

## Team teaching

Team teaching can be defined as a group of two or more teachers working together to plan, conduct and evaluate the learning activities the same group of learners. In practice, team teaching has many different formats but in general it is a means of organizing 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. To facilitate this process a common teaching space is desirable. However, to be effective team teaching requires much more than just a common meeting time and space.

S Quinn and S Kantar define team teaching as “simply team work between two qualified instructors who, together, make presentations to an audience”. [ 84].

There appear to be two broad categories of team teaching:

- category A: two or more instructors are teaching the same students at the same time within the same classroom;
- category B: the instructors work together but do not necessarily teach the same groups of students nor necessarily teach at the same time.

It's important to mention that category B is very common for the process of teaching English in Ukraine Universities while category A is still “unusual” for Ukrainian teachers in Scandinavian countries the situation is quite different as category A is always used at schools and universities being an obligatory form of teaching English.

When instructors team teach the same group of students at the same time (category A), there are a number of different roles that these team teachers might perform. American scientists such as M. Maroney, O. Robenson have identified six models of team-teaching at the lessons of English. They are the following:

- 1) traditional team teaching: one teacher may present the new material to the students while the other teacher constructs a concept map on the overhead projector as the students listen to the presenting teacher;

- 2) collaborative teaching: a traditional team teaching situation in which the team teachers work together in designing the course and teach the material not by the usual monologue, but rather by exchanging and discussing ideas in front of the learners;
- 3) complimentary (supportive team teaching) : one teacher is responsible for teaching the content to the students, while the other teacher takes charge of providing follow-up activities on related topics or on study skills;
- 4) parallel instruction: the class is divided into two groups and each teacher is responsible for teaching the same material to her\ his smaller group;
- 5) differentiated split class: one teacher challenges the learner who grasp the concept more quickly, while the second teacher reviews or re-teaches those students who require further instruction;
- 6) monitoring class: one teacher assumes the responsibility for instructing the entire class, while the other teacher circulates the room and monitors student understanding and behavior.

Team teaching involves a group of teachers of English working purposefully, regularly, and cooperatively to help a group of students of any age learn and master the English language. Teachers together set goals for a course, design a syllabus, prepare individual lessons plans, teach students, and evaluate results. They share insights, argue with one another, and perhaps even challenge students to decide which approach is better.

The team-teaching approach allows for more interaction between teachers and students. New teachers may be paired with veteran teachers; different personalities of teachers, their voices, approaches spark interest, keep attention and prevent boredom at the English lessons.

Working in teams spreads responsibility, encourages creativity, deepens friendships, and builds community among teachers. Teachers complement one another. They share insights, propose new approaches, and challenge assumption. They learn new perspectives and insights, techniques and values from watching

one another. Students enter into conversations between them as they debate, disagree with conclusions, raise new questions, and point out consequences. Contrasting viewpoints encourage more active class participation and independent thinking from students, especially if there is team balance for gender, culture, and age. Team teaching is particularly effective with older and under prepared students when it moves beyond communicating facts to tap into their life experience. The team cuts teaching burdens and boosts moral. The presence of another teacher reduces student-teacher personality problems. In an emergency one team member can attend to the problem while the class goes on. As teachers see the quality of teaching and learning improve, their self-esteem and happiness grow. Teams need to have a sense of direction. When teams are formed from teachers with no previous team experience, the English scholars say that “ it will take about three years for them to develop the team teaching process to an efficient and effective level”. Hence in setting a time line for teams to achieve realistic goals it is important to ask what will be the aims of team teaching during the first year or semester and what are the longer team goals? The answers to such questions are important in determining priorities for the development of teams. It’s unrealistic to expect that all goals and expectations will be met immediately. Speaking about advantages, it is important to mention that team members give their own interpretations of the materials and use their own teaching styles. The greater the agreement on common objectives and interests, the more likely that teaching will be independent and coordinated.

Team teaching has a myriad of benefits backs from both the teacher’s and the student’s perspective. Working as a part of team has a multitude of advantages as it:

- gives the participating team teacher a supportive environment ;
- allows for development of new teaching approaches;
- aids in overcoming academic isolation;
- increases the likelihood of sounder solutions regarding the discipline of problematic students and augments the opportunity for intellectual.

While team teaching may prove advantageous for many students, some students may feel frustration and discontentment about having more than one teacher. The potential for diversity and ambiguity within team teaching may prove disconcerting for some students who might become confused by more than one way of looking at issues or grading assignments. These students may be unwilling to try out new learning techniques, such as small-group work, in this different team teaching environment. When team teaching involves two instructors teaching the same class at the same time, the inevitability of larger class sizes may be a detriment for some students, particularly students with attention deficit disorders, or students who feel uncomfortable or anonymous in large group settings. Also, a clever student may attempt to play one teacher against the other in order to improve his/her grades. This is one of the many reasons that team teachers have to maintain a common and united front, and continually discuss the numerous team teaching issues and concerns in ongoing communication. Throughout the literature on team teaching, including the reflections by teachers who have teamed during their career, certain key elements appear to be necessary for a successful team teaching program: (1) compatibility of team members, (2) shared commitment to team teaching and ongoing communication, (3) a keen interest in connecting the content or curriculum to real life, and (4) a strong desire to ignite students' thirst for knowledge. Also, the program goals and philosophies, as well as the roles of the teachers and administration need to be well-defined. Although at the outset, team teaching will inherently require more time and necessitate more compromises than other educational approaches, the advantages to both the educators and the students appear to make team teaching enormously worthwhile. The extra time taken up by staff development and daily or weekly meetings provide a richer learning environment for the students and the teachers. Team teaching can make learning a cooperative and growing process for both students and the teachers.

## References

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