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A CONVERSATION WITH DAVID DEVINEY, Ph.D., PROFESSOR OF MANAGEMENT AT TARLETON STATE UNIVERSITY, TEXAS

Extended DISC: Today I spoke with David Deviney, Ph.D., Professor of Management at Tarleton State University, Texas about how he uses Extended DISC assessments in his academic setting. Hi Dave, tell me about your role in using Extended DISC® in your organization.

David: I'm a Professor of Management and I have been using DISC for 30 years. I am currently using it in three of my courses.

Extended DISC: Can you tell me how you usually use Extended DISC® Assessments?

David: The three classes I am using the assessments in are Organizational Behavior, Leadership, and Organizational Development and Change; which is a graduate-level course.

I usually put the link, for students to complete the questionnaire, in one of their assignments. I typically tie several assignments to Extended DISC®. For example, in my Organizational Behavior class, a few of the topics we discuss are decision-making, problem-solving, and communications. We use the Extended DISC® assessments



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to help us navigate those topics and how they pertain to the students individually. One topic I have found students are interested in is themselves. In the courses, students are held accountable for their self-discovery.

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Extended DISC: I love the part about self-discovery and tying it to assignments with real-life applications. How effective do you find the tool for your students?

David: I use a lot of different assessment tools, yet Extended DISC® is the tool I always receive the most positive feedback. What I hear most is that it's easy to use and self-explanatory. Occasionally, I'll get someone who says, “yeah, this is not me.” If someone finds a part of the Extended DISC® report they disagree with, I encourage them to take it to someone who knows them well and ask them if the statement fits. I always say “find someone who will be brutally honest with you.”

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I think it's human nature to look at other people who are different from us behaviorally and think good or bad or right or wrong, but it's not any of that; it's just different. It's making sure the students leave class knowing this.

One of the things that makes Extended DISC® so fun is it's all about them. That's just the first step — having self-awareness. The second step is learning how do I apply this to others? I try and incorporate assignments to teach them a compatibility look and how their DISC style interacts with other DISC styles. I'll put them in pairs to discuss how each person prefers communication, how each of them approaches problem-solving, and how they view teamwork. They are also given assignments on how to leverage the different DISC styles on a team.

Extended DISC: What is the learning from these assignments?

David: There's a lot of group discussion about who's different and who's the same. It's eye-opening for them to have these conversations. They tend to walk away with a deeper understanding and appreciation for one another.



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Extended DISC: What tips or suggestions do you have for an academic professor just getting started, or trying to make the decision, about how to use Extended DISC® in their curriculum?

David: I usually tell people to go take the DISC assessment themselves as the first step. Take a look at yourself, through the lens of DISC, and gain some confidence in the instrument. The other thing I recommend is to complete training around the instrument to gain a deeper understanding of the tool and to build confidence in using it. Having this knowledge is very helpful and important.

From an academic standpoint, understanding the theory behind DISC can also be helpful. Learn more about Jung’s Theory of Human Behavior and William Moulton Marston. There is an interesting evolution of DISC and having an understanding of how the model came into being adds credibility in the classroom and to the tool.

When I’m teaching DISC in the classroom, I always go over the basic theory and the 4 Quadrant model. It’s important to understand and lays the foundation for determining what somebody else’s style is.

Extended DISC: Tell me more about how understanding the other person gives you a competitive edge.

David: Understanding yourself and others is helpful and will set you apart. Not too many people have a deep self-awareness or other awareness. We have lots of discussions about understanding someone’s behavioral style and how to adjust to them. For example, if you know you’re interacting with an S-Style you know you’ll need to ask more open-ended questions and pull out their opinions. If you’re interacting with a D-Style you might want to pick up the pace and focus on results. Not only do we explore identifying the other person’s style; but we also explore adjustments we can make to make the interaction more effective. And that’s what gives us a competitive edge.

Extended DISC: Between course changes and switching to an online classroom, I am impressed you have sustained the use of DISC for over 30 years. What else would you like your colleagues to know about DISC?

David: Of all the many instruments I’ve used, I find the simplicity of the DISC model to be its superpower. It’s simple but complex. I don’t know how many style combinations Extended DISC® calculates, but I’m sure it’s in the hundreds (Editor: The actual number is over 220 million). In my opinion, Extended DISC® is the most accurate tool I’ve ever seen.

Extended DISC: Thank you for your time, David. It’s been a pleasure!