

Construction Management showcase: The active role of team-based learning in enriching the experience of online learning

M Shokry Abdelaal¹

¹ The University of South Australia

Online learning went through ages of evolution and theoretical frameworks during the past two decades. Online students' engagement and 'presence' in their virtual classroom remade as a momentum topic for controversial discourse as interpersonal communication remains an area of the constant need for development in online learning.

A team-based project (TBP) was introduced to the Online learning environment by Palloff and Pratt (2010). They suggested that online learning should be enriched with students' interactivity to leverage their critical thinking skills, socialised intelligence and reflection of a better learning experience. Also, it helps in constructive engagement with other online classmates and boosts self-motivation and esteem while being isolated within the boundaries of a self-learning experience (Morrison, 2014). For construction management students, it is important to develop cohesiveness within the learning groups. A sense of community of connected learners can be created in the TBP environment (Sibley, 2014).

This study went through a scoping review for a wide range of literature related to online learning to find the distinction between 'interaction' (all-important student-to-student and student-to-instructor communications) and 'interactivity' (adding study tools or activities that can help create an active online learning environment) within such a context. Students' interactivity during TBP can provide students with a sense of self-confidence, control and management of the learning process. Fewer faculty-student engagements and student-student engagements can make students and faculty alike feel dissatisfied with online teaching (Cohen, 2021). Nevertheless, TBP assignments or projects were an area of friction between students and teachers. It forces the high-achieving students to compensate for those less willing to put in the effort (Lieberman, 2018).

TBP in online learning appears challenging and full of logistical roadblocks (McNeal, 2016), such as the geographical and time zone barriers, lifestyle and commitments between participants. Most importantly, it is challenging for the teaching team to keep monitoring collaborative learning (CL) within the team and minimise the chances of teammates' frustrations due to being obliged to work in teams with students they cannot contact in person.

This paper is presenting the case of practice-based research in the scholarship of teaching and learning. The course development team used primary and secondary resources effectively to reach the proposed strategy of enhancing team-based activities in online learning. Some techniques were tested during 5 rounds of course offerings between 2019 and 2021. Such as the criteria of formulating teams, preparing private team forums and shared folders for better communication, flexible and balanced distribution of workload and marking between team and individuals, regular online class meetings, stabilising team with communication/contents' understanding concerns team performance review sessions. Most importantly, providing the

team with a clear pathway and documenting progress following up weekly. Team agreement and weekly meetings were successful tools to make the team more engaged and improve the professional workplace environment. Despite being tailored to match the construction management profession's needs, many learned lessons can be extracted from this experience for other disciplines. Besides, other international success stories of integrating teamwork experience in online learning will be discussed.