

TLC Seminar on Co-teaching

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Elena Berg

Overview

One of things that really struck me as I read through stacks of articles and read through educational websites: in all its forms, team teaching is an extremely effective pedagogical tool. It engages students and reinvigorates our teaching.

Effective team teaching requires resources – we cannot ask faculty to engage in team teaching if they receive only partial teaching compensation. Lots of evidence that team teaching pays off in terms of faculty satisfaction and student retention, but effective team teaching is time consuming and requires ongoing financial support.

Definition

MANY definitions, little consensus

Davis 1995: "All arrangements that include two or more faculty in some level of collaboration in the planning and delivery of a course."

Quinn and Kanter 1984: group of instructors working together to "plan, conduct, and evaluate the learning activities of the same group of students."

Gurman 1989: "an approach in which two or more persons are assigned to the same students at one time for instructional purposes."

Hatcher et al 1996: "two or more teachers collaborating over the design and/or implementation and evaluation of the same course or courses."

Really hard to define because there are so many models of team teaching and educational settings.

(for a good overview of this, see Anderson & Speck 1998)

History:

Introduced to US as early as 1963 by William M Alexander, who is known as the "father of the American middle school"

Gained popularity in the 1980s.

A lot of the literature I found was for grade school level teaching – really different set of models than for university teaching

Often used in language teaching and ESL

Different models of team teaching, roughly in order of most effective but time consuming to least effective but less time/labor intensive (see BYU & Stanford Center for Teaching and Learning websites):

Interactive (collaborative) team teaching:

two+ faculty members present in front of the class simultaneously
Usually more work than solo course – must get paid equivalently
By far the most effective, but the most work as well

Participant-observer team teaching:

All faculty are present for all classes but only one is "teaching" at a time

Like the FirstBridge lecture that Elizabeth Kinne, Michelle Kuo, Linda Martz and I taught during Sp16

Faculty may play different roles: participating observer, model learner, observer, panel member, resource

Rotational format team teaching:

Faculty alternate teaching the class

Dispersed model:

Like our FB model, in which faculty teach linked courses with one "interactive" reflective seminar session per week (however, faculty often make this rotational to save time)

Good mixture of big and small class size, chances for integration and interaction, BUT can limit opportunity for students to hear multiple perspectives on the same topic, ONE OF THE CORE LEARNING ADVANTAGES OF TEAM TEACHING

Team coordination

Faculty arrange and integrate a curriculum so as to maximize learning and connections using paired or linked courses, an integrated cluster of independent courses, or freshman interest groups

Could involve shared planning or sharing of ideas while still teaching independently

Eisen 2000 – relationships using metaphor of family systems model

Benefits

Students:

Opportunity to observe and engage in the process of learning

Opportunity to observe your instructors interacting and learning.

Learn that it is possible to disagree and "still respect the integrity of your opponent without being hostile" (Anderson & Speck 1989: 673)

Learn from faculty as model learners, models of mutual respect

Participation in a collaborative environment

Complexity – multiple perspectives

Deepen students' analytical abilities

Build greater curricular coherence

Build a sense of community

Witness and participate in "intellectual excitement" – this can increase student participation (Rinn & Weir 1984)

Can improve evaluation/feedback of students' performance – e.g. team grading provides multiple perspectives, promotes fairness

Faculty:

Reinvigorates teaching – learn from your colleagues, not only about subject material and different intellectual perspectives, but about teaching methods

Learn about teaching

Improve teaching skills

Step out of comfort zone

Opportunities for creative assignments

Become informed and encouraged in interdisciplinary research

See teaching through learners' eyes
Avoid the lonely, repetitive, fragmented experience of solo teaching
Gain new insights into their disciplines

Open to diverse ways of thinking

Wary of absolutism

Able to admit they do not know

Good at listening

Unconventional

Flexible

Willing to take risks

Self-reflective

Comfortable with ambiguity

Other biases – e.g. man + woman, different races, different seniority

Might experience stereotype threat more if paired up with someone from the group less likely to feel that specific stereotype threat

For example, Anderson & Speck 1998 – woman felt that she fell into “wife/mother” role (more organized, more nurturing etc), tendency for students to see male prof as the expert.

This reminds me of the data showing that women get lower student evaluations than men.

Teachers as facilitators, students take more responsibility for their learning
Dispersion of authority
Teacher as expert learner, not sole authority
Team teachers as models of professional disagreement and mutual respect

Specific argument for support of team teaching at AUP:

Interdisciplinarity is at the heart of AUP's mission

Remind them of benefit to university quote above

We already have small class sizes – especially conducive to team teaching!!!

How

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