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## THE POTENTIAL OF TEAM TEACHING TO ENHANCE TEACHING-LEARNING PROCESS

*Also, a team teaching program must be introduced, when teachers internalize its benefits, when it is not imposed to them, and when they feel that it is necessary for them and to the students they teach. Especially, newly recruited teachers can benefit most from team teaching, when they are attached to veteran teachers: having expertise of teaching for many years.*

*Key words: Proficiency, differentiated instruction, interdisciplinary, interdependence, shared vision, respect for individual differences, conflict-resolution, partnership, cooperation.*

**Introduction.** At a time when increased emphasis is put on inclusive programming for all students, teachers are often asked to team teach. Team teaching based on partnerships is practiced and /or developed in colleges offering regular education or support services ; and also in special education offering colleges. Once to many times ,when teachers are interested in team teaching or when they are asked to develop team teaching partnerships, questions arise pertaining to 'what' to teach, 'how' to teach or 'why' to teach in partnerships.

Team teaching involves a group of teachers working purposefully, regularly and cooperatively to help a group of learners irrespective of their ages. Teachers set goals together for a course to be taught, design a syllabus, prepare individual lessons, teach learners and evaluate their performances.

Teachers share insights, argue with one another and work towards challenging students to decide which delivery methods suits them. Teams can be single- discipline, interdisciplinary or school within a school ; teams that meet with the same subjects taking students over an extended period of time.

Most preferably, newly recruited teachers can be paired with veteran teachers . Innovations and good practices are encouraged and modifications in class size , location and time are allowed. It is also important to note that different personalities, voices, values, and approaches spark interest, keep attention and prevent boredom.

Team teaching, beyond doubt, allows for more interaction among teachers and students. teachers evaluate students on learning performances; on the other hand, students evaluate teachers as regards to their teaching performances and proficiency. Team teaching leads to students' and faculty growth, balancing initiative, shared responsibility specialization and broadening horizons, sound and interesting presentation. Team teaching is not an answer to all problems facing teachers, students and administrators.

Here, it must be noted that team teaching requires serious planning, skilled management, willingness to risk change and even failure, humility, open mindedness , imagination, and creativity. Amid the challenges, it is important to introduce team teaching in view of its advantages both for teachers and students.

Working in teams is important; in that teams spread responsibility, encourage creativity, deepen friendships, build and community among teachers. Teachers complement one another, share insights, develop new teaching approaches, learn new techniques and values from one another. Similarly, students actively participate in conversation among themselves. debate, agree and disagree with conclusions, raise new questions. Contrasting viewpoints encourage more active class participation and independent thinking. Working as a team , teachers model respect for differences, interdependence and conflict resolution skills.

**Teaming to teach : operational definitions.** Team Teaching can be defined as a pair of teachers or more than two teachers working together, plan ,conduct and evaluate the learning activities for the same group of students .Quinn and Canter ( 1984) defined team teaching as ‘ ‘ *simply teamwork between two qualified instructors who, together make presentations to an audience* ‘ ‘

**The categories of Team Teaching.** *Category one* implies that two or more instructors are teaching the same group of students at the *same time* within the same classroom. *Category two* implies that instructors work together but *do not necessarily* teach at the same time.

Following, let us see the types of team teaching by categorizing them as category 'A' and category 'B' for convenience sake .

When teachers team- teach the same group of students at the same time, (category 'A») teachers working together as a team, are required to perform different roles. In this kind of team teaching, come *six models of team teaching* as identified by Maroney (1995) and Robinson and Schaible (1995)

Thus, category 'A' team teaching often involves a combination of the following forms of team teaching.

**The traditional Team Teaching.** In a traditional team teaching, two or more teachers actively share the instruction- content and skill areas- in which all students participate. For instance, one teacher may take the role of presenting the material, where as the other teacher carry on another activity such as constructing a concept map on the over head projector as the students listen to the presenting teacher.

**Cooperative Team Teaching.**

Cooperative team teaching describes a traditional scenario in which two or more teachers work together in designing course material, but teach it not by the usual monologue, but rather by exchanging and discussing the ideas and theories in front of the learners. Not only the teachers teach students together, but also such courses use group learning techniques for the students, such as small- group work exercises, peer-led discussion and joint quizzes.

**Differentiated split class Team Teaching.** In this form of team teaching, the class is divided into two groups according to a specified learning needs. Each group is provided with instruction to meet their specified needs. This kind of teaching is usually applied, when the class is divided into a higher-lower split, where one teacher provides an enrichment activity to the good achievers, and the other teacher provides re-teaching to the low- achiever students; in order to equalize them to the good achievers. Applying differentiated split class team teaching approach to various subject areas, will require different groups of students; as some students have strong sides in some areas and others the vise versa.

**Complimentary/ Supportive Team Teaching.** This kind of team teaching takes place when one teacher is responsible for subject delivery of the material, where as the other teacher becomes in charge of providing some sort of follow up activity on a related topics or on skill developing tasks.

**Parallel Instruction.** In a parallel type of team teaching, the class is divided into two groups and each teacher is responsible delivering the same material to his/ her small group. This type of team teaching is often used in combination with other forms of team teaching, and is ideally suited the situation when students are engaged in project works or problem solving tasks, as the teachers can roam and give students individualized support or coping strategies.

**The Monitoring Type Team Teaching.** In this kind of team teaching, one teacher takes the responsibility for instructing the entire class, while the other teacher circulates the room and monitors the students' performance and behavior patterns. Usually, this form of team teaching is applied, when one teacher delivers the content and models the steps of laboratory experiment, where as the other teacher moves around the room to observe and assist individual students as they work. At times, the lecturing teacher might be using a strategy in which he/she stops frequently to ask students to quickly answer a question. The monitoring teacher can then determine whether or not students have responded correctly and can provide immediate feedback to the lecturing teacher. Now, let us see category "B" type of team teaching. This category consists of a variety of team teaching models, in which two or more teachers work together but do not necessarily teach the same group of students. However, if they teach the same group of students, they do not teach them at the same time. This category of team teaching, entails many forms such as the following;-

**Team members meet, share ideas and resources but work independently.** In this case, teachers may not teach the same students, but the course content to be covered is the same. However, they hold joint meetings, and on-going discussions, plan content out lines together; give one another ideas on how to teach the content but they teach the course material independently. Weekly meetings are recommended, the goal of which being to discuss the concepts, and to share new ideas among the same courses teaching materials.

**Teams of teachers sharing a common resource center.** In this case, teachers teach independently, but share resources such as lesson plans, supplementary material, text books and exercise problems.

**Teaching the different sub-groups within the whole group.** This reflects a team in which members share a common group of students, share the planning of instruction, but *teach different sub-groups within the whole group*. Various instructors share a common group, but teach separate sub-groups of students.

**One individual plans the instructional activities for the entire team.** This model may not directly fall into a team teaching concept, as only individual's thoughts are incorporated. At times, due to financial or time shortages, there may be no alternative to one individual designing the whole program.

**Issues to be considered in Team Teaching. Is Team Teaching Voluntary or Imposed?** An important element to consider is whether the inception of the team teaching plan originated from the administration or from teachers. Team teaching is likely to be more doable when it is originated from teachers. Prior to introducing a team teaching plan, teachers must be convinced that it is important for them to work together as collective and cooperatively to help students learn better. Usually, grassroots' initiatives serve better than administration imposed initiatives. The same is true in team teaching.

**Selecting a Team Teaching Partner.** Some teachers tend to believe that there is only one ideal partner for them; while others think that the philosophies of team teachers must be the same. Others are of the opinion that team members should be clones of each other because differences can have positive effects to boost creativity and growth to the individual team members. According to Robinson and Schaible (1995) it is suggested that collaborative team teaching be limited to two teachers, as good team teaching is difficult enough with more than two teachers.

**Roles in groups of three or more.** When a team is larger than two or three members, there is a need for a team leader. The team leader takes the responsibility for internal operations of the team (such as setting up meetings and coordinating schedules). And also, the team leader is responsible for external operations such as communicating with department heads (i.e. to ensure that the team is meeting departmental goals or that resources and support are in place) Each team member is responsible to take part in teams' discussions and planning sessions.

**Planning.** Prior to implementation, members of the team teaching should have enough professional development, have good insights of team teaching, understand the philosophy behind team teaching and the rationale of how it will fit to the rest of the departmental program.

Team building discussions are encouraged, because team teaching partners need time to foster a trusting and open relationships. Team members also need to be clear about their responsibilities and the time requirements involved with their particular form of team teaching.

Team members teaching the same class at the same time should meet daily or weekly to make important discussions about: (a) *What* will be presented (e.g., the units, lessons objectives and in what order), (b) *how* the material is to be presented (e.g., to a large or small group presentation), (c) *who* is to present the information, (d) *how* the students should be assessed, and (e) *how* small groups will be organized and which team teacher will be assigned to teach small group.

Further, after the team teaching program has been in to effect for a week or few weeks or months, team members should focus on improving their team teaching program by posing questions such as : (a) how can the class activities be improved ? (b) what problems have arisen? And (c) how can these problems be solved?

**Dealing with tension and conflict.** No matter how teaming teachers are good friends, in the process of working together, conflict situations do occur. Team teaching tends to expose each partner's professional and personal points of view more than the traditional one-teacher per session classroom situation. Different view points may lead to clashes. The point is how to change conflict or tension into a constructive learning situation. Team partners must try to acknowledge each team member's strong points, interests in a good fate. All conflicting situations must be addressed in joint meetings. Team teaching partners must be able to negotiate and discuss concerns in a way that is mutually beneficial.

**Advantages and disadvantages of team teaching.** Team teaching has both benefits and shortcomings for teachers as well as for students. Talking about the benefits or advantages, working as part of a team is useful for teachers as well as students. First, let us address the advantages and disadvantages related to teachers;

**Advantages of team teaching for the teacher.** It gives the participating team teachers a supportive environment, allows development of new teaching methods, helps in overcoming academic isolation, improves disciplinary problems of students, promotes intellectual growth.

Team members are exposed to different styles of planning, organization, and class presentations. Team teaching gives an opportunity to develop and enhance teachers' own teaching styles and techniques.

Working closely with one or more colleagues enables teachers to overcome the isolation inherent in teaching. When a teacher teaches alone, he or she rarely has the time for interacting with his/ her fellow teachers. Team teachers can discuss issues relating to students, such as behavioral expectations, students' motivation etc.

**Disadvantages of team teaching for the teachers.** Time factor is the main disadvantage of team teaching. The time required prior to the implementation of the team teaching partnership for professional development, the several meetings required during the running of the program will be time taking. Several meetings may be divisive and this may lead to conflict. Hence, before starting the program, intensive staff development in the area of team teaching may be necessary.

This training may involve the rationale behind team teaching, shared readings and discussion, learning cooperative skills to enable a positive partnership to evolve, as well as learning a variety of time management skills to ensure smooth operation in meetings and in the classroom.

While the course is in progress, time will be taken up by numerous planned and spontaneous meetings dealing with planning the course, agreeing on guidelines for such issues as consistency; when grading writing or tests, how to deal effectively with difficult students, how to improve the content of lessons and the way in which they are to be presented.

It is good to note that personality conflict may arise, when conducting team teaching. These conflicts may lead to renewed insights and understanding, On the other hand, however, they may lead to irreparable rift between the colleagues. Thus, when mediation cannot mend the situation, separation is often the best alternative, as students can sense the negative tension between the educators in class.

**Advantages of team teaching for students.** Students can learn accepting more than one opinion and act more cooperatively with others. Team teaching can offer educational benefits such as increasing the students' level of understanding and retention, also team teaching enables students to get higher achievements. Exposure to the views of more than one teacher allows students to gain mature level of understanding and knowledge; varying views help students better knowledge about their surroundings, diverse perspectives encourage students to consider the validity of diverse views. learners also can gain insights of positive team work skills and attitudes. The benefits of collaborative learning include higher achievement, greater retention, improved interpersonal skills (Robinson and Schaible (1985)

**The potential disadvantages of team teaching for the students.** Team teaching could be advantageous for many students, on the other hand, it may also be disadvantageous to have more than one teacher per class. The potential for diversity and ambiguity in a team teaching may be confusing for some students; as a result, students may be unwilling to try out new learning techniques, such as small group work.

When team teaching involves two teachers teaching the same class sizes may be a problem for some students, particularly those students with attention disorder problems, or students who feel uncomfortable in large group situations.

**Conclusion.** Team teaching as an academic exercise is worthwhile, but it is not as regards to its implementation. The issues related to team teaching are many and complex. No single model of team teaching will automatically result in success. Interventions of team teaching must be customized to a given context, suit the curriculum on play, teachers and students. In the process of literature review on team teaching, certain key elements appear to be necessary for a successful team teaching program: (a) Compatibility of team members (b) shared commitment and on-going communication, (c) a keen interest in connecting the content / curriculum to real life, and (d) a strong interest to ignite students' thirst knowledge. Further, team teaching goals and philosophies must be well defined. Even though team teaching is time consuming, necessitating more compromises than other educational approaches, its advantages to both teachers and students makes it

worthwhile. The daily, weekly or monthly meetings provide vital learning environment for teachers, students and create better learning environment, and cooperative atmosphere for teachers and students. Successful team work enhances cooperation among teachers and students, promotes team spirit and unity. Successful team teachers are willing, always want to try and are positive thinkers, respectful, honest, flexible, resourceful, able to communicate and open to another's point of view.

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### ***Возможности обучения учительской группой для улучшения образовательного процесса***

*Рассматривается программа обучения учительской группой, в случае которой учителя на практике перенимают положительный опыт, становятся очевидными преимущества такой работы для них самих и для студентов, которых они обучают.*

Ключевые слова: *опытность, дифференцированные инструкции, междисциплинарность, взаимозависимость, общие взгляды, уважение к индивидуальным различиям, конфликт-решение, партнерство, взаимодействие.*