Masks and roleplay for helping students negotiate personality differences in group work

Andy Peisley,

SL & Course Coordinator PGCHE & MA in Creative Education, Falmouth University

Andy.Peisley@falmouth.ac.uk

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Andy Peisley - background

- Organisational psychologist, leadership assessment & development consultant
- professional actor and teacher of acting
- HE – Psychology, Business Management, HRM, MBA, Education
- Westminster Business School (WBS), Uni of Westminster (UoW)
- Falmouth University – Education, PGCHE & MA Creative Ed
- Senior Fellow Higher Education Academy

Background to masks project

University of Westminster Business School (WBS):

- WBS L&T grants x 2
- Interdisciplinary innovation in T&L practice
- Drama pedagogy in business education – sociodrama, masks
- MBA, staff development
- PGCHE/MA HE research project

Background to masks project

Falmouth university:

- Students and staff, working in groups & teams
- Journalism
- Business Entrepreneurship,
- Photography
- Fashion Photography
- PGCHE & staff development

Rationale for this approach

- Impact of personality preferences in life and work
- Topic taught in different social sciences disciplines – e.g. psychology, business management
- Prevalence of group working in HE teaching
- Common issues of negotiating conflict in group work
- Developing empathy and appreciation of diversity in teams
- Overcoming some limitations in common teaching methods
- Masks – strong visual 'anchor'
- Helps role play, release of inhibitions
- Exploration through action, opportunity for skills practice
- Engagement of whole learner, embodied, active, deeper learning

Benefits identified so far:

- Appreciation of diversity of personality in teams
- Power of masks as enablers
- Facilitates practice through lightness and play
- Develops aspects of emotional intelligence
- e.g. empathy, self awareness, social skills

Challenges & future development:

- Uses Jungian personality model and masks based on that, vs e.g. Five Factor Model
- Cost of masks
- Student response varies widely, depending on maturity and subject discipline
- Heavy reliance on facilitator ability, experience and enthusiasm

Learning outcomes:

- To reflect on, discuss and generate ideas, for adapting this approach for your own teaching context
- To apply knowledge of Jungian personality types to analyse your own and others interactions
- To generate, practice & critically evaluate strategies for negotiating interaction with others
- To gain more empathy and more appreciation of value of contribution of different personalities, to group outcomes

Workshop structure:

- Meet the masks/personality 'types' – Jung model and relate to other Jungian based personality models you may know

- Compare and contrast the 'types' to yourself and people you know

- Identify which are easier and more challenging to manage for you

- Explore moving and acting as different masks – walking in another's shoes

- Explore different strategies for interacting with them – via roleplay

- Reflect on your learning and how you might take this forward for your development

Caution!

- Not claiming Jungian typology model is 'truth'
- An example, a common model
- For exploring impact of individual differences, not as 'truth'
- Another method to support learning about 'personality'
- An evolving ongoing project
- Potentially better ways forward?
- Different models, with stronger evidence?
- E.g. Five Factor Model (e.g. NEO PI-R)?
- 'masks as metaphor' for diversity

LET'S MEET THE MASKS!

- BLUE
- RED
- YELLOW
- GREEN

- Full & half-mask versions

BLUE – What is BLUE like?

Strengths? Less attractive characteristics?

In pairs – introduce yourself and say hello – then tell your partner what you think

RED – What is RED like?

Strengths? Less attractive characteristics?

YELLOW – What is YELLOW like?
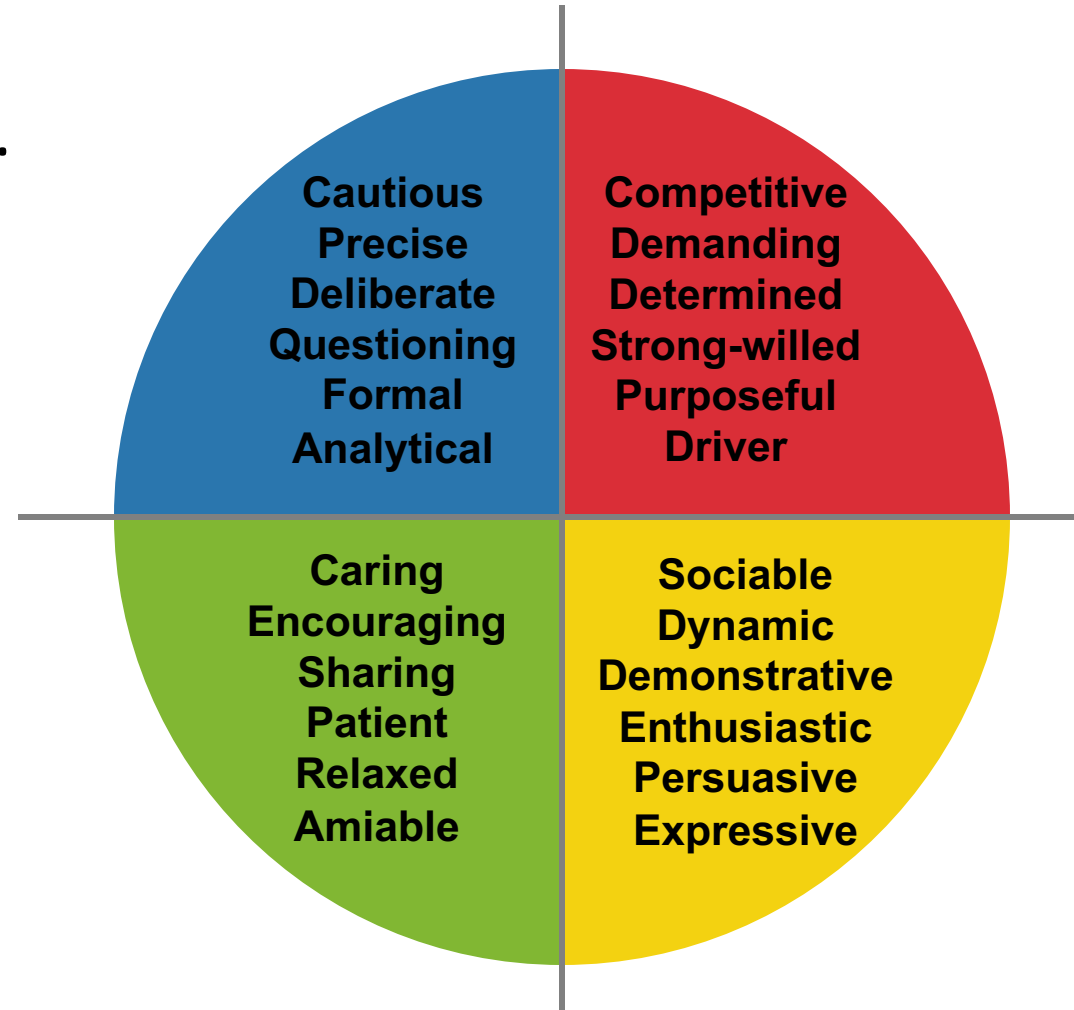
Strengths? Less attractive characteristics?

GREEN – What is GREEN like?
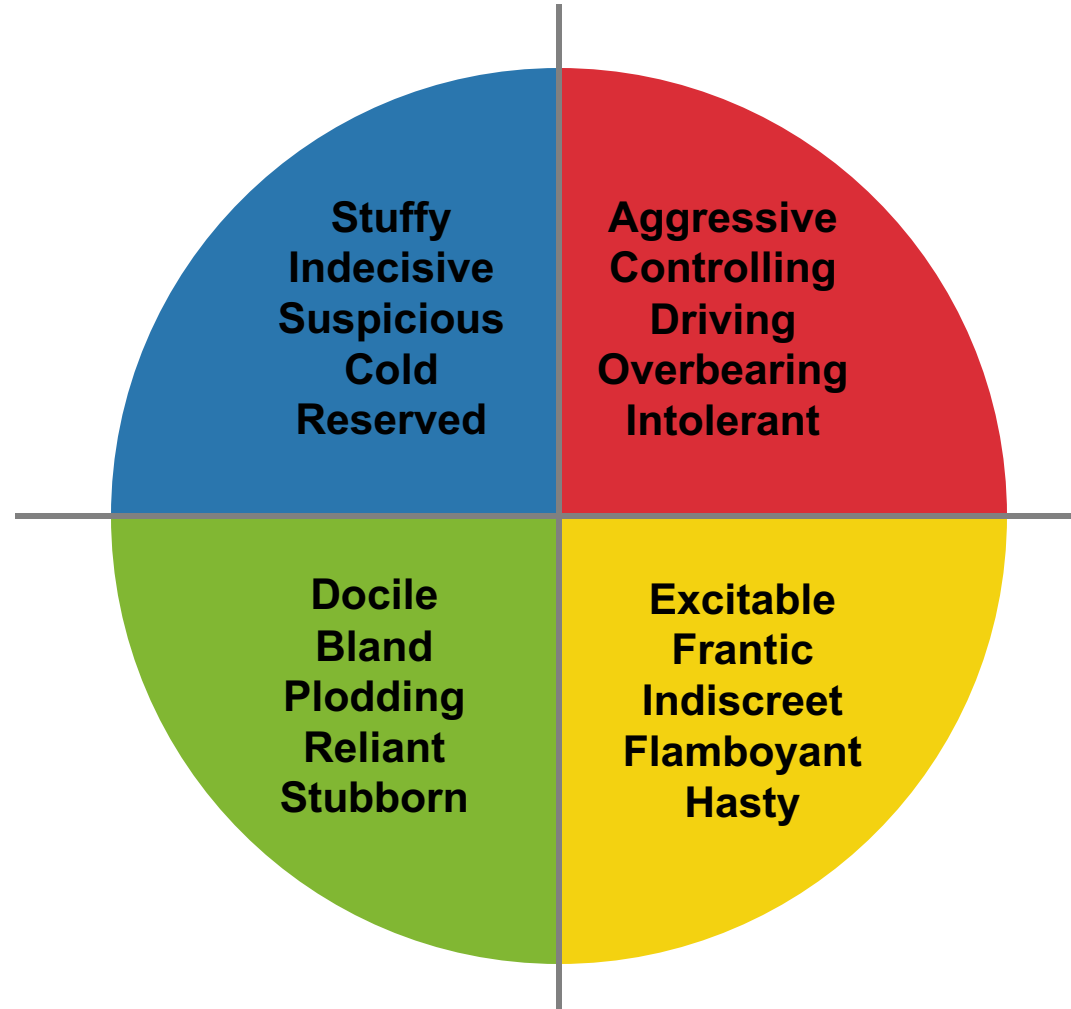
Strengths? Less attractive characteristics?

The Insights 4 Colour Energies

- On a good day...

| Cautious Precise Deliberate Questioning Formal Analytical | Competitive Demanding Determined Strong-willed Purposeful Driver |
| Caring Encouraging Sharing Patient Relaxed Amiable | Sociable Dynamic Demonstrative Enthusiastic Persuasive Expressive |

Insights (2015): www.insights.com

The Insights 4 Colour Energies

- On a bad day...

Stuffy
Indecisive
Suspicious
Cold
Reserved

Aggressive
Controlling
Driving
Overbearing
Intolerant

Docile
Bland
Plodding
Reliant
Stubborn

Excitable
Frantic
Indiscreet
Flamboyant
Hasty

Insights (2015): www.insights.com

The Insights Colour Quadrants

'Cool' Blue c'   'Fiery' Red

'Earth' Green   'Sunshine' Yellow

Insights (2015): www.insights.com
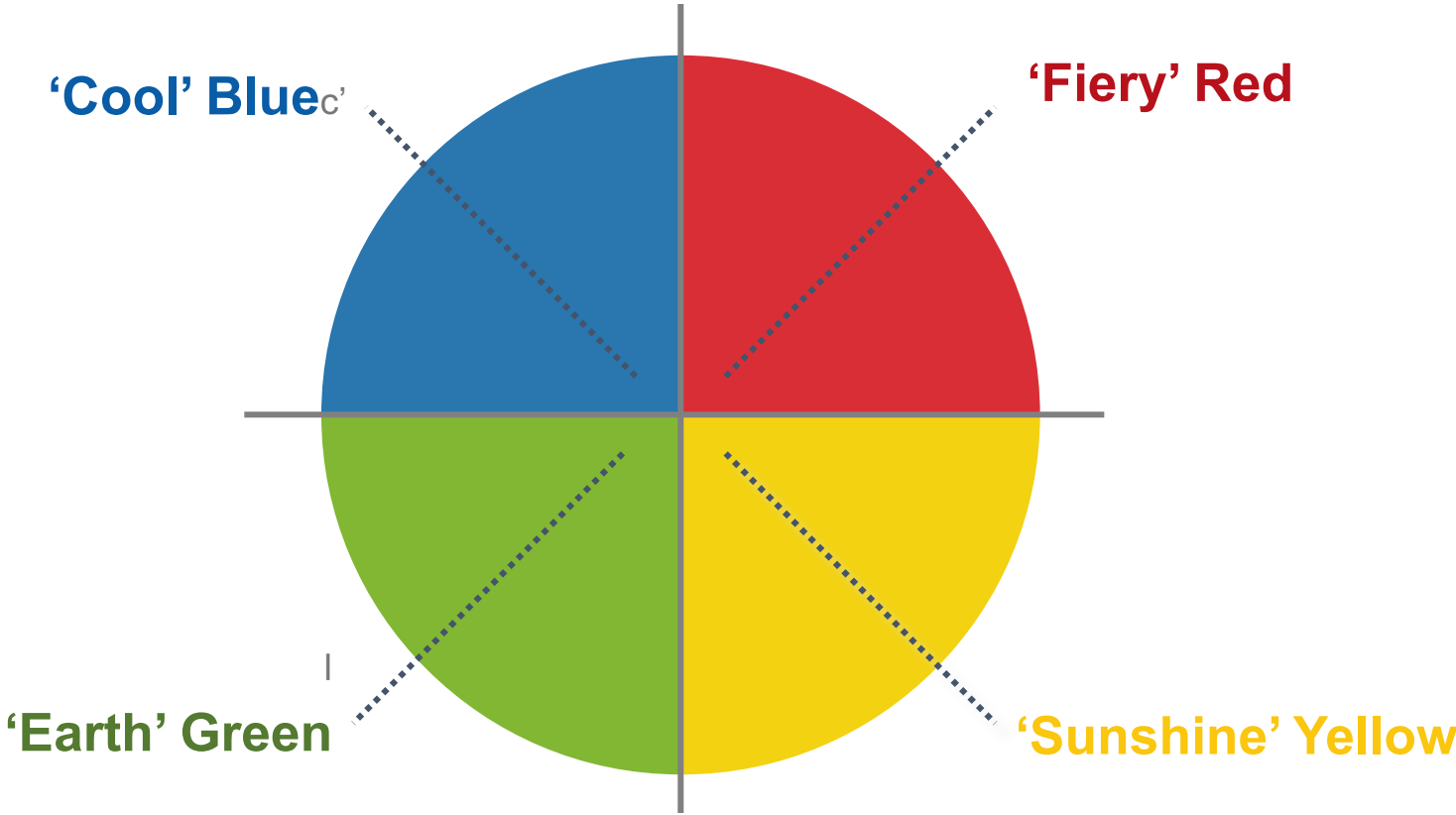
Colourful Statements

Relate the masks to you and people you know

Go and stand by the mask:

- Which is most like you? Why? – *(explain, quickly, to someone there too)*

- Which do you find most easy to work with? Why? *(explain)*

- Which do you find most difficult to work with? Why? *(explain)*

- Which is most like you? *(explain)*

Get to know the masks better

- Get into groups, 1 mask per group, *x* persons in each group
- Take turns - to put on and move as the mask
- Rest of the group – help the person wearing the mask, to explore moving and acting as that mask
- By asking the mask questions and making requests of them
- Use handouts to ask questions and requests
- Use example requests or make up own, based on mask characteristics
- Mask - *respond through movement and/or sound – NOT words*
- Each group work through each mask in turn
- Move fast, don't over-think it!

Example questions & requests for the mask:

How would this ………… Mask:

- Sit on a chair
- Wait for a bus that was already 10 minutes late
- Walk home after a good day at the office
- Enter the room, sit and greet an interview panel
- Respond if they went to the shared fridge, only to find that their milk had gone
- Organise a group shot at a wedding
- Pack for a long journey
- React to stepping in dog poo and dragging it across a new white carpet at their mum's house
- *Masks – Remember! – No words, only sounds and movement*

Influencing strategies? – for B, R, Y, G?

- Get into groups of *x* persons, 1 mask each group
- Pick a mask
- Decide (quickly) on an event that you think this mask:
- Would NOT like to attend, given their personality preferences
- Sociodrama scenario and roles: 'Mask', 'Influencer', 'Audience'
- Influencer tries to persuade mask to attend the event
- Group uses sociodrama to explore how influencer can best do this
- Can give simple group scenarios too – e.g. one mask needs to get other masks to mover large pane of glass via tricky route – swap leader; e.g. planning a work celebration.

Sociodrama method and techniques

- **Stop** and **start** the action
- to explore the situation & try out & practice influencing strategies
- *Role reversal* – e.g. 'mask'-'influencer', 'audience' – 'mask' or 'influencer'
- *Ask the audience* -
- Audience can give advice, or take role to show or try out alternative strategies
- Roles stay, but anyone can take and explore any role
- Use handouts for ideas, but also explore your own ideas for strategies

Student Reflection & Discussion

In groups:

- *What did you learn from this last exercise?*

- *From this workshop?*

- *What value can each of these masks bring to a group project – Blue? Yellow? Red? Green?*

- *What challenges can you see working with different masks and how can these be overcome?*

- *How could you apply this in your current group projects and work?*

- *What should you do differently and how? Why?*

Teacher Reflection & Discussion

- *What did you learn from this last exercise?*

- *From this workshop? How did you learn this?*

- *How could you adapt this approach for your students, in your own teaching practice?*

- E.g. The learning about personality preferences, this type of teaching and learning method, masks & roleplay, sociodrama, etc?

Email: andy.peisley@falmouth.ac.uk

Masks at Mike Chase: (www.mikechasemasks.com)

Insights (2015): Insights model: (www.insights.com)

Sociodrama resource: Sternberg, P. & Garcia, A. (2000). Sociodrama: Who's in your shoes? (2nd ed). Westport: Praeger.