

Innovation Report: Utilizing a Mobile Communication Platform for Improving Learning Community Engagement and Team Dynamics In Medical School

Ali Mahfuz BS MBA, Sujata Ojha BS, Samir Nangia, MD CPE and Daisy Nwachukwu, MD CPE

TCU and UNTHSC School of Medicine, Fort Worth, TX

— TCU and UNTHSC —
School of Medicine

UNTHSC HEALTH SCIENCE CENTER TCU

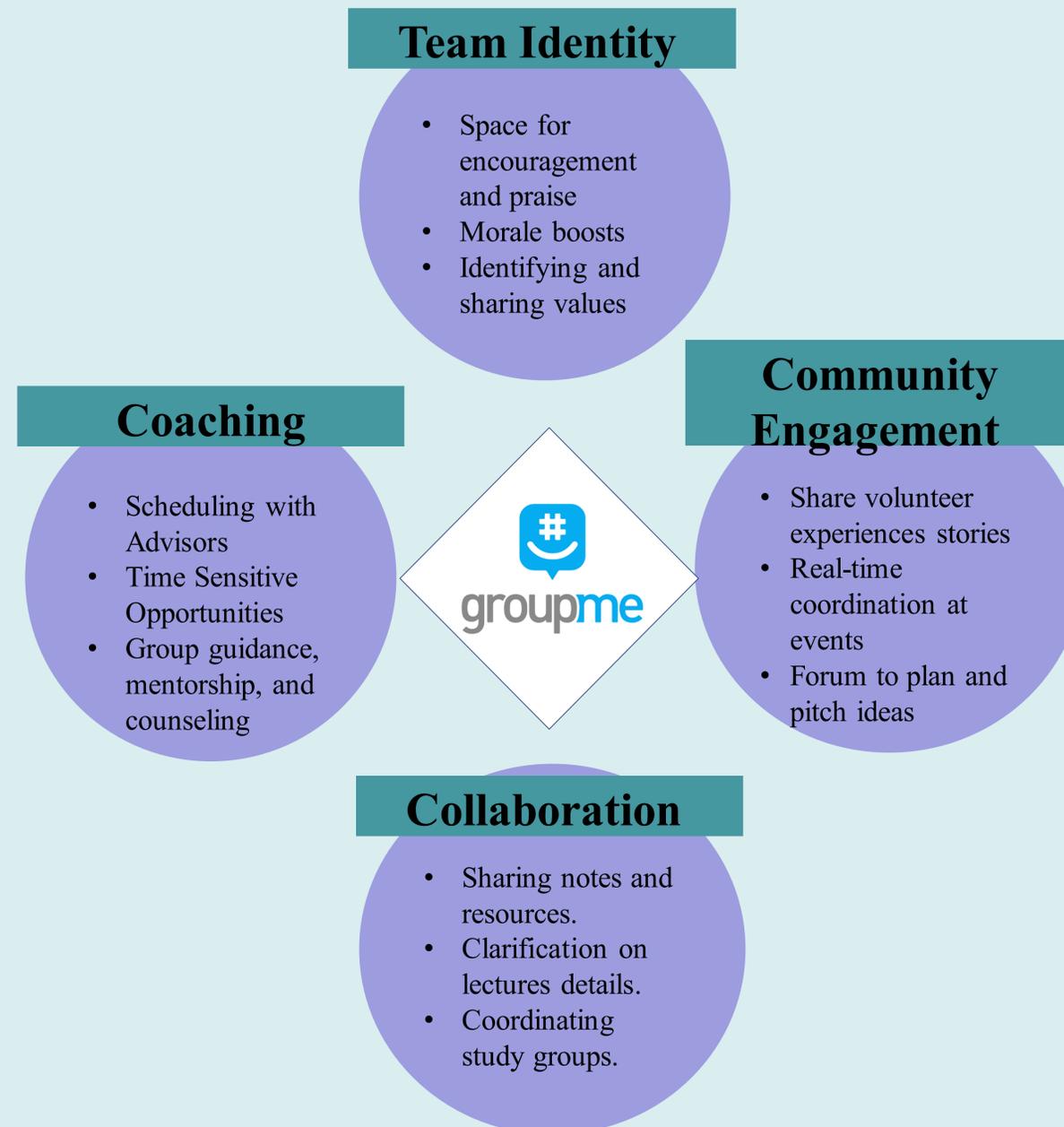
BACKGROUND

Learning communities rely on communication to express ideas and facilitate collaboration. Frequent communication is pivotal in fostering engagement and building team identity. The impact of real-time mobile communication platforms in learning communities hasn't been universally utilized and formally investigated. Traditional educational communication platforms such as emails and discussion boards limit an engaging environment and are associated with formal language; creating a communication barrier for students. The barrier can inhibit collaborative planning and delay real-time reaction of students' academic and wellness needs.

OVERVIEW

The inaugural class of 2023 at TCU and UNTHSC School of Medicine adopted mobile messaging platform, GroupMe, as a communication modality within learning communities. The cross platform and hand-held nature of the application makes communication accessible and expeditious. It provides valuable tools that assess student interest in faculty-led initiatives, and creates a forum for casual team discussions. GroupMe de-identifies personal contact information mitigating student and faculty privacy concerns, and can be accessed by moderators for professionalism.

COMMUNICATION INFRASTRUCTURE



CHALLENGES/SUCCESS

Challenges

- Advisors unfamiliar with the application will experience a learning curve
- Requires school appointed moderator
- Guidelines and expectations need to be communicated with students and advisors

Success

- Safeguard users against privacy concerns
- Active engagement pivotal for team identity formation and nurturing a collaborative environment
- Immediate team mentorship, coaching, and advising during crucial moments

CONCLUSIONS

Utilizing Mobile communication platform for learning community engagement has been instrumental at the TCU and UNTHSC School of Medicine. Traditional communication methods limit interactions and hinders flexibility, GroupMe has been instrumental in increasing responsiveness and engagement that is crucial in team-identity formation. This can be similiary use for communication of student government vs student affairs, student interst groups with advisors, and research groups with primary investigators .

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