



#TP2020
@APTRupdate

SUCCESSFUL GROUP PROJECTS IN AN ONLINE MPH PROGRAM: *CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES*

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Disclosure to Participants

Notice of Requirements For Successful Completion

- ❖ Please refer to learning goals and objectives
- ❖ Learners must attend the full activity and complete the evaluation in order to claim continuing education credit/hours

The presenters have no relevant financial relationships with any commercial interests to disclose.



Presentation Outline

❖ Background

- Program & course context | Experience/feedback from S18

❖ Key course strategies

- **Contract/Group Charter** – Student ownership of learning
- **Peer evaluations** – Student feedback on learning
- **Instructor-group synchronous meetings** – Timely and sequential progress
- **Final paper submission** – group writing

❖ Future directions

- **Individual student assessment** – how to assess for work submitted as a group??
- **Mixed peer reviews** – grading methodology/approach??
- **Findings** – Thematic analysis of student feedback





SUCCESSFUL GROUP PROJECTS IN AN ONLINE MPH PROGRAM

Background

Background

❖ Program & course context

➤ HEP MPH Program at USU

- A fully online program | 42-45 credits
- 40 full-time and part-time students
- 7 faculty and 2 adjunct faculty

- **Program emphasis** – *behavioral, social and cultural factors related to individual and population health and health disparities over the life span*

- Council on Education in Public Health (CEPH) accreditation applicant



Background

❖ Program & course context

➤ Courses

- **HEP 6000** Advanced Program Planning and Evaluation
- **HEP 6550** Qualitative Methods for Public Health
 - 16-week online courses
 - **Primary course assignment**
 - ✓ A semester-long group project
 - ✓ Divided into smaller assignments
 - ✓ Final product – a written paper or executive summary
 - ✓ Theoretical (6000) v. fieldwork w/ primary data collection (6550)



Background

❖ Experience/feedback from S18

➤ Student evaluation – illustrative comments

▪ MIDTERM

1. *"Group project in an online class?"*
2. *"The group project is still not as clear as it could be"*
3. *"Involve online office hours / interactive broadcast and/or more specific assignments with group early on"*
4. *"It would be better suited as an in person class"*
5. *"Can I do this project on my own"*

▪ FINAL

"This class needs to be taught in person. It's material that is much easier to comprehend when able to ask questions. We met with Dr. DasGupta about 4 times and learned a lot more from those visits."





SUCCESSFUL GROUP PROJECTS IN AN ONLINE MPH PROGRAM

Key course strategies

Key course strategies

❖ **Week 1** – address student perceptions and/or inertia regarding online group work

➤ HEP6000

• Welcome note, Syllabus, & Intro video:

▪ Rationale for a group project:

"...benefit of such work is peer interaction that enables the development of higher order critical thinking, reflection, communication, and interpersonal skills..."

▪ Assignment description

"...assignment is a team project not only to represent how interventions are developed in the field, but also because good public health practice reflects the perspectives and contributions of more than one person..."



Key course strategies

❖ **Week 1&2** – address student perceptions and/or inertia regarding online group work

➤ **HEP6550**

- Welcome video, Syllabus Video and Quiz, Project Intro Video
 - Stressed the importance of collaboration in qualitative research
- Project required identifying and working with a CBO
- IRB encouraged but not required
- CIDI certification required



Key course strategies: #1

❖ **Contract/Group Charter** – Student ownership of learning

➤ **Week-1 or 2 activity** (low stake point assignment)

- **Group size:** 3-4
- **Group formation:** students self-select for 6000 and assigned for 6550
- **Group member roles:** 16 personality test and group roles (HEP6550) | 12 suggested roles (HEP6000)
- **Group rules/member roles:** flexible (fixed v. rotating)



Key course strategies: #1

- ❖ **Contract/Group Charter** – Student ownership of learning and accountability to the team
 - HEP 6000 example

Health Program Plan (HPP) Assignment Team Contract
HEP 6000: Advanced Health Program Planning and Evaluation for Public Health

CONTRACT COVER PAGE

By signing this document, I fully understand that it is my responsibility to be the best teammate possible I can for my team. This means being on time and contributing to all meetings and work related to the project - which includes all HPP assignment deliverables. I will not only complete my tasks as required but I will complete them on time (ahead of time if needed) and I will deliver material of the best quality to represent my team as a whole. Whenever needed, I will ask for help when I struggle, help my teammates when they struggle, and I will communicate clearly and directly on all issues related to the project.

If I do not contribute as required, I understand that my grade could be lowered for poor performance. Evidence of poor performance will be documented in peer evaluations and instructor observations throughout the semester. Specifically, poor performance from two or more teammates in any given peer evaluation will trigger a grade change (one or more letter grade) on related team deliverables. Furthermore, instructor observations during instructor-student HPP meetings may also trigger a grade change (one or more letter grade) on team deliverables.

Team Name: _____

Team member name	Team member signature	Date
Team member name	Team member signature	Date
Team member name	Team member signature	Date
Team member name	Team member signature	Date
Team member name	Team member signature	Date

1

Health Program Plan (HPP) Assignment Team Contract
HEP 6000: Advanced Health Program Planning and Evaluation for Public Health

HPP-GROUP POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Below are the terms of group conduct and cooperation that we agree on as a team. We share these goals and expectations, and agree to these policies, procedures, and consequences.

Goals & Expectations: We agree to...

Participation: We agree to...

Communication: We agree to...

Meetings: We agree to...

Conduct: We agree to...

2

Conflict: We agree to...

Deadlines: We agree to...

Team Name: _____

Team Member's Name	Team Member's Role(s)

Team member name	Team member signature	Date
Team member name	Team member signature	Date
Team member name	Team member signature	Date
Team member name	Team member signature	Date
Team member name	Team member signature	Date

3



Key course strategies: #2

❖ Peer evaluation – Student feedback on learning

- **Group check-ins:** 5 times (6000) | 7 times (6550)
 - 6550 also added weekly muddies point assessments that was helpful for team meetings prep (students recommended these be viewable to all students in the course)
- **Anonymous-not seen by other team members**
- **Point assignment:** low (5 points) except for the final evaluation
- **Evaluation Qs:**
 - 6000: 5 statements on a 5-point Likert scale; 1 open-ended question
 - 6550: Open ended and based on that weeks assignments/duties ;redundant with muddies point at times



Key course strategies: #3

❖ **Instructor-group synchronous meetings** – Timely and sequential progress

➤ HEP 6000

- Mandatory (1-point) | 4 times | in-person & Zoom meetings

➤ HEP6550

- Optional | But often invited to weekly team meetings, especially the week prior to a progress report due -Webex & Zoom



Key course strategies: #4

❖ **Final paper submission** – group writing

➤ HEP 6550

- Students needed assistance in managing the writing and editing of a large paper
- Example papers posted
- Video posted on possible strategies and expectations
- [Resource shared on writing in a team](#)
- Edited work/progress reports entire semester





SUCCESSFUL GROUP PROJECTS IN AN ONLINE MPH PROGRAM

Future directions

Future directions

❖ **Individual student assessment** – how to assess for work submitted as a group??

➤ CEPH Accreditation requirement

➤ Current approach

- **Group contract / charter text**

If I do not contribute as required, I understand that my grade could be lowered for poor performance.

Evidence of poor performance will be documented in peer evaluations and instructor observations throughout the semester. Specifically, poor performance from two or more teammates in any given peer evaluation will trigger a grade change (one or more letter grade) on related team deliverables. Furthermore, instructor observations during instructor-student HPP meetings may also trigger a grade change (one or more letter grade) on team deliverables.

➤ Strategies for additional rigor?



Future directions

❖ **Mixed peer reviews – occurred frequently**

➤ **Current approach**

- instructor perception based on interaction/observation during synchronous meetings
- A larger and more detailed peer evaluation due at the end of the semester

- Novel approaches to grading of group work needed?



Future directions

❖ Findings for the Future

- Thematic analysis of student feedback
- Analysis of IDEA (summative) student evaluations
- Qualtrics survey for student feedback on group process
- Mastery learning outcomes in Canvas



Group Projects in an Online MPH Program

❖ Questions?

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