



# Virtual Teamwork using Microsoft Teams

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## Abstract

Social work graduate students in an online Group Dynamics and Social Work Practice course were asked to work in small groups and function as task groups to complete a group proposal. Students were to apply the content learned in the course to create a task group and to work virtually using Microsoft Teams.

Students worked in their small group all semester. They used Microsoft Teams to communicate via text, phone calls, conduct video conferences and to consult with the instructor.

## Introduction

Microsoft Teams is a part of Office 365 Education. It is free to students. It can be used on effectively on all platforms. Students were able to have full access via their cell phones and other devices. The digital hub brings conversations, content, assignments, and apps together in one place.

The instructor found that students don't often enjoy group work. Introducing a new platform and empowering students to engage in virtual group work using theories learned in class was her way of changing the traditional group work practices of students. While there are many functions of Microsoft Teams, the class focused on communication within the virtual team and sharing of documents.



Figure 1. Microsoft Teams

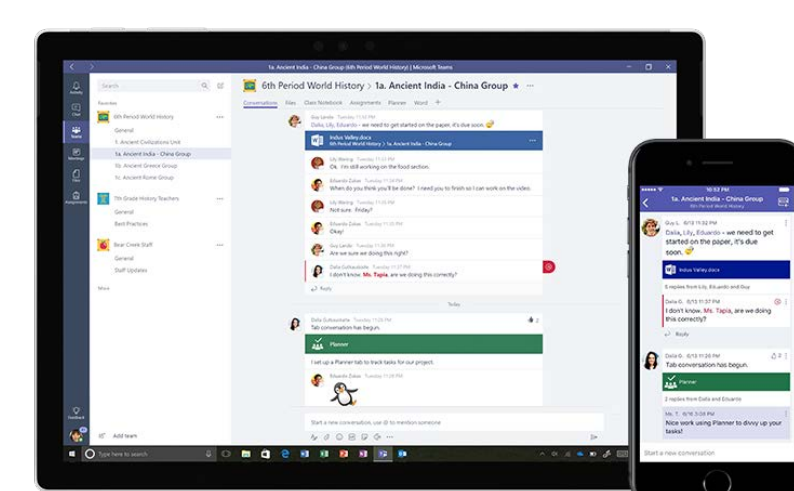


Figure 2. Sample student communication

## Methods and Materials

Are students group work experiences enhanced by the use of Microsoft Teams?

Students were polled and completed a voluntary survey via Survey Monkey.

1. Was Microsoft Teams user friendly?
2. Had you used Microsoft Teams prior to this course?
3. How useful was Microsoft Teams in enhancing your group work experience?
4. How much did using Microsoft Teams enhance your learning?
5. What was the best part of using Microsoft Teams?
6. What could be improved about working with Microsoft Teams?

## Results

92% of students found Microsoft Teams user friendly.

92% of students had not used Microsoft Teams prior to the course.

36% of students found the tool to be extremely useful in enhancing their group work experience. 24% found it very useful. 36% found it somewhat useful. 4% found it not so useful.

52% of students reported Microsoft Teams enhanced their learning a great deal. 36% reported a moderate amount. 8% reported a little and 4% reported not at all.

## Discussion

Microsoft Teams was new to the instructor. She had to learn how to use the platform with her students. Prior to Microsoft Teams, meetings with students were held on Zoom. Microsoft Teams is even more user friendly and students can access it from any electronic device. Instructor received phone calls and chat messages via the platform. Several meetings with student groups were held via the platform. Students initiated the meeting and sent a calendar appointment. Instructor only needed to join the meeting. Instructor was able to share documents as we discussed in the meeting. Instructor felt much more engaged and connected to the students. Questions were addressed and it is hoped that quality assignments will be produced.

Some student groups allowed the instructor to be a member of their sub-groups and she was able to see their communication. Communications varied from professional to fun chat that included emojis. No conflict was noticed.

## Conclusions

Instructor will use the platform in other courses. Integrating the classroom into the platform and using other functions such as the Class Notebook, Assignments and Calendar link are options. The platform could easily replace the LMS. Now that it's been used before, a better tutorial can be developed for students.

The instructor learned that students in online courses are often isolated from their peers. Those that engaged reported a fulfilling group experience and were excited to be taught a tool they can use professionally.

## Contact

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## References

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