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Designing a nutrition course to develop collaborative and effective teamwork among the students though emphasis on informal and formal group work and cooperative learning

Kassandra Harding
kassandra.harding@csusb.edu

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Designing a nutrition course to develop collaborative and effective teamwork among the students through emphasis on informal and formal group work and cooperative learning

Rationale: Community Nutrition is a required course for nutrition and food service majors that provides the foundational and advanced skills and knowledge in nutrition that is community based or related. A great deal of the jobs in the area of community nutrition require working in small groups or teams to achieve program goals. Therefore, this Q2S Enhancing Pedagogy Grant was used to study techniques in formal and informal group work and cooperative learning, in order to design the semester Community Nutrition course with an emphasis on building student's skills and comfort in working collaboratively and effectively with teams. As outlined below, this has been reflected in the course goals, assignments, and evaluations.

Key words: group work, cooperative learning, teamwork, nutrition, Q2S

Community Nutrition Course

Course Goals

Students who successfully complete this class will be able to:

CLO1: Explain biological, genetic, behavioral and psychological factors that affect population's nutrition.

CLO2: Explain the social, political, and economic determinants of health and how they contribute to community nutrition.

CLO3: Explain how globalization affects global burden of disease.

CLO4: Interpret results of data analysis for public health research, policy, and practice.

CLO5: Assess population needs, assets, and capacities that affect community's health.

CLO6: Develop communication materials for key nutrition issues for a specific target audience.

CLO7: Effectively communicate and think critically about topics and issues in community nutrition.

CLO 8: Work collaboratively and effectively in small online teams.

Course Assignments

Assignment	Type of assignment
Participation	Blackboard discussions and in-class group challenges
Weekly quizzes	Individual
Nutritional infographic	Individual
Nutrition policy brief	Individual
Grant proposal	Group
Final	Individual and group

Assignment Descriptions

Participation

This class requires a high level of participation from all students to support everyone's learning. This will be done through regular blackboard discussions (6 throughout the semester), as well as in-class group challenges (6 throughout the semester). Blackboard discussions require critical and applied thinking and online interaction with peers to both share with and learn from each other. The group challenges will happen during class time and

require your presences. In groups of 3-4 students, you will work together to solve a community nutrition problem using the tools and skills we learn in this class.

Quizzes

Weekly blackboard quizzes will be due before class each Tuesday. The quiz will cover the material from the required readings for the upcoming week. These will be due before class to evaluate your understanding from the readings so that we can make sure to spend more time on topics that were confusing. Quizzes will always be posted one week before the due date.

Nutrition Infographic

Infographics are a powerful way to communicate data and tell a story. In this assignment, you will choose an objective from Healthy People 2020 and design a targeted infographic. The assignment requires that you compile and synthesize existing local, national, and/or global data and research articles relevant to your topic and generate a meaningful message for a specific target audience. This assignment will give you the opportunity to practice your skills in searching, compiling and synthesizing multiple, reliable sources of information, and to be creative in designing a targeted message and visual to relay this information to a target audience. This assignment is to be completed individually. However, one week before the final submission deadline, you will post your infographic on a Blackboard discussion, and provide feedback to at least three of your classmates by grading their infographic using the assignment rubric. This is a great way to get feedback before your final submission – both from the feedback your peer's give you and from your experience "grading" other's infographics.

Nutrition Policy Brief

Nutrition and health professionals are should be prepared to think critically about health policy issues and contribute to discussions about the development and revisions to policies specific to their field. A quality policy brief is one tool that can be used to communicate information about an issue and what policy actions could be taken to address the issue in a short (~4 page), easy to understand summary. Different policy briefs have different purposes, and we will focus on presenting a particular policy option to address an issue. Like a research paper, a policy brief requires reading and understanding the literature and evidence related to an issue, yet a policy brief is written in plain language and focuses on what can/should be done about the issue. This assignment will give you the opportunity to research a specific issue in public health nutrition in the Inland Empire and develop a policy brief that highlights possible policy solutions. This assignment also gives you the unique chance to practice writing for an audience of policy makers. While you will complete this assignment individually, one week before the final submission deadline, you will post your Policy Brief on a Blackboard discussion. Similar to the infographic, you will provide feedback to at least two of your classmates by grading their policy brief using the assignment rubric.

Grant Proposal

You will work in a small group (3-4 students) to develop a grant proposal to address a significant community nutrition problem. The community health problem will be presented in the first week of class, and you and your team will have all semester to complete the proposal. Students will be provided a community nutrition problem to address with their proposal, and a call for grant proposals that they should respond to. In grant writing, it is essential to follow instructions explicitly and carefully. Working in a group, you will be able to triple check that every "t" is crossed and "i" is dotted.

Final

The final is an in-class exam with a mix of multiple choice, true/false, and short answer. You will have 1 hour to complete the exam. In the second hour of the exam class period, you will work in a group of 3-4 students to solve a group challenge.