



Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning

Intra-Course and Cross-Departmental Teamwork to Promote Interprofessional Collaboration.

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Rationale:

Intra-Course and Cross-Departmental Teamwork allows students to experience interprofessional partnerships by offering collaborative projects between students studying in different fields or professions. Currently, I am 'testing' the project that involves students from two different courses taught by two different instructors to collaborate during the semester and produce one final product. This semester, I am integrating inter-course teamwork between students that take the Human Trafficking course and the Crime Prevention course.

For the Spring semester, I am adding a collaborative online international aspect of the course for experimental cross-cultural learning where international students are working on the project with the Criminal Justice students. I am partnering with Annabelle Conroy to enhance the experience by offering a collaborative project that will involve students that take the Human Trafficking course and international students from various majors that take the American National Government course.

The projects show how completely two different disciplines can work collaboratively to address the same issue, weather any challenges, and bring in effective solutions to the community.

Description:

Once two courses are identified, the first few things that shall be addressed are the goals of the collaboration and getting buy-ins from the department administration and the students. Next - is a decision on the project idea. Joint meeting dates are set as well as means for the meeting (currently, Zoom was used for two mandatory meetings where both instructors and the students from both courses attended). Both instructors will coordinate the project starting with identifying the best way to connect the mixed groups for the first time (via Zoom groups) and decide any other technological tools to be used to communicate between group members for the duration of the project. This includes planning whether the instructors will require a specific technological tool or leave it up to the students to identify what works best for them. Assignment instructions and project delivery are agreed upon prior to the semester (for this semester, students from both courses are submitting their final collaborative project along with the write-up portion of the project relevant to their course of studies. Individual reflections are a part of the collaborative project grade as well.)

Writing collaborative project instructions require input from both instructors. The first semester of collaboration, both instructors used Webcourses Pages to deliver project instructions to their students and these instructions differed in the writing portion of the project (altered to the specific content of the course). For the second semester, both instructors decided to use Obojobo to write the instructions that will be used in both courses as well as the project delivery will be the same for both courses.

During the semester, it is important to constantly follow up with the groups on their progress.

Both instructors tried to identify possible hick-ups and how to address those should the need arise. For example, if after the withdrawal deadline both students taking the same course and belonging to one mixed group drop the course.

Appraisal:

The project is still in process, so there are no formal evaluation comments from the students other than a few students mentioned it in their anonymous surveys or during the regular semester follow ups with the instructor. As expected, not all students are happy with the team project while other groups showed their full engagement from the start. One interesting suggestion from a student was to give more specific guidelines for the project but mentioned that he/she understood that the given instructions were meant to give the teams ownership of their project ideas and their way of communicating (mirroring a real-world task). A few students mentioned that it would be much easier to complete the project if it was not for the current pandemic (note: that is a learning experience in itself).

References:

Cummings & Kiesler (2005). Collaborative Research Across Disciplinary and Organizational Boundaries. Social Studies of Science. PDF: <http://www.jstor.com/stable/25046668>

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