Social dynamics in group work

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Abstract
Group work plays an important role in the preparation and role development of nursing students. Benefits of group work include skill building and promotion of positive behaviors. Despite the many benefits of group work, there are challenges that accompany the process for students and nursing educators. This article will highlight concerns related to group work. In addition, evidence-based teaching strategies for nursing educators will be presented.
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Group work projects have become a common method of preparing students for the real world, particularly within nursing programs. In the midst of today's health care environment, it is important for undergraduate nursing students to cultivate a variety of skills as a group member in the academic and clinical setting (Beccaria, Kek, Huijser, Rose, & Kimmins, 2014). These skills are important to the delivery of care. Group work can enhance the development of learning through promoting self-confidence, problem-solving skills, teamwork skills, management skills, active learning, and shared understanding (Beccaria et al., 2014; Hunt & Hutchings, 2014). Group work also creates opportunities for nursing students to enhance interpersonal skills such as oral communication, listening, manners, cultural awareness, and accountability (Hunt & Hutchings, 2014).

Despite the many potential benefits of group work, there are challenges that accompany the management of group work projects. Social dynamics such as procrastination,

social loafing, and free riding often occur with group work projects. These social dynamics can affect the assessment of individual accountability in group work. Students often cite a variety of concerns with group work projects including individual versus group grading, group members not meeting expectations of the group, and the peer assessment process. It is essential that nurse educators are cognizant of social and group work dynamics (Freeman & Greenacre, 2011). Understanding social dynamics and their applicability to group work projects can assist nurse educators to maximize the learning opportunities inherent to the use of group work.

Defining the Social Dynamics of Group Work

Procrastination is defined as an individual's voluntary delay of an intended action toward a task despite the negative consequences and outcome (Ferrari & Pychyl, 2012) and is a common issue that impacts group work. Another primary problem cited by students within a group is the issue of social loafing. Indeed, social loafing is the most common complaint of students while working in group projects (Aggarwal & O'Brien, 2008; Donmeyer, 2012). Social loafing is

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characterized by the susceptibility of a reduced individual effort when participating in groups as compared to the individual effort put forth when working alone (Williams & Karau, 1991). *Free-riding* students, another term used interchangeably for social loafers, do not contribute to the group but expect others to pick up their slack and yet receive the same grade (Jassawalla, Malshe, & Sashittal, 2008). Research indicates that some degree of social loafing can be found within every group (Davoudi, Oraji, & Kaur, 2012). On average, group work projects require increased time

Group Project Assignment

The purpose of this assignment is to work together as a group to research an evidenced-based healthcare related topic. Group members will design and deliver an electronic presentation (PowerPoint or Prezi). Each member of the group will have the opportunity to assess the performance of each group member including self-evaluation.

Guidelines

The Group Project is worth ____% of the course grade. Your presentation must include the following:

- Introduction of topic, implications for clinical practice, and connecting the topics to evidence-based practice.
- Minimum of 15 slides not to exceed 20 (excluding title slide and reference slide)
- Remember to be creative, including images, transitions, bullets, sounds, videos, and animations
- Presentation must be narrated and each member must participate in narration
- Use of American Psychological Association (APA) format 6th Edition

Topic Selection

Students will be randomly assigned to a group. Students will collaborate and select a topic related to nursing informatics.

Topics Include:

- Telehealth
- Electronic Health Record
- Patient Safety Issues: Bar Code Medication Administration and Medication Errors; CPOE and Medication Administration Errors
- Patient Quality of Care Issues: Core Measures and Electronic Documentation and Data Collection
- Clinical User and Device Issues: COWS/WOWs, PDAs or Tablets
- Nurse Informaticists

Group Assignments

The group leader (selected by group members) will post their selected topic under the group topic discussion board area. Students are encouraged to explore the chosen topic thoroughly. The group leader will submit the group's PowerPoint Presentation to the assignment area. Each member of your group is expected to participate in the assignment and prepare the power point presentation.

- Groups will consist of 4-5 members
- Groups must select a group leader and selected topic by assigned date/time and post to the discussion board group topic forum.
- Each group member must participate with a minimum of two substantial entries each week in the group work space. **Group members who fail to meet this requirement will have points deducted from their individual grade.**
- All participation of group activity must occur in the group work area in order to receive credit
- All group work is to be individually cited by the contributing group member in order to receive credit. Each Powerpoint slide must contain the group member who authored the slide and the appropriate citation of sources.
- The quality of your contribution to the group project will directly affect your individual portion of the grade

Fig. 1 Group project guidelines.