

Learning from Co-Teaching Best Practice Workshop

Kristián Šrám and Ondřej Pekáček, Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University

Summary

This workshop contribution resides in the sharing of our experience from the application of a co-teaching method in higher education. Co-teaching might enhance the classroom teaching/learning experience by aiding with the classroom management, increasing the teacher-to-student ratio and offering unique methods of participatory learning, while providing a continuous platform for best practice sharing among teachers. The primary challenge of this method includes the need for an effective co-planning, co-instructing, and co-assessment. Based on the student evaluations, peer-review and self-assessment, we consider the advantages and challenges of this educational approach. From the students' perspective, the most appreciated benefits were increased participation, engaging activities, and creativity offered by teaching in tandem.

Set Up

The workshop consists mostly of discussions in small teams as well as the whole group. Outcomes from the discussion will be visualized using a flipchart/whiteboard mind map, which we will then compare to our experience with co-teaching. The primary goal is to facilitate a reflexive conversation on this particular teaching method.

Reflection on our experience

- The combination of individual teaching styles provided for a varied learning experience.
- The increased creativity of the lecture design (owing to our regular brainstormings) was noticed and appreciated by the students.
- Teaching in tandem is demanding on cooperation. This, as a result, decreases the time allotted to “traditional” frontal lectures.
- Increased teacher-to-student ratio provides us with more time for individual interaction with each student.
- Multiple expert perspectives potentially challenge students' critical thinking abilities, while navigating the complexity of the subject at hand.
- Easier class/course management (including increased flexibility for both teachers - if necessary, it is possible to “skip a class”).
- Knowledge transfer between the teachers, the experience fosters importance of cooperation.
- Co-teaching creates new demands and inefficiencies. Oftentimes, we would have more teaching material for a particular class than necessary.

Questions for the workshop in-group discussion

- Do you have experience with co-teaching?
 - IF YES: Please describe it briefly. What were the perceived benefits for your class and how did it influence your development as an educator?
 - IF NO: Do think that your course would potentially benefit from co-teaching? How?
- Based on the self-assessment of your teaching style, depict your ideal co-teaching partner.