = 1.128) and post-collaboration rating (M = 4.44, SD = .59) following participation in the in-class activities cohort t(16) = -1.99, p = .068. Table 1 represents the mean difference for self-rating of the importance of collaboration for student success.

Table 1

Mean Difference within groups for self-rating of ability to collaborate with peers to be successful as a student as reported by The Amended Values Team Survey (Question #1)

Subjects	Pretest mean	Posttest mean	Mean Difference	t	Df	p
Group Course Cohort	4.05 Variance- 0.576	4.47 Variance- 0.46	.42	-1.80	18	.09
Learning Community Cohort	4.2 v- 0.76	4.75 v-0.188	.55	-1.744	7	.13
In-Class Activities Cohort	3.85 v-1.128	4.44 v-0.496	.59	-1.987	15	.068
All Cohorts	4 v-0.857	4.512 v-0.436	.51	-3.078	39	.01

Note. p<.10

Statistical significance was found for Survey item 1, "The ability to collaborate with my peers will be necessary if I am to be successful as a student," suggesting students recognize the necessity of collaborating with peers in order to be successful in their academic endeavors. This finding suggests that all cohort student participants viewed their collaboration with peers as an important part of being

successful as a student. The *Peer Value* and, specifically, *Collaboration* is found to be a significant prominent value expressed between all three high-impact practice cohorts, supporting the Emerging Values Model (EV).

EV Model Construct, Peer value: Skills

The survey item #3, "ability to work with my peers is a valuable skill," was found to be statistically significantly different for pre-post scores, as found in Table 2. The amended values team survey question 10 was related to the EV Model *peer value: skills*. For the group course cohort posttest, 12 (63%) of the respondents noted they agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "It is important to volunteer to lead groups" (survey # 10) with 7 neither agreeing or disagreeing on the Likert scale. Similarly, out of the in-class activities cohort, 8 (50%) of the respondents selected agree or strongly agree while 8 respondents (50%) remained neutral selecting "neither agree or disagree" with the statement "It is important to volunteer to lead groups." These findings are consistent with Williamson-Ashe and Ericksen's (2017) original analysis (11 [55%] of 20 participants selected agree or strongly agree), demonstrating supportive evidence and consistency in the EV Model.

EV Model Construct, Group Work Value: Decision Making and Problem Solving

All three high-impact practice cohorts indicated decision making and problem solving as an emerging group work value. The Amended Value Survey item number five (5), "Solving problems in a group is an effective practice I have learned," was directly related to the *group work value: problem solving* EV Model construct. The significant difference in pre-post scores for the group work course cohort demonstrated this prominence (see Table 1). For the learning community cohort, all respondents (100%) indicated support for the survey statement 5, "Solving problems in a group is an effective practice I have learned," with 4 responding "strongly agree" and 4 responding "agree." Similar findings emerged for the in-class activities cohort with 94% of respondents indicating "strongly agree" (6 respondents) or agree" (9 respondents) to survey item #5. For survey question 9, "Solving problems in groups leads to better decisions than solving problems alone," 75% of learning community cohort participants were in agreement, 63% of in-class activities cohort participants were in agreement, and 72% of groups course cohort respondents were in agreement. These results exceed the 50% of student participants in agreement found during the original research (Williamson-Ashe & Ericksen, 2017), further supporting the EV Model constructs.

Qualitative Findings

Using systematic comparison several themes emerged in the data. Emerging themes included *collaboration* comprising subcategories of *camaraderie* and *extra help/assistance* (EV Model- Peer Value: Collaboration), *new perspectives* and *ability to work with peers* (EV Model- Peer Value: Skills), and *knowledge gain* related to the subcategories of *groups*, *general knowledge* and *problem solving* (EV Model- Group Work Values: Decision Making & Problem Solving). These emerging themes

within the group high-impact practice cohorts match several EV Model constructs (see Table 2).

Table 2

Emerging Value Model (EV Model) Constructs related to Emerging Themes within Group High-Impact Practice Cohorts

Emerging Values Model (EV) construct:	Emerging Themes:	High-Impact Practices Cohort:	Data/Quotes
Peer Value Collaboration	*Peer Collaboration:* Extra Help /Assistance Camaraderie	Experiential Learning-Group Course Cohort	One benefit was "camaraderie"
		Learning Community Cohort	"Having extra help with work" "getting to know classmates"
		In-Class Activities Cohort	"you get more work done in time" "Furthering knowledge on what others had to say about assignment" "You are able to have help when completing work"
Peer Value: Skills	*Peer Learning:* Learning from Peers New Perspectives	Group Course Cohort	"I personally learned more about myself/others which allowed me to be comfortable" "One benefit was "creative icebreakers and activities that my classmates provided"
		Learning Community Cohort	"you can understand the material better from other people perspective" "allowed me to see things on different perspectives" "learning different perspectives" "things don't always go as you planned, and when you get lemons make lemonade"
		In-Class Activities Cohort	"getting different perspectives on a subject" "being able to work with others and see other peoples understanding" "being able to get a better understanding of something from a peer" "learning to be open minded of other people ideas"
Group Work Value: Decision making and Problem Solving	*Knowledge Gain:* Groups	Group Course Cohort	"understanding group dynamics in group facilitation" "I am now able to navigate through the phases of the group" "learning skills to effectively facilitate groups"

| General | In-Class Activities | One benefit of group work "get more knowledge" |
| | Cohort | "working in a group brings in more information" |

EV Model Construct, Peer Value: Collaboration

The most prominent emerging theme was *collaboration,* which directly matches the *peer value: collaboration* construct related to the Emerging Value Model (EV model). Additionally, all three cohorts reported the emerging subcategory "camaraderie." Specifically, one learning community cohort participant reported the benefit "getting to know classmates" (Respondent #2) while "camaraderie" (Respondent # 8) was noted by a groups course cohort participant. Another respondent highlighted the benefits of collaboration with comments such as "you get more work done in time" (Respondent # 8, in-class activities cohort participant).

EV Model construct, Peer value: Skills

Emerging themes supported the EV Model construct *peer value: skill* including the theme *new perspectives.* Some benefits noted by student participants from the in-class activities cohort were "engaging with other people and being innovative learning new things" (Respondent #2, in-class activities cohort) and "getting different perspectives on a subject" (Respondent #14, in-class activities cohort). Further support of the *peer value: skills* construct emerged in data from the learning community cohort; when asked about the benefit of group participation, "learning new perspectives" (Respondent #7, learning community cohort) was noted. A participant in the group course cohort indicated that after participation in the course they were "getter better with speaking in front of groups and learning to work with different types of personalities" (Respondent #17, group course cohort). Similarly, an in-class activities participant reported "learning to be open minded of other people ideas" (respondent #13, in-class activities cohort).

EV Model construct, Decision making and problem solving

One participant noted gains in understanding problem solving in groups through the *general knowledge gain* theme "get more knowledge" (Respondent # 10, in-class activities cohort). Respondents in the group course cohort shared an increase in their knowledge specifically related to group work, commenting that "I am now able to navigate well through the phases of the groups life-cycle" (Respondent #18, group work course cohort), and shared that they are "learning skills to effectively facilitate groups" (Respondent #9, group work course cohort).

Group Course Cohort Prominence

Additionally, several Emerging Values Model constructs were highly supported by the specific survey item findings for the groups course high-impact practice cohort. A paired-samples *t*-test was conducted to compare each of the amended values

team survey items pre-post ratings after attending the respective courses. There was a prominent statistically significant difference found in three (3) group course cohort survey items related to the Emerging Values Model. Specifically, the following emerging themes match with the Emerging Values Model constructs: waste of time (EV Model- *group work value: productive*), ability to work with peers (EV Model- peer value-skills), and solving problems (EV Model- *group work value: decision-making & problem solving*). The pre-post reverse scoring results for the survey item "It is a waste of time to work in groups" indicated there is a statistical significance for the self-reported ratings for pre-waste of time rating ($M = 2$, $SD = .737$) and post-waste of time rating ($M = 1.368$, SD = .443) following participation in the graduate level course $t(19) = 2.534$, $p = .03$. For the item "Ability to work with peers," there was a significant difference in the scores for pre-peers rating ($M = 4.421$, SD = .349) and post-peers rating ($M = 4.895$, SD = .094) following participation in the in-class activities cohort $t(19) = -3.101$, $p = .01$. The results for survey item (#5), addressing the ability to effectively solve problems in a group, revealed a significant difference in the scores for pre-solving problems rating ($M = 4.211$, SD = .271) and post-solving problems rating ($M = 4.737$, SD = .194) following participation in the groups course cohort $t(19) = -3.363$, $p = .01$. Table 3 represents the prominent mean difference for self-rating for the group course cohort and specific item analysis for the value of group work, the ability to work with peers, and learning to solve problems in a group.

Table 3

Mean Difference for Self-rating of Specific Survey Items for the Group Course High-Impact Practice Cohort. As Reported by The Amended Values Team Survey

Survey Item	Pretest mean	Posttest mean	Mean Difference	*t*	*Df*	p
*It is a waste of my time to work in groups (#2)	2 v-0.737	1.368 v-0.443	0.632	2.534	18	.03
The ability to work with my peers is a valuable skill. (#3)	4.421 v-0.349	4.895 v-0.094	.474	-3.101	18	.01
Solving problems in a group is an effective practice that I have learned. (#5)	4.211 v-0.271	4.737 v-0.194	.526	-3.363	18	.01

Note. p< 0.05
*reverse scoring for item

Within the group course cohort, the most significant pre-post differences were found for three (3) items: waste of time (reverse scoring), the ability to work with peers, and learning to solve problems in a group. These survey items support the Emerging Value Model constructs for the groups course cohort.

Limitations

The difference in class sizes may have contributed to the variations reported by participants. A smaller class size means more individual instruction from the professor, which could result in a favorable response to their experience. The small sample size makes it difficult to generalize the results. Graduate students' participation in an elective course could suggest their preference for group work might also influence the outcomes.

Discussion and Implications

These findings suggest participation in various high-impact practice group elements (three cohorts; group course, learning community, and group activity integration) promotes a gain in knowledge and value for group work. All three cohorts reported some benefit from their participation in the group experience. Different types of benefits were expressed for the three different cohorts. These results can be used to support educators' use of group work in the class and challenge students to work with group members towards effective outcomes, which prepares them for employment.

Finding ways to enhance students' connections between course material and their careers is optimal. Collaboration is the ability to effectively work with others and is one of the primary skills employers are seeking (Monster.com, TopResume.com). Others use a similar term, such as "teamwork skills" (Indeed.com, thebalancecareers.com), to recognize the value of this characteristic. Students' high-impact practice experiences demonstrate their ability to connect the value of participation in groups (in various formats), and teamwork is becoming an essential expectation from hiring professionals.

Educators can assist in the development of these professional skills in students to best prepare them for future employment. The high-impact practice of experiential group work in the class can contribute to students' knowledge about collaborating with other group members while increasing the value of group work for participants/future professionals as indicated by the EV model.

This research further validates the EV Model and its relevance to the high-impact practice of engaging group work. It is not surprising that since the courses have varying engagements in group activities, there are different outcomes. The largest impact related to the Emerging Values Model was from the groups course cohort. This suggests more frequent engagement and direct group work interaction, leads to a greater appreciation of groups, and supports the EV Model emerging values: peer value (skills, collaboration) and group work value (productive, decision-making and problem solving).

The largest pre-post statistical difference was reported by those participants in the high-impact practice group course cohort. Perhaps not surprisingly, an elective graduate course teaching group content had the most significant support for the EV Model. These graduate students are in fact studying the group process and learning about specific group benefits, which translates to an understanding about groups. Additionally, since this is an elective course, students have a personal interest and therefore may see more value in group work and have more commitment to the success of groups. These graduate students have taken an initial graduate level group course and likely already taken an undergraduate course including group content; therefore, this group course content builds on their previous knowledge and experience.

The prominence for the *peer value: collaboration* across all three cohorts demonstrates the value of offering the high-impact practice of group work engagement in various formats during a course. Exposing students to group work and preparing them for effective professional development in groups and teams can be promoted in the classroom. Educators should continue to promote group work education within their courses as they are able. The results for the peer collaboration construct in the Emerging Values Model (Williamson-Ashe & Ericksen, 2017) indicate a statistical difference in pre-post results, suggesting participants gained a new perspective about peer collaboration following participation in the course. This high-impact practice format indicates a gain for all participants. Collaboration is an essential skill for effective professional development and is highly valued by potential employers. The *peer value: collaboration* (EV Model) is helpful to real-world application for students. It is necessary for individuals to be able to work in various types of groups/teams in their profession.

Learning communities have been found to be high-impact practices that enhance the learning experiences for students (Kuh, 2008); therefore, the lower perceived benefits are surprising for this group. Students' self-selection to participate in the learning community also suggests that they prefer working with like-minded individuals in a group setting. Perhaps participation in this learning community (LC) was impacted by the optional nature of the activities outside of classroom time and/or students not viewing the LC as a group. The last-minute unavoidable change to the itinerary for the trip to the General Assembly (state capital) may have been upsetting to some of the student participants and may be reflected in their responses. A lack of group cohesiveness can also impact the group experience as noted by the learning community cohort with responses like "not everyone completes their part of the assignment" (Respondent #8) and echoed by the group course cohort frustration involved in "getting everyone to stay engaged and participate" (Respondent # 9).

These research findings support the benefit of in-class group activities, which are similar to the approach of small group discussions that enhance student classroom learning (Knight, 2000). Both the group course cohort and the in-class activities cohort courses required active engagement in group activities to accomplish school

assignments while learning communities participated in additional voluntary group activities outside the classroom.

It is important for students to learn the skills associated with group work as noted by potential employers (Cruz et al., 2020). This research suggests students learn the value of group work through the high-impact practices of experiential small group participation, as supported in the literature (Cruz et al., 2020). Although some students complain about the challenges of working in groups with inferences such as "some group members do not participate" (Respondent #3, learning community cohort), the data overwhelming supports the group work *decision-making & problem-solving* found in the Emerging Values Model. Supportive data is also shared by respondents about the benefit of group knowledge: "understanding the process of groups was a valuable benefit for me" (Respondent #19, group course cohort) and "working in group brings in more information" (Respondent # 9, in-class activities cohort).

These findings suggest that incorporating group activities and engaging students in groups within course content can influence their perceptions about the value of group work. This is significant to note as it supports the social work curriculum and CSWE competencies, which assert the importance of group work in social work. Social work students will facilitate and practice psychoeducational, therapeutic, and support groups as professionals, and, therefore, educators need to adequately prepare them through group work in the class (Cohen, 2010). Engaging in classroom group work develops an appreciation for the values associated with group interactions.

Conclusion

High-impact educational practice group elements (experiential learning-group course content, in-class activities, learning communities) were found to promote a gain in knowledge and value for group work, supporting the EV Model. Participants in the group course (highest group engagement and content) were found to report the highest impact of group work; however, all students shared benefits from the group experience. Exposure to group work was positive for all students, developed their appreciation for group work, and prepared them for professional group facilitation. The inclusion of high-impact group activities in various formats improves students' knowledge and value for group work. This better prepares students for the workforce where teamwork and collaboration are prominent.

This research demonstrates the EV Model offers valuable considerations in the implementation of group work in the class to help perpetuate both personal and professional growth and development. Group work develops valuable transferable skill for all professions. Additionally, the EV Model offers a good reminder to educators and students that experiential group work assists in the best understanding of the process to become effective group professionals and that they need to overtly discuss the positive outcomes of group work.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this article.

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