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A Comparison of Team-Teaching Techniques

Tony Minotti

Abstract

An integral part of education, team teaching is an instructional approach that involves collaboration between two or more teachers to enhance classroom learning experiences. Fundamentally, it is a valuable approach for educators looking to improve student engagement, increase instructional quality, and enhance students' overall learning experience. This paper examines four team teaching strategies: lead-support, which involves one teacher taking the lead role in delivering instruction while the other provides support; parallel teaching, which occurs when two teachers work simultaneously with different groups of students; complementary team teaching, which involves two teachers collaborating to deliver a comprehensive and well-rounded lesson; and station-team-teaching, where teachers set up different learning stations or centers in the classroom. The paper explains each strategy and provides examples of how and when they can be implemented. It also points out issues with each technique that readers should bear in mind. The paper concludes with an assessment of teaming teaching and its value in the classroom.

Keywords: lead and support team-teaching, parallel team-teaching, complementary team-teaching, station team-teaching.

A Comparison of Team-Teaching Techniques

The concept of team-teaching dates to the 1960s, when Anderson and Landy developed it in high schools in the United States where it first became popular (Anderson & Landy, 2006). Team teaching is an instructional technique in which two or more teachers collaborate to plan, instruct, and assess groups of pupils. This strategy aims to improve educational effectiveness, boost student involvement, and improve the overall learning process. According to Clemens and McElroy (2011), children who were taught in teams as opposed to by individual teachers demonstrated indicators of improved performance on standardized tests. In team teaching, educators collaborate to create lesson plans that integrate their unique areas of knowledge and skill. This can involve having one teacher give a lecture while the other one leads discussions or organizes class activities. Instructors can also alternately assume the helm of the entire class while employing various instructional modalities. In the words of Jessen-Marshall and Lescinsky (2011), team teaching can “build deep professional and intellectual bonds with a colleague that are very different

from the typical intra-faculty bonds” (p. 34).

The many advantages of team-teaching warrant mention. One benefit is that it enables educators to share their knowledge and skills, which bolsters classroom diversity and energy. Since instructors can support one another and share duties, this approach can also lessen teacher workload and boost teacher morale. As Murata (2002) put it, team teaching “empowers teachers and fosters collegiality to improve the practice of teaching through collaboration and curriculum integration” (p. 67). This essay examines four team-teaching techniques (lead and support team teaching, parallel team teaching, complementary team teaching, and station teaching), illustrating each approach with examples and highlighting the issues to be aware of when employing each of them. It concludes by providing an overall evaluation of all four methods.

Lead and Support

The educational strategy known as “lead and support team teaching” involves two or more instructors

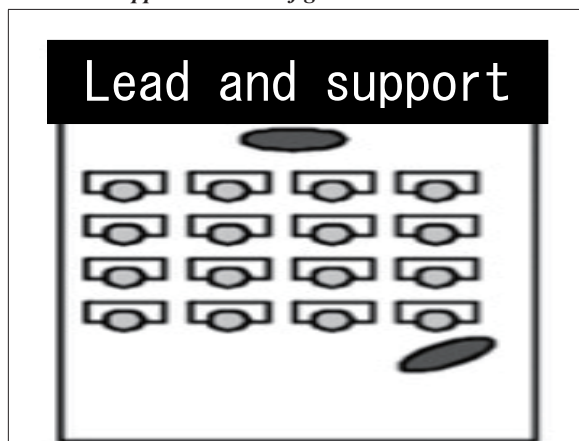
working together to offer instruction, with one teacher serving as the lead teacher and the other(s) as support. While the supporting teacher(s) assist with instruction, offer additional support to students, and provide feedback to the lead teacher, the lead teacher takes on the main responsibility for planning and delivering lessons. The lead teacher in a lead and support team teaching situation oversees the creation of lesson plans, the establishment of learning objectives for the students, and the delivery of instruction. Together with the main teacher, the supporting teacher(s) provides students additional support, manages the classroom, and gives feedback on lessons. Gladman (2014) found that students in team-taught classrooms were more likely to raise questions than those in single-teacher learning environments. The students in that study pointed that while one instructor was lecturing, those who were having trouble understanding could ask the other teacher for help. “A team of two teachers lets one of them be available when we want to ask a question, so we feel less reluctant to ask” (Gladman, 2014, p. 139). The study also found that students felt “cared for” because of the improved student-teacher ratio. The fact that each instructor only needed to care for a small number of pupils improved the quality of the class (Gladman, 2014, p. 141).

Implementation

Lead and support also known as “one teach, one assist” can be beneficial in several settings. Figure 1 shows an example of the classroom layout for this type of teaching.

Figure 1

Lead and Support Class Configuration



(Friend et al., 2010)

Lead and support would be ideal in an “inclusive classroom environment”—a type of learning space where students with a range of backgrounds, skills, and needs are accepted and given equal opportunity to engage and learn. Placing students with disabilities in general education classrooms where teachers are expected to cover core curricula and ensure all students are learning the content has resulted in schools turning to recent research to implement supportive instructional strategies such as co-teaching in general education classrooms (Vaughn & Bos, 2015). The aim of the lead and support approach is to foster an environment that honors and respects each student’s distinctive qualities and experiences. The lead teacher oversees teaching, and the supporting teacher offers extra help to certain students as needed. This could entail adjusting or altering the curriculum, offering individualized assistance, or working with small groups of pupils. Lead and support team teaching can also be utilized in content areas like science or English language learning to help students draw connections between various courses. In an English language class, the lead teacher could oversee instruction in one subject, such as grammar, while the supporting teacher(s) provides additional assistance by leading discussions, offering supplemental materials, or giving feedback on students’ work. Overall, lead and support team teaching can be a useful strategy for educators who want to boost student learning and improve both the caliber of education and the entire learning process. It can foster a more vibrant and encouraging learning atmosphere that is advantageous for instructors and students alike.

Disadvantages

While the lead and support teaching method encourage teacher collaboration and results in a more personalized education, it has several possible drawbacks that warrant consideration. These potential drawbacks include a lack of teacher autonomy, time and resource limitations, communication difficulties between teachers, and unequal teaching roles. Teachers who are not in the lead position may feel as though they have less control over the curricula and instruction, which can make them frustrated

or disengaged. Combined with a lack of ownership over subject matter, this may negatively impact instruction quality and student results. Meanwhile, time and resource limitations may make this approach impractical. To deliver effective collaborative teaching, teachers may need more resources or technology, and they must take the time to plan and coordinate with one another. This can make it challenging for schools to completely implement this teaching method since it might place additional burdens on already overloaded schedules and scarce resources. In addition, teachers may have differing pedagogical views, approaches to instruction, or teaching methods, which can cause disagreements or miscommunications. Making sure that all students receive consistent guidance and support across all subjects can also be difficult. Finally, the position of each teacher needs to be considered. The lead instructor plays a significant role in setting the direction and tone of lessons. This may result in situations where lead teachers have more sway and authority over decisions than supporting teachers. Situations in which supporting teachers feel their contributions are not recognized or believe they have not received equal opportunities to contribute to the instruction could prove problematic.

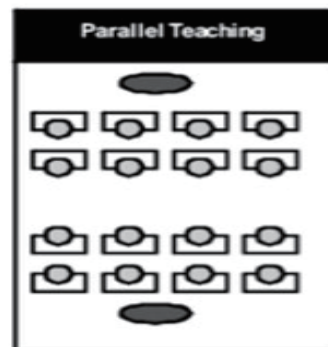
Overall, the lead and support teaching method can be a useful strategy for encouraging teamwork and giving pupils more personalized education. Teachers must, however, recognize and attempt to address the potential drawbacks through good communication, clear delineation of roles, and continual professional development. Schools can then leverage the advantages of this approach while reducing its disadvantages.

Parallel Team Teaching

The “parallel team-teaching” strategy involves two or more teachers working together to instruct two groups of pupils simultaneously. Each teacher oversees the organization and provision of education to a single group of pupils. Meanwhile, the teachers collaborate to ensure the coherence and consistency of their curriculum, and work together on assessments, grading, and other teaching-related tasks for both groups.

Figure 2

Parallel Team-Teaching Class Configuration



(Friend et al., 2010)

Parallel-team instruction has been utilized to give pupils more personalized learning in subject areas like English. When two teachers collaborate to educate two groups of pupils, they can each concentrate on a different set of concepts or abilities. Because it enables teachers to concentrate on separate levels or kinds of instruction, this approach can also be utilized in differentiated instruction to offer personalized help to students with diverse levels of competence. Teachers must work together to ensure the instruction is aligned and uniform for both groups (Simons et al., 2018). Meanwhile, collaborating to offer education to two groups of pupils enables them to better focus and tailor their support to meet the requirements of each student.

Disadvantages

While this method has numerous benefits, like enabling more individualized instruction and offering chances for peer learning, it also has several possible drawbacks. Simons et al. (2019) used questionnaires to explore the perceived advantages and disadvantages of parallel team teaching. The primary disadvantages they identified included difficulties in maintaining consistency, communication challenges, and increased planning and preparation time. To begin with, maintaining consistency in instruction and ensuring that both groups of students learn about the same topics and receive the same levels of training can be difficult when parallel teaching. Disparities in content delivery disparities or the degree of challenge offered may emerge due to teachers’ varying teaching philosophies, techniques, or approaches. Such disparities

may confuse students and generate differences in learning results. Meanwhile, ensuring coherence in parallel teaching requires high levels of coordination and communication between the teachers. This can be difficult, especially when instructors have diverging timetables or modes of instruction. In addition, it might be challenging for the teachers to interact with one another during sessions without interfering with the instruction for their different student groups. Finally, parallel teaching may involve more planning and preparation time than conventional teaching approaches. Teachers must develop and align their curricula, which can be time consuming (Simons et al., 2019). To ensure that the teaching goes successfully, the teachers may also need to organize schedules, resources, and technologies. This can be particularly difficult for those working in poorly funded institutions.

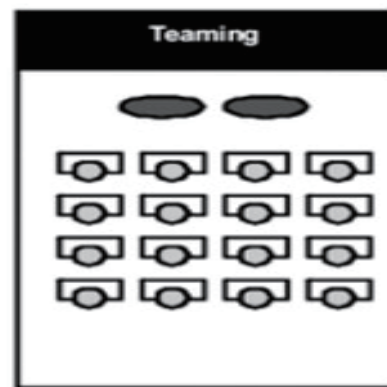
Overall, parallel teaching can be a successful teaching method for several subjects and student populations. However, educators must consider and seek to address its potential drawbacks through efficient planning, communication, and professional development. In so doing, schools can maximize the method's advantages while reducing its disadvantages.

Complementary Team-Teaching

The phrase “the purpose of a team-taught course from an educational standpoint is to push students to achieve high level of synthesis and integration in their study of new material” perfectly sums up the value of students’ evaluation feedback in team-teaching (McDaniels & Colarulli, 1997). The teaching strategy known as “complementary-team teaching” entails two or more educators working together to deliver lessons in a way that builds on and compliments their individual abilities. The goal of complementary-team teaching is to create a more engaging and productive learning environment by assigning each teacher a particular function or task. This approach is frequently used when teachers have diverse areas of expertise or experience, or when one teacher has a stronger background in a certain subject area or teaching style. The teachers can improve children’s learning experiences by cooperating and utilizing one other’s strengths and skills.

Figure 3

Complementary Team-Teaching Class Configuration



(Friend et al., 2010)

In language learning, complementary-team teaching can be employed to give students a more comprehensive education. For instance, teachers might collaborate to deliver instruction on a particular project or unit, with each teacher assuming responsibility for a distinct area of the curriculum. While one teacher focuses on speaking and listening, the other may concentrate on the reading and writing portions of the project. Complementary-team instruction can be employed in cross-curricular contexts (where students receive instruction across different disciplines) to provide a more thorough understanding of subjects. For instance, a social studies instructor and an English instructor might collaboratively teach a particular subject, with the English instructor focusing on writing techniques and the social studies instructor on the historical backdrop. Complementary-team teaching can be a useful strategy for teachers seeking to cover topics more comprehensively. Moreover, by cooperating and utilizing one another’s talents and skills, teachers can create more dynamic and supportive learning environments that benefit them and their students.

Disadvantages

The potential problems of the complementary teaching approach include maintaining consistency in instruction, ensuring that both teachers are delivering the same content and level of instruction, differentiation of teacher roles, and chemistry between instructors. Teachers’ diverging teaching philosophies, techniques, or approaches

may create disparities in content delivery or subject matter difficulty that may confuse students and generate differences in learning results. Meanwhile, in complementary teaching, one instructor may adopt a more dominant position while the other one adopts a more supportive one. This can be problematic if the assisting teacher feels their contributions are not respected or that they are not receiving equal opportunities to contribute to lessons. It may also result in a power imbalance that is detrimental to both teaching effectiveness and student achievement. Moreover, the effectiveness of complementary instruction is highly dependent on compatibility and cooperation between teachers. It may be challenging to collaborate effectively if the teachers have dissimilar personalities or teaching philosophies. This could negatively affect the learning environment and generate unequal learning outcomes.

In sum, while complementary teaching can be a successful strategy for some subjects and student populations, educators must recognize and try to address its potential drawbacks through efficient planning, communication, and teacher professional development. As Deltermer et al. (2009) argued, since team-teaching is collaborative, teachers need to “collaboratively discuss students’” needs, solve problems, demonstrate instructional techniques, lead, or participate in professional development initiatives, share resources and network with other professionals. Schools that can ensure their teachers do this can make the most of the advantages of complementary teaching while minimizing its disadvantages.

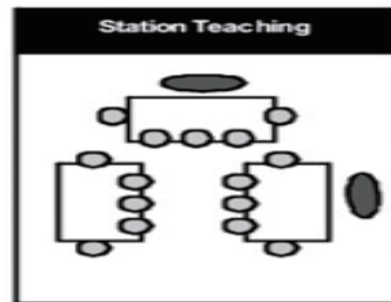
Station Teaching

According to Eisen (200), at their best, teaching teams are “model learning communities that generate synergy through collaboration” (p. 12). In “station team teaching,” two or more teachers cooperate to offer instruction through several stations or learning centers. Groups are formed in lessons, and classrooms are built out with stations. As students move from station to station, each teacher presents a distinct lesson from the shared lesson plan. Students rotate among the stations to receive instruction from the teachers, with each station focusing on a particular area of the lesson plan or learning target.

Teachers should collaborate on assessments, grading, and other aspects of teaching in addition to working collaboratively to ensure that instruction is consistent and aligned across all stations.

Figure 4

Station Teaching Class Configuration



(Friend et al., 2010)

In the English language learning context, team teaching can be employed in language stations to deliver more specialized instruction in various literacy skills, such as reading comprehension, writing, and vocabulary. For instance, while one station might be devoted to reading comprehension, with the teacher guiding students through practice exercises and lessons focused on how to read and comprehend texts, another might be dedicated to writing, with the instructor guiding students through exercises and lessons on how to write well. Station team teaching can also enable students with varied ability levels to receive more tailored instruction and support in arithmetic. For instance, while one station might be devoted to fundamental math, with the instructor leading lessons and practice exercises in addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division, another might focus on harder subjects like algebra or geometry, with the teacher giving lessons and practice exercises in those areas.

Overall, station team teaching can be a useful strategy for teachers who want to give students more personalized, practical, and interesting training. The use of stations or learning centers to enable students to interact with subjects in various ways can create more engaging and encouraging learning environments.

Disadvantages

The possibility of an uneven allocation of

instructor support and attention is a fundamental drawback of station team instruction. Students cycle between stations in a station-based format, and each station tends to be guided by a different teacher or teaching assistant. This generally means that not all teachers give their students the same amount of time and attention, and such differences in supervision and support can affect learning opportunities and results. Alleviating this problem requires the creation of clear standards and expectations to ensure that all students receive sufficient support at each station. The greater need for discipline and structure in such classrooms is another drawback of station-team instruction. Setting up stations and coordinating the activities for each station also takes careful planning and considerable time. All stations must be properly furnished with the requisite tools and resources, and teachers must make sure that switching between stations is quick and easy. In addition, because teachers are dispersed across the classroom, monitoring student conduct and involvement at each station may prove difficult. To solve this problem, teachers must use efficient classroom management techniques and communicate clearly. Additionally, the use of station-team teaching may reduce the chance for lectures and discussions with the entire class. It may also limit the time for whole-class instruction, interactive conversations, or group problem-solving because students are working in small groups or independently at stations. Critical thinking abilities and cooperative learning opportunities may suffer as a result. To combine station-based activities and whole-class participation, teachers can designate times during sessions for whole-class instruction or group discussions.

Conclusion

In conclusion, team teaching techniques provide beneficial chances for classroom collaboration and instructional efficacy. As Ericksen and Dyer (2004) pointed out, teacher teams that follow described or prescribed progressions perform well. Events that shape teams during formative periods influence outcomes in subsequent days. When used effectively, the four methodologies covered in this paper—lead and support, parallel-team teaching, complementary-team teaching, and station-

team teaching—can bolster student engagement, support differentiated instruction, and establish a supportive learning environment. In the lead and support team teaching method, one instructor assumes the lead position while the other helps. This approach facilitates the division of labor, subject matter knowledge, and teaching responsibilities. The supporting teacher can move among pupils, delivering individualized assistance or enrichment activities, while the lead teacher gives direct instruction. Given that students receive personalized instruction and assistance based on their unique skills and talents, this approach is particularly effective at meeting the different learning needs of kids. In parallel-team teaching, two teachers collaborate on a lesson while concurrently working with two different groups of pupils. This method works well when students have varying levels of proficiency or class sizes are large. Parallel teachers can concentrate on different facets of lessons, such as language and content instruction, or offer alternate justifications and illustrations. Since each student receives individualized instruction catered to their unique needs, parallel-team teaching encourages all students to engage and actively participate. Meanwhile, in complementary team teaching, two teachers collaborate to give lessons in a coordinated and complimentary way. Instructors add their unique skills and knowledge to the classroom, resulting in a more thorough and well-rounded learning environment. For example, one teacher may focus on language or reading abilities while the other provides content instruction. Since this approach allows teachers to incorporate several subject areas into their classes, creating connections and enhancing students' grasp of the material, it encourages interdisciplinary learning. Finally, in station team teaching, teachers set up and oversee various stations or learning centers in the classroom. As students move through the stations, they participate in various exercises or assignments that reinforce the lesson's goals. Because it allows students to work at their own pace and investigate many facets of a given subject, station-team teaching encourages independent learning. Moreover, since teachers can offer targeted support and feedback at each station, this technique also enables focused small-group instruction. To ensure the effectiveness of these team-teaching tactics,

the implementation process must be outlined in detail. To guarantee a unified and coordinated approach, team teachers must effectively communicate and plan together. In addition to defining roles and duties, teachers should also specify the educational goals and expected results of each technique. They should work together to create and arrange learning activities, resources, and instructional materials that complement the team-teaching approach they choose. Flexibility is crucial because changing student demands or unanticipated events may necessitate adjustments. In

conclusion, team teaching

techniques like lead and support, parallel team teaching, complementary team teaching, and station team teaching provide effective chances for cooperative education and improved student learning. By utilizing these tactics and adhering to clear approaches, teachers can create dynamic and engaging learning environments that support tailored instruction, encourage active involvement, and foster positive student outcomes.

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大阪樟蔭女子大学附属 子ども研究所 について

大阪樟蔭女子大学附属子ども研究所は、子どもの成長・発達に関わる諸問題について多角的に研究し、その成果を広く公開することで社会に貢献することを目指して設立されました。

本研究所の前身となる児童研究所は、昭和 24（1949）年に大阪樟蔭女子大学学芸学部児童学科が誕生し、昭和 26（1951）年に大学附属の「樟蔭幼稚園」が開園したことにもなつて幼稚園に設置され、長年にわたり教育相談活動などをおこなってきました。

平成 13（2001）年に児童学科が人間科学部に組み入れられたことを契機に、より包括的な人間科学の立場で研究を深めることを目して、名称を子ども研究所とあらためました。

その後二度の改組、名称変更を経て、児童学科は児童教育学部児童教育学科となりましたが、創設以来、幼稚園教諭を輩出してきた伝統を基礎にすえつつ、社会の要請にこたえて、保育士、小学校教諭、中学校教諭（英語）の養成へと幅を広げてきました。

子ども研究所は、附属幼稚園、児童教育学科との連携をより一層緊密にしながら、持続的な社会貢献を目指して活動を進めてまいります。

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