

“Team Teaching: A Better Alternative”

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Abstract

Team teaching is an approach which involves true team work between two or more qualified instructors who, together, make presentations to learners. Team teaching has the potential for revitalizing instructional capabilities through a process of dialogue. The impersonal nature of large lecture halls can be brought to life by an interactive and dynamic situation. Present paper comprises the benefits, procedure, characteristics and principles of team teaching.

What is Team Teaching?

Team teaching most often refers to two or more faculty members who jointly produce a course (Davis, 1995). Easterby-Smith and Olve (1984) write: “Team teaching involves two or more teachers collaborating over the design or implementation of the same course” It is a collaborative effort from course planning to implementation. Materials, content and schedule were planned collectively by faculty members. During implementation, both instructors attended and participated in each class session. Although one instructor would ‘take the lead’ for a lecture during a given session, the other would actively contribute further information in the lecture, answer student questions, or lead a discussion on assigned readings. The arrangements vary considerably among teams, and there seems to be little agreement on what constitutes the team part of team teaching or even what to call the arrangement—team teaching, co-teaching, collaborative teaching, or cooperative teaching (Luckner, 1999). Team teaching requires that the faculty is organized so that teachers share a group of students, a common planning time to develop curriculum and instruction in multiple content areas, the same schedule, and that the teachers are in the same physical area of the school

Gurman (1989) also states: “Team teaching is an approach in which two or more persons are assigned to the same students at one time for instructional purposes”. As in this arrangement two or more teachers regularly and purposefully share responsibility for planning, presentation, and evaluation of lessons prepared for the same group of students so Deighton (1971) describes this ‘collaborative’ approach. Often, responsibility over course material will be distributed so that one instructor ‘takes the lead’ on topics over which she or he feels a greater level of expertise, but inevitably both instructors share relevant perspectives and experiences, thereby creating an environment characterized by greater depth of knowledge.

Teams are typically composed of between two and four teachers working collaboratively to plan thematic units and lesson plans in order to provide a more supportive environment for students. In practice, team teaching has many different formats but in general it is a means of organising staff into groups to enhance teaching. Teams generally comprise staff members who may represent different areas of subject expertise but who share the same group of students and a common planning period to prepare for the teaching. The

members experienced a concept of co-operative planning. A democratic attitude is fully seen in team teaching and variety of learning activities are provided to learners.

Why Team Teaching?

Team teaching boasts many pedagogical and intellectual advantages. It can create a dynamic and interactive learning environment, provide instructors with a useful way of modeling thinking within or across disciplines, and also inspire new research ideas and intellectual partnerships among faculty. The purpose of a team-taught course, from an educational standpoint, is to push students to achieve higher levels of synthesis and integration in their study of new material. It is, therefore, vitally important for instructors to model the process of integration by interweaving teaching partners' perspectives into each presentation. Instructors and students who have participated in collaboratively taught classes enthusiastically outline its benefits as compared to solo-taught courses (Anderson & Speck, 1998; George & Davis-Wiley, 2000; Rinn & Weir, 1984). Needleman and Leland (1973) characterises this as "alternate solo performers" and Pugach, Johnson, and Lilly (1995) believes that such an arrangement violates the intent of team teaching.

Rinn and Weir (1984) discusses how team teaching increases student participation. As teaching partners dialogue in class, students infer the freedom of and value in multiple perspectives, which increases participation and intellectual enthusiasm. Quinn (1984) also highlights how effective team teaching values respect for individuals and ideas, while colleagues interact and discuss substantive issues in the classroom, particularly in the face of intellectual differences or disagreements. Although more time consuming, students in team-taught classes often describe the learning environments as 'rich' in knowledge, perspectives and experiences (McKinley, 1996).

Research suggests that students who do not feel connected to peers and their teachers, often have a higher rate of academic failure Jenson, (1998). Team teaching can have a highly positive impact on student learning outcomes, largely due to the increased opportunity for student participation that team teaching provides. "The formation of interdisciplinary teams has been proposed as one way of reducing student alienation and increasing students' sense of membership... Teams provide students with a greater sense of identity, belonging, and support Wallace, (2007).

The presence of more than one instructor in the classroom increases the occasions for student-teacher inter- action (Wadkins, Miller, and Wozniak, 2006). More importantly, a collaborative teaching environment invites students to take a more active role in the learning process. Because team teaching encourages a variety of perspectives on a topic, students are more likely to feel they can make valuable contributions to class discussions (Anderson and Speck, 1998). Students in team-taught courses learn new material by approaching it from many different perspectives. The dialogic structure of class meetings often stands in stark contrast to the lecture format to which many students and instructors are accustomed.

Characteristics of Team Teaching

- 1-It is a instructional strategy.
- 2-Two or more than two teachers perform in a class turn by turn.
- 3-Teachers of same subject work together for teaching.
- 4-All the teachers involved in the team-teaching plan teaching cooperatively and execute it cooperatively.

5-The teaching plan and procedure in team-teaching is flexible.

6-The teachers decide their responsibilities themselves in the team teaching.

7-In team teaching, the entire responsibility is shared by all the teachers. SO we can say it is based on collective responsibility.

8-Each member use his/her special competencies of teaching.

9-Teacher considers the needs of their students and they teach for satisfying the needs of students.

10-Each team member has responsibility for planning, organizing, leading, demonstration, controlling evaluating

11- Team-Teaching is based on cooperation. All the teachers participating in the team teaching apply their resources, abilities and experiences

Principles of team Teaching

1. Size and composition
2. Level of Instruction
3. Duties assigned to teachers of team
4. Learning Environment
5. Time factor
6. Supervision

Size and Composition

The size of the group should vary according to the objective or purpose of team teaching. e.g. purpose like to remove the difficulties of the students in a topic trigonometry of mathematics, certainly the size of the group should be small because the students who have similar type of difficulties included only in a group.

Level of Instruction

The entry behavior of the target group should respond to the level of instruction.

Duties assigned to teachers of the team

It involves two types of tasks- (i) Lead Lecture, and (ii) Group work or Follow-up Work or Demonstration. According to the competencies of teachers appropriate duties can be assigned to each member of the team.

Learning Environment

Learning environment must be generated by using appropriate teaching aids, e.g. field trip, demonstration, workshop, simulation, laboratory, models, maps etc.

Time factor

Time factor is flexible in team teaching. Time schedule should be prepared by allotting the content, leading the lecture and team work.

Supervision

To develop the mastery of the subject matter by employing the expertise of teachers is the main focus of team teaching. Supervision is necessary for assimilating the knowledge of a topic.

Types of Team teaching

1. A team of teachers from same department
2. A team of teachers from inter departments but from the same institution.
3. A team of teachers from inter institution.

In first type all members of team belongs to the same institution and also from the same discipline or same subject.

In second type all team members belongs to same institution but working in different departments.

in the team as per their capabilities and competencies of the teaching.

Planning to Implement Team Teaching

Procedure of team teaching includes mainly three steps, these steps are as follows.

Step-1: Planning of Team Teaching

- (i) Topic selection
- (ii) Formulating the objectives of team teaching
- (iii) Writing objectives and their specifications
- (iv) Identification of the initial behavior of the learner
- (v) Identification of the human and physical resources
- (vi) Selection of the members of team teaching
- (vii) Appropriate teaching aids selection
- (viii) Fixing up the level of instruction
- (ix) Preparation of the schedule
- (x) Assigning the duties or responsibilities to team members
- (xi) Evaluation

Step-2: Organizing team teaching

- (i) Level of instruction determination
- (ii) Selecting the appropriate communication technology
- (iii) Lead lecture presentation
- (iv) Follow-up work
- (v) Providing the motivation to learners
- (v) Supervising the activities of students which are assigned in lead lecture or follow-up work.

Step-3: Evaluation of team teaching

- (i) Evaluation through oral, written or practical work
 - (ii) Learners homework and practical works evaluation
 - (iii) Decision about level of performance and realization of the objectives
 - (iv) Diagnosis of difficulties of the learners and providing the remedial measures
 - (v) On the basis of evaluation revising the planning and organization of team teaching
- To experience the full benefits of team teaching, however, instructors must adjust their course planning and classroom management strategies to accommodate a collaborative approach.

Conclusion

As Landy says, team teaching gives professors the opportunity “to teach in a different way, and to learn in a different way.” It allows instructors to hone their pedagogical skills and explore new topics for research. The benefits of team teaching extend to students as well, improving learning outcomes by offering increased student-teacher interaction, as well as a multi-dimensional approach to subject matter. Moreover, as several authors have noted (Hughes & Murwaski, 2001; Jurena & Daniels, 1997; McKinley, 1996), multiple instructors create a ‘richer’ learning environment, due to multiple perspectives and more effectively catering to individual learning needs. Ultimately, the advantages of team teaching far outweigh the time and energy it requires.

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