Group Coursework in the Online Classroom: Ways to Reduce Stress for Students and Faculty

Tracia M. Forman, PhD, RN-BC, CNE - Assistant Professor

Ava S. Miller, PhD, EdD, RN-BC, CNE - Professor Emeritus
The purpose of this presentation is to present evidence regarding best practices, skills and technology which nursing faculty can use to transform online group work into a positive learning experience.
Research Problem and Design

Student reported frustration with group assignments.
- Qualitative Study
- Retrospective analysis of student responses posted to a discussion board
Sample

Discussion Board Introduction Prompt

- Write a paragraph or two introducing yourself to the rest of the class. Include information about how you feel about online education at this point in your educational journey. Consider the following questions:
  - Are you comfortable in the online classroom environment?
  - If you have had online courses in the past what seems to work well with your learning style and what does not work so well?
  - What is your perception of group work in the online classroom?
Analysis

Qualitative Content Analysis
- Analyzed data from three courses, over two semesters
- $N = 192$
Results

Organization
Getting Started

Communication
Difficulties

Burden
Equality

Grading
Fairness
Tools for Organization

The details matter.
- Assignment objectives
- Group size
- Group composition
- Group roles
- Project materials
Communication Tools

- Skype
- FaceTime
- Slack
- Asana
- Google Hangouts
- Yammer
- Trello
- Chanty
- Flock
- Microsoft Teams
- Ryver
- Fleep
- Confluence
- Redbooth
- Wrike
- Basecamp
Virtual Communication

Tips
- Early check-in
- Encourage early virtual communication
- Assign a simple task for conferencing practice
- Establish a communication safety net
Tools to Facilitate Collaboration

- Establish Ground Rules
  - Deadlines
  - Accountability

- Encourage Task Sharing
  - Monitor and intervene
  - Assist

- Model Good Behavior
  - Promote patience
Group Grade
Divide and Conquer
Degrees of Difference
Dual Grades
Oral Exam
Written Exam
Limitations

There are study limitations to report:

◦ Inability to seek clarification of participant responses due to the retrospective analysis of data
◦ Data collected from students with varied past educational experiences
◦ Students were enrolled in courses at the same university, within the same program
Questions?

Thank you for your attention!
References


References


References


