Negotiating a Pedagogical Approach to Team Teaching: Experiences from an Interdisciplinary First-Year Cluster

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CURRENT ISSUES IN EDUCATION

“With over a third of all students requiring remedial education upon enrollment in our nation’s public two- and four-year institutions of higher education (IHE’s), it is clear there is a disconnect between the knowledge and skills students have when they graduate from high school and what they need for success in credit-bearing college courses.” (Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers PARCC)
WHY TEAM TEACH

- Empower skill-deficient students
  - ...to think critically
  - ...to make connections
  - ...to be more engaged
  - ...to communicate effectively
  - ...to establish authority and confidence to engage in academic discourse about worldly topics
DEFINITION

Team-teaching is a pedagogical strategy in which two or more instructors from similar or cross-disciplines come together to teach a cohort of students (Seabury & Barrett, 2000).

It provides students:

- With fundamental concepts
- With connections across disciplines
- With how to apply their knowledge beyond the classroom setting
- With a mentorship relationship with an instructor
## Interdisciplinary vs. Linear Teaching

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interdisciplinary</th>
<th>Linear Teaching</th>
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<tr>
<td>Instructors pool their talents together</td>
<td>Disconnect between courses</td>
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<td>Aids the professional and interpersonal dynamics of departments leading to closer integration of staff</td>
<td>Hindered attempts to create collaborative environments where instructors regularly talk with each other, and observe one another</td>
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<td>Students take a more active role in learning (increased student retention and collaboration)</td>
<td>Lack of collaboration between students and teacher/student interaction</td>
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<td>Students receive more individual attention</td>
<td>Teacher dominated interaction: lessons are teacher centered and the students become passive receivers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provides an expanded number of teaching styles that may connect with more student learning preferences</td>
<td>Lecture teaching (students are exposed to one type of teaching style)</td>
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If team-teaching is done correctly, students can learn to **synthesize various perspectives**, **interconnect concepts**, and **broaden their problem solving skills** (Davis, 1995).

“Seemingly the opportunity of having two professors in one classroom encourages students to **experience varied instruction** that addresses the diverse learning styles and needs within the classroom” (Ferguson and Wilson, 2011 p. 65).

Well-designed learning communities emphasizing **collaborative learning** result in **improved GPA, retention, and satisfaction** for undergraduate students (Lennings and Ebbers, 1999).
“Team teaching provides an opportunity for colleagues to model learning for students because in the best team teaching experiences colleagues continue to learn from each other, about both content and teaching” (Shibley, 2006, p. 271).

Instructors with a strong desire to learn from each other are able to negotiate pedagogical differences during the planning, content integration, and teaching stages (Davis, 1995).

Allows instructors creativity in reaching their learning goals by co-planning assignments, topics, and class discussions with each other. This provides instructors with frequent feedback on their teaching style and course content.
INTERDISCIPLINARY OBJECTIVES FOR CLUSTER

- **Make Connections**
  - Infer, translate, extrapolate and interpret specific informational and discipline-specific texts and make text to text, text to self and text to world connections

- **Think Outside the Box**
  - Formulate “outside the box” concepts and examine and determine the logic behind concepts with little or no leading

- **Be Consistent**
  - Demonstrate consistent habits which will hone skills needed to be effective, successful and confident readers, writers, thinkers and learners

- **Prepare to Argue**
  - Explore and theorize all sides of an argument, concept, picture and/or text and draw conclusions based on material presented

- **Model the Three C’s**
  - Display effective communication, collaboration and critical thinking skills
THE TEAM-TEACHING PROCESS

How does it work?
THE TEAM-TEACHING PROCESS

- **Selection of Team Instructors**
  - Work Ethic, Creativity and Balance
  - Pedagogical Similarities/Differences

- **Plan, Plan, Plan**
  - Create lessons that intersect and connect
  - Be Realistic

- **Co-Facilitation**
  - Designate Course
  - Flexibility in Structure

- **Introduce Team-Teaching Structure to Students**
  - Prepare Students for Team-Teaching Sessions

- **Reflective Practitioners**
  - Student Evaluations
  - Teaching Logs
  - Note-taker
SAMPLE QUESTIONS-FINAL STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

1. My experience with co-teaching in this learning community has been positive.

2. The integrated assignments between all three instructors helped me to better understand the material and exposed me to various viewpoints.

3. The private consultations with each instructor did not provide the opportunity to gage my mid-term academic standing.

4. The content course (INTD 149 HIR) helped to develop my critical thinking skills and my ability to analyze theories and concepts.
THE TEAM

K. Aste
Reading & Study Skills

T. Cunningham
Reading & Writing Across the Disciplines II

R. Perez
Human & Intercultural Relations (General Studies Course)
A TEAM-TEACHING MODEL
THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF RACE
Reading Images: A Higher-Level Thinking Activity

**Total Objective:**
- Employ higher level, critical thinking skills when conferring a text
- Communicate concepts, argue positions, make inferences and identify connections based on the readings

**Specific Objective:**
- Employ higher level critical thinking skills to understand the social construction of race and its offspring—racism, color-blind racism and white privilege

**Assignment:**
- Various images posted around the classroom
- Students visit each image station to think critically about the images
- Students critically respond to the images using tiered questions
A TEAM-TEACHING MODEL: TIERED QUESTIONS

**Tier I:**
What does this image make you think of?

**Tier II:**
What argument or underlying message does the image suggest?

**Tier III:**
How does that argument or message connect to the text (articles), to you (personal experiences) and to the world?

**Tier IV:**
What are the greater implications of that argument or message, and how might people respond?
ACTIVITY: GROUP I

Create a lesson plan, employing the co-facilitation approach, using the following information:

Professor Morales teaches Literature & Film.
Professor Kincaid teaches Orientation to College.
Professor Kincaid will visit and co-facilitate a lesson in Professor Morales’ Literature & Film class.
Write the team-teaching plan
Activity: Group II

Create a lesson plan, employing the co-facilitation approach, using the following information:

Professor Drew teaches Sociology.
Professor Moran teaches Race, Class and Gender.
Professor Drew will visit and co-facilitate a lesson in Professor Moran’s Race, Class and Gender class.

Write the team-teaching plan
ACTIVITY: GROUP III

Create a lesson plan, employing the co-facilitation approach, using the following information:

Professor Chiu teaches Speech.
Professor Boseman teaches Introduction to Media.
Professor Chiu will visit and co-facilitate a lesson in Professor Boseman’s Intro to Media class.
Write the team-teaching plan
REFERENCES


