

Team Building for Distance or Online Students

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Virtual Students

- Effective communication is can be a challenge with distance students
 - Misunderstandings and miscommunications
 - Loss of speed
 - Loss of creativity
 - Loss of trust
 - Loss of clarity of goals



Virtual Students

- Require more out of class time
- Often feel more disconnected from the class
- Often feel frustrated when working on group work
- We underestimate the impact of virtual distances



Virtual Students

- Trust is required for effective communication across distances
- Cannot assume that trust will develop



Jarvenpaa and Leidner 1999. Communication and trust in global virtual teams, **Organizational Science** 10, 791-815

Virtual Students

- Building trust
 - Requires time together (work and play)
 - Requires students to find common ground
 - Requires a shared vision
 - Requires respect and sensitivity to differences



Global Project Management

Global Project
Management



Emgt 6323
Dr. Joan Schuman

- Large, 6000 level discussion based class
- 45 distance students/51 total this term
- Uses WebEx for live online streaming of the class

Global Project Management

- Class requires two team projects
- Incorporated Team Building activities
- Each week students completed an assignment with team members
- I have used this approach for 3 classes using different approaches



Team Building Exercises

■ GOALS

- Discuss a topic pertaining to the lecture material.
- Use collaborative tools for distributed discussions.
- Build familiarity and trust among your team members.
- Allow less experienced classmates learn from those with more experience.
- Allow distance students a chance to feel more connected to the class.

Virtual Team Building

- First approach:
 - Had breakout sessions in class with each team
 - Used google docs
- Difficult to handle the audio
- Google docs were cumbersome and students were typing over each other
- Teams didn't work together
- Took a great deal of time in class
- Issues with some students using Google products.



Virtual Team Building

- Second approach:
 - Teams used GroupMe chat rooms for posting team answers to the exercises
 - Exercises were completed prior to class
- Teams were required to work together to build consensus
- Results in one answer per team
- Answers were brought up in class for discussion

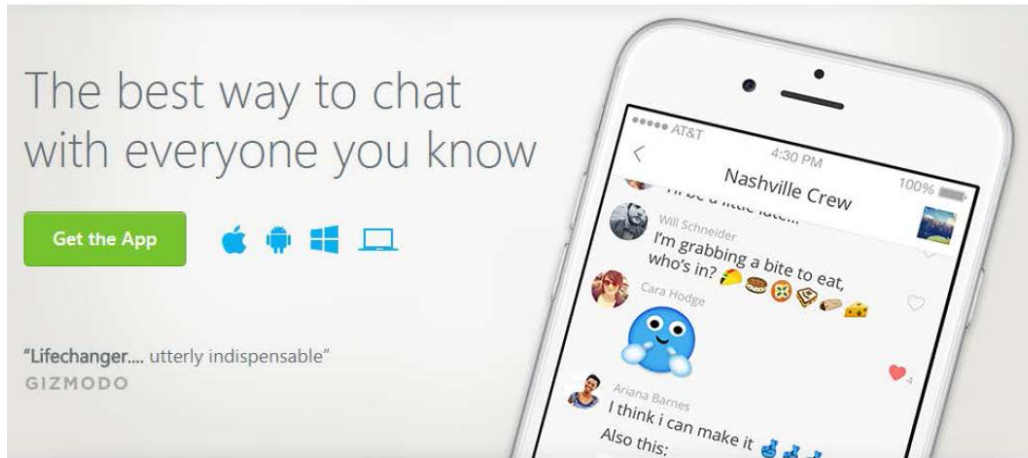
Virtual Team Building

- Groupme
 - Free group messaging
 - Easy to set up
 - Students used for other work
 - No issues from students as with Google docs





Chat with your groups online: [Log in](#)



From here select [“Sign up today”](#) in order to use your [Missouri S&T email](#).

Log in

[f Log in with Facebook](#)

or


Remember me [Forgot password?](#)

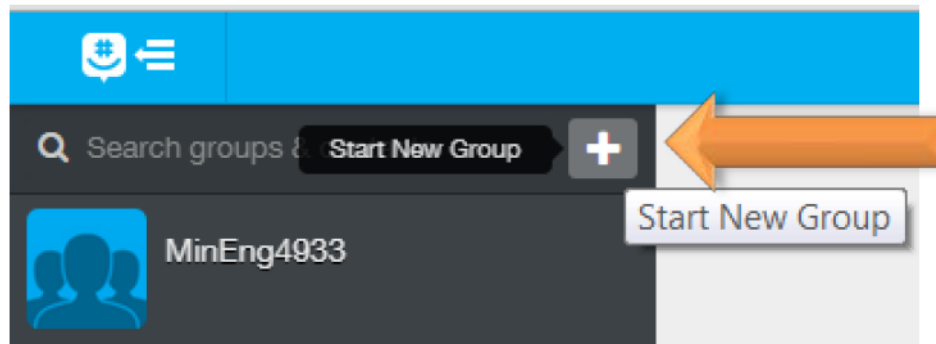
[Log in](#)

groupme.com





To add students to a group, you must first “Start New Group”. Select the carrot  on the upper left hand side of the screen then select the “+” symbol





- Can create as many teams as you want
 - Add in specific students or post a “Share Link”
 - Team 1: https://groupme.com/join_group/18637079/l76EI5
 - Team 2: https://groupme.com/join_group/18637093/Oqk0GE
 - Team 3: https://groupme.com/join_group/18637120/3MO7F7
 - Team 4: https://groupme.com/join_group/18637143/5pTuJq
 - Teams were self enroll in Blackboard
 - I posted a share link for each team on homepage in Blackboard
- groupme.com



Virtual Team Building

- Teams
 - 7-9 people
- Weekly assignments types:
 - Have them create a team name and avatar
 - Polling about a topic
 - Consensus on questions
 - Consensus on analysis for a scenario or mini cases



- Student teams created better connections with team members
 - Saw more cohesion with team interaction
 - Teams performed better than previous classes on projects
 - Teams spent less time on second project (average of several hours)
 - Teams had less conflict
 - Students who were frustrated with the technology had support from team members



- Comments from students:
 - “I really liked the team building exercises, especially the scenario analysis”
 - “Learned a great deal from other students in the team building exercises”
 - “Didn’t get much out of the team building exercises, but felt that students with less experience did learn from me”
 - “Team building exercises made the project work easier, already had those connections”