



G17032

Increasing Student Satisfaction with Team Projects in the Virtual Classroom

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I'm celebrating my 10 year anniversary at



KAPLAN
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LearningTimes

Agenda



- Overview of Speaker-Dr. Ilene Ringler
- Overview of Project
 - Teams in the Classroom and Business
 - Problem Identification
 - Team Composition
- Methodology
 - Overview
 - Details
- Initial Results
- Recommendations
- Ideas for Future Research
- Questions



Dr. Ilene Ringler

- Full Time Faculty in Kaplan MBA Program School of Business and Information Technology - online program focusing on adult learners worldwide (<http://www.kaplanuniversity.edu/business/mba-master-business-administration.aspx>)
 - Course lead for first and last core classes in MBA program, relying heavily on team based projects using virtual teams
- Principal Ilene Ringler Associates, LLC- a full service business growth consulting practice (<http://www.ileneringler.com>)



Teams In The Classroom and In Business

- Virtual teams have become a major component in the delivery of online courses both here at Kaplan University (KU) and in higher education in general (Olson, et. al, 2015).
- Teamwork has been identified as a necessary professional competency that companies look for in the hiring process. One example
 - Gray and Koncz (2014) state “Employers considering new college graduates for job openings are looking for leaders who can work as part of a team and communicate effectively, according to a new report from the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE)” (para 1).
- To fulfil the employer requirements, as stated by Gray and Koncz, teamwork has been established as one of the six professional competencies that KU students are assessed for in all of our programs.



The Problem



- Virtual teams in the classroom have become a major source of student and faculty complaints.
- This has resulted in virtual team projects being removed from some classes.
- To increase the success of graduates, the cause(s) for these issues need to be researched and solutions identified and implemented.



Team Composition

- A cross-functional team of full time graduate and undergraduate faculty was established to review the team project processes in the School of Business and Information Technology (SBIT).
- The team's objective was to conduct a causal analysis and develop recommendations for improving how classroom team projects are developed and implemented.



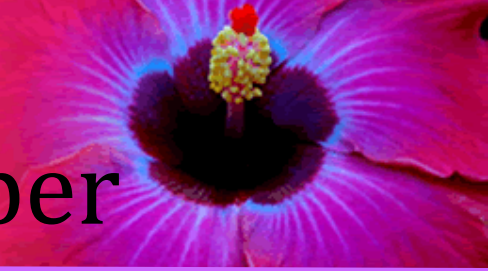
Overview of Research Methodology



- A literature review was completed focusing on all elements of teams,
- 2 separate focus groups completed to collect data,
 - Faculty – two perspectives
 - Personal - “How have you operated on teams?”
 - Professional - “How have you worked with teams in the classroom?”
 - Student- focus on team experiences overall
- Data analyzed,
- Recommendations created and presented to Kaplan leadership.



Faculty Focus Groups- Conducted by Team Member



Personal Feedback Perspective

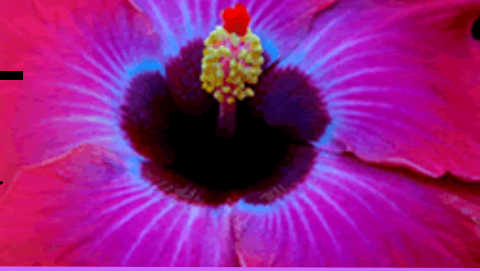
1. What are the teams you have work in?, i.e., School, Work, Other
2. What are some elements of the successful teams you have worked on?
3. What are elements of the non-successful teams you have worked on?
4. If you have worked on virtual teams, what has been different than working on face to face teams
5. Did you receive any formal training?

Feedback from a Faculty Perspective

1. What are elements that led to successful student teams in your classroom?
2. Given that team work is a professional core competency how were you held accountable for integrating that into your classes?
3. What support were you given?
4. What specific problems have you experienced in using teams in the classroom?
5. What recommendations do you make for students to communicate in teams? How familiar are you with Adobe or other technical communications platforms? How do you use them in your class? Have you had any formal training in this area?
6. Other feedback on teams?



Student Focus Groups- Conducted by Faculty



- What are the type of teams you have worked on?.
i.e., School, Work, Other
- What are some elements of the successful teams you have worked on? Which type(s) were they?
- What are elements of the non-successful teams you have worked on? Which type(s) were they?
- If you have worked on virtual teams, what has been different than working on face to face teams
- Did you receive any formal training in any of the teams you worked on? If so what did the training consist of?
- Other feedback on teams?



Initial Results



Some of the problems identified by the initial research conducted by the task force regarding virtual teams included:

1. Poor communication within the team;
2. Lack of leadership;
3. Time schedule issues; and
4. Lack of training for both students and faculty.



Recommendations

- Develop formal training on successful virtual teams, for both faculty and students.
 - Research within current Kaplan courses revealed a foundation for this training with a current course used at the undergraduate level
- Start team projects early in the term with a duration of at least three units.
- Required team charters for all team projects.
- Make Google Hangouts with video chats available for students.
- Make grades independent for all team members.



Ideas for Future Research

- Examine the differences in student team success between new students and upper level students.
- Examine different lengths for team projects in terms of how trust and communication develop and with regard to the success of the team project.
- Implement student training on the teamwork process, and studying the performance of a trained team against an untrained team would be another research path.
- What the difference is between and group and a team, which may have an impact on how we view future projects in the classroom



Questions or Comments?





References

- Gray, K., & Koncz, A. (2014). The Skills/Qualities Employers Want in New College Graduate Hires. Retrieved March 18, 2017, from <http://www.naceweb.org/about-us/press/class-2015-skills-qualities-employers-want.aspx>
- Olson, J.D., Ringhand, D.G., Kalinski, r., & Ziegler, J.G. (2015). Forming student online teams for maximum performance. *American Journal of Business Education*. 8(2), 139-160.

