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Creating an Interprofessional Education Course in Groupwork using Active Learning and Technology

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ABSTRACT

College graduates are often expected to be effective communicators who can work cooperatively in teams. To address this need, we developed, created, and implemented a course, taught by an interdisciplinary team, that allowed students to hone these skills. This poster provides the rationale, development, and future directions of the course.

RATIONALE

- People work in groups/teams. Effective communication among members is important.
- Groups are often interdisciplinary. It is necessary to learn about and appreciate what these different disciplines and approaches bring to the table.
- Group members communicate both in-person and online. Technology can help teams achieve their goals, especially if the members are in different locations.

BACKGROUND

The Universities at Shady Grove

- USG is a University System of Maryland (USM) Regional Higher Education Center (RHEC) located in Montgomery County Maryland.
- The USG student population mirrors the county in terms of its diverse population and first generation college attendees.
- USG offers more than 80 undergraduate and graduate degree programs from nine Maryland public universities on one campus in Montgomery County.



THE COURSE

Participants

- Three Instructors, one each from UMBC PSYC, UMD COMM, and the UMD iSchool
- Ten students from UMBC PSYC, UMBC SOCWK & UMD COMM

Location and Schedule

- The course ran during the first six weeks of the summer session in the Active Learning Classroom (ALC) at the Universities at Shady Grove (USG)



Assignments

- Pre-class readings and “Prep” tests
- Warm-ups
- In-Class exercises (e.g., The Moon challenge, making an origami crab, telephone, building a house of cards)
- Brief lectures and in-class discussions
- Post-class Summary Papers
- Post-class on-line discussions
- Team Project (incremental assignments with iterative feedback) and presentation

The Assessments

- A modified **Team Skills Scale (TSS)** [Pre- and Post-]
- A **self assessment** tool that measured perceived interprofessional team skills. Two parts:
 - Students rated their ability to carry out each of 17 tasks on a 5-point scale.
 - Students responded to open-ended questions.
- A **Student Satisfaction survey**. [Last day only]. Two parts:
 - Students provided open-ended feedback on the course.
 - Students rated, on a 5-point scale (1 being “Not at all” and 5 being “I felt that this was covered completely”), how well they felt the course met the stated Learning Objectives from the syllabus.

FINDINGS

The Results: TSS

Significant findings on the following items:

- Q6 (Handle disagreements effectively): $Z=-1.983, p=.047, r=.63$
- Q7 (Strengthen cooperation among disciplines): $Z=-2.251, p=.024, r=.71$
- Q17 (Help draw out team members who are not participating actively in meetings): $Z=-2.050, p=.040, r=.65$

The Results: Student Statements

Responses to items asking: (Post-1) “What did you gain from working in teams?”, and (Post-6): “What did you learn about the role of communication and teamwork from this experience?”

“A lot of new ways to learn about how to work in teams, and apply them to the real-world.”

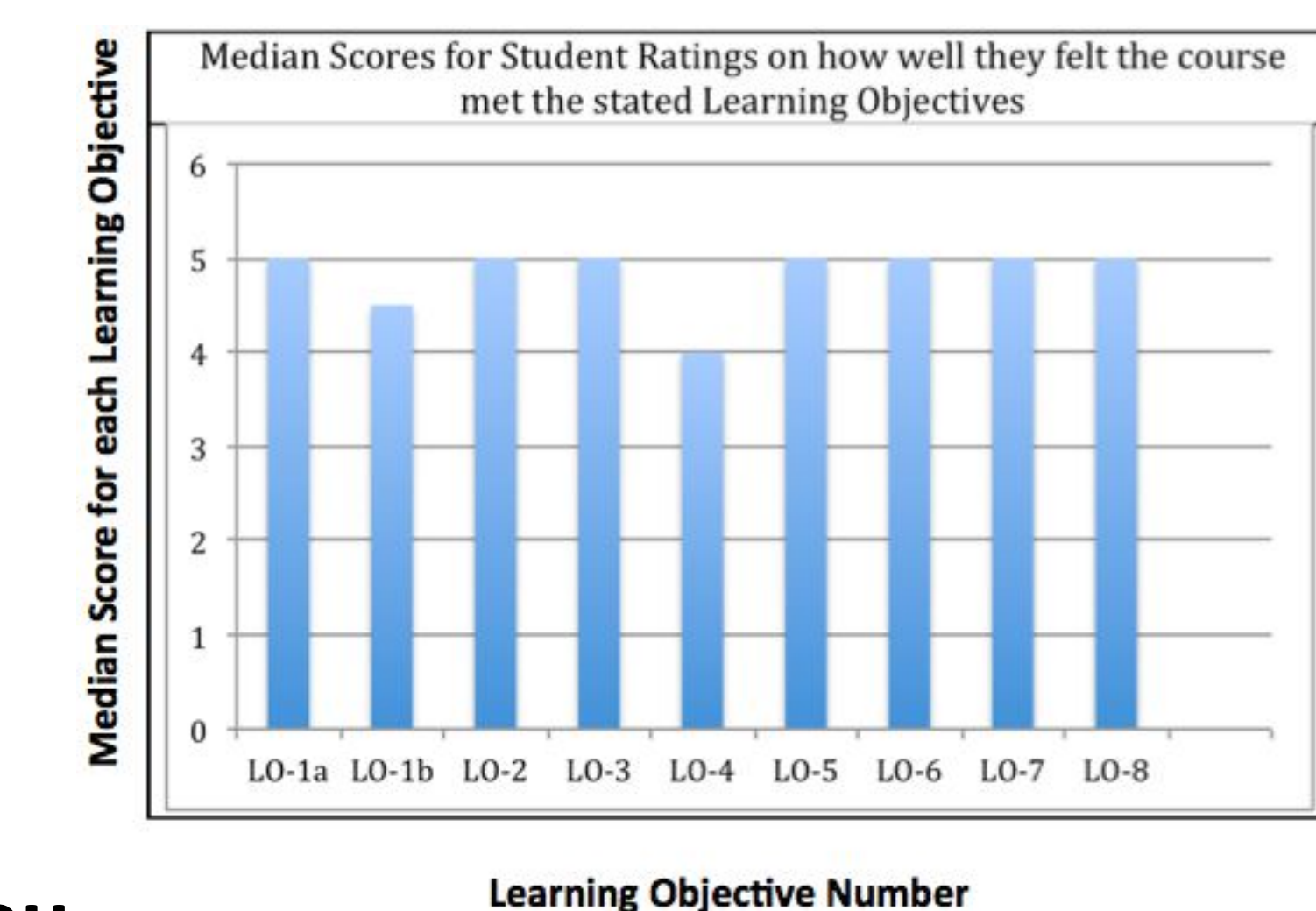
“Knowledge and experience on how groups function, how conflict and problems arise, and how they're overcome and the goal is accomplished.”

“Effective communication is VITAL for successful teamwork! Teams have to communicate goals, issues, tasks, and any questions early and often.”

The Results: Satisfaction Survey

Learning Objectives: The Median scores for all questions were above 4.0 on a 5.0 scale (N=10). No individual scores were lower than 3.0 on any item.

- Students liked: the group project, the interactive group activities, in-class activities, Blackboard organization, and discussions
- Students didn't like/noted: Too many assignments, wanted more time to work on the group project, summer session was too short, confusing/difficult quiz questions, requirements for discussion board were vague
- **Usefulness:** All students responded either “Yes” or “Most Likely” to the question, “Do you think you will use the info in college? In work?”



Final Thoughts/Quote:

“We discussed things that are rarely if ever discussed in any of my other courses and discussed information that can really improve performance in whatever we choose to do.”