



# **TEAM TEACHING**

## **Introduction**

The long standing notion of a self-contained classroom of 30 pupils taught by one teacher is giving way to alternative proposals. One of these proposals is team teaching. Team teaching is one of the resources, interests and expertise. It is a new movement concerned with the quality of education and the re-structuring of our schools so that they promote development and advancement of teaching-learning process. It is a good innovation in teaching strategies. In simple words, team teaching strategies are simplest form where all teachers of a subject collectively teach a class in that subject. It is a collaborative teaching or co teaching strategy. To provide supportive environment, there are teams of two or four teachers working collaboratively to prepare lesson plans.

Team teaching had its origin in America in the mid 1950's and it took root in the schools rather than at the universities. In 1963, William M. Alexander known as the “father of the American middle school” was scheduled to discuss the structure of the junior high school at a conference at Cornell University. However, after re-thinking the needs of adolescents at this age, he proposed the middle school concept where a team of three to five teachers would be assigned to 75 to 150 pupils organized either on a single-grade or multi-grade basis. This recommendation of junior high school reform is where the idea of team teaching developed. Team teaching is now used in all grade levels and across disciplines. When done correctly, this approach has been shown to create bonding opportunities for students and to engage teachers in a collaborative as well as interdisciplinary planning.

## **MEANING**

Team teaching is one of the innovations developed with the intention to improve the teaching-learning process in the classroom. It encourages the use of teachers of particular competency for teaching a large number of students. It is concerned with the most efficient use of all faculty members.

In team teaching a group of teachers, working together, plan, conduct, and evaluate the learning activities for the same group of students. In practice, team teaching has many

different formats but in general it is a means of organising staff into groups to enhance teaching. Teams generally comprise of staff members who may represent different areas of subject expertise but who share the same group of students and a common planning for teaching. To facilitate this process a common teaching space is desirable. Team teaching involves a group of instructors working purposefully, regularly, and cooperatively to help a group of students of any age learn. Teachers together set goals for a course, design a syllabus, prepare individual lesson plans, teach students, and evaluate the results. They share insights, argue with one another, and perhaps even challenge students to decide which approach is better.

Teams can be single-discipline, interdisciplinary, or school-within-a-school teams that meet with a common set of students over an extended period of time. New teachers may be paired with veteran teachers. Innovations are encouraged, and modifications in class size, location, and time are permitted. Different personalities, voices, values, and approaches spark interest, keep attention, and prevent boredom.

Working as a team, teachers model respect for differences, interdependence and conflict-resolution skills. Team members together set the course goals and content, select common materials such as texts and films, and develop tests and final examinations for all students. They set the sequence of topics and supplemental materials. They also 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 interdependent and coordinated.

Teaching periods can be scheduled side by side or consecutively. For example, teachers of two similar classes may team up during the same or adjacent periods so that each teacher may focus on that phase of the course that he or she can best handle. Students can sometimes meet all together, sometimes in small groups supervised by individual teachers or teaching assistants, or they can work singly or together on projects in the library, laboratory, or fieldwork. Teachers can be at different sites, linked by video-conferencing, satellites, or the Internet.

Breaking out of the 'taken-for-granted', 'single-subject', 'single-course', 'single-teacher pattern', team teaching encourages other innovations and experiments. For example, students can be split along or across lines of sex, age, culture, or other interests, and then recombined to stimulate reflection. Remedial programs and honors sections provide other attractive opportunities to make available appropriate and effective curricula for students with special needs or interests. They can address different study skills and learning techniques. Team teaching can also prevent the danger of imposing ideas, values, and mindsets on minorities or less powerful ethnic groups. Teachers of different backgrounds can culturally enrich different groups of students.

## **DEFINITIONS**

Some definitions of team teaching are as follows:

Singer (1964) defined team teaching as an arrangement whereby two or more teachers co-operatively plan, teach and evaluate one or more class groups in an appropriate and agreed

upon teaching plan and in given length of time, so as to take advantage of specific competencies of the team members.

In the words of Shaplin (1964) team is a type of instructional organization, involving teaching personnel and the students assigned to them, in which two or more teachers are given responsibility of working together, for all or a significant part of the instruction of the same group of students.

Callahan (1971) defined team teaching as that teaching-learning process where two or more teachers cooperatively formulate a plan, carry it out, and evaluate its effectiveness as it relates to a specific group of students.

## **CONCEPT OF TEAM TEACHING**

All students do not all learn at the same rate. Periods of equal length are not appropriate for all learning situations. Educators are no longer dealing primarily with top-down transmission of the tried and true by the mature and experienced teacher to the young, immature, and inexperienced pupil in the single-subject classroom. Schools are moving toward the inclusion of another whole dimension of learning: the lateral transmission to every sentient member of society of what has just been discovered, invented, created, manufactured, or marketed. For this, team members with different areas of expertise are invaluable.

Of course, team teaching is not the only answer to all problems plaguing teachers, students, and administrators. It requires planning, skilled management, willingness to risk change and even failure, humility, open-mindedness, imagination, and creativity. But the results are worth it.

Teamwork improves the quality of teaching as various experts approach the same topic from different angles: theory and practice, past and present, different genders or ethnic backgrounds. Teachers' strengths are combined and weaknesses are remedied. Poor teachers can be observed, critiqued, and improved by the other team members in a non-threatening, supportive context. The evaluation done by a team of teachers will be more insightful and balanced than the introspection and self-evaluation of an individual teacher.

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 assumptions. They learn new perspectives and insights, techniques and values from watching one another. Students enter into conversations between them as they debate, disagree with premises or 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, race, culture, and age. Team teaching is particularly effective with older and underprepared students when it moves beyond communicating facts to tap into their life experience.

The team cuts teaching burdens and boosts morale. 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. Sharing in decision-making bolsters self-confidence. As teachers see the quality of teaching and learning improve, their self-esteem and happiness grow. This aids in recruiting and keeping faculty.

## **COMPONENTS OF TEAM TEACHING**

The components of team teaching are as follows:

- Team teaching depends on co-operative planning, teaching and evaluation of the pedagogic activities.
- It allows forming groups of students of different size to achieve the specific objectives. The groups may be large group class, small group discussion or the individual study.
- It utilizes the talent creativity and expertise of the individual teachers. Team teaching represents an effort to capitalize on the special talent of individual teachers and thus improve their efficiency.
- It shows teachers to make optimum use of infrastructure/facilities including space, teaching aids/media appropriate to the purpose and the content of teaching.
- It gives autonomy to the members of the team to schedule their activities.
- Team teaching can overcome some of the weaknesses of existing teaching practices. Here teaching activities are shared by more than one teacher, which enables him to pay individual attention to students.
- Team teaching enables the teachers to teach some areas of curriculum knowledgeably and effectively, depending on their background knowledge and experience.
- It is helpful to develop team spirit among the students.

## **OBJECTIVES**

The main objectives of team teaching are:

- To make the best use of attractive abilities, interest and expertise in the teacher-learning process.
- To make classroom teaching effective according to the interest and capabilities of the pupils.
- To encourage flexibility in grouping the pupils. And this grouping is done according to the interests and aptitude of the pupils.
- To increase the quality of the instruction given to the students.

## **CHARACTERISTICS**

Some of the characteristics of team teaching are:

- Team teaching is a teaching method
- Two or more teachers participate in the teaching process.
- Team teaching is based on cooperation. All the teachers participating in the team teaching apply their resources, abilities and experience.
- All the teachers involved in the team teaching plan and execute teaching by full cooperation. Evaluation is also done on cooperative basis.
- During this process, the needs of the pupils, schools and existing resources are also considered.
- One topic is taught by two or more teachers turn by turn.
- The main aim of team teaching is to make teaching learning more effective.
- This method is based on collective responsibility and it avoids isolation. And thus the whole responsibility is shared equally by all the teachers in the team.
- This method helps to create new instructional conditions and thus bringing more interaction and innovation into teaching.

## **GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

The guiding principles of team teaching as be discussed as under:

Time factor, Level of instruction, Supervision, Size and composition, Appropriate duties, Learning environment.

- Time factor: In team teaching, the duration should be decided on the basis of the subject's importance. To allot too much time to an unimportant subject makes the team teaching ineffective.
- Level of instruction: Before imparting instruction to the pupils, the initial behaviours of the learners must be observed and the level of the instructions should be given according to the pupils' pre-requisite knowledge.
- Supervision: The method of supervision depends upon the objective of the group; therefore the objectives of the group must be kept in mind at the time of the supervision.
- Size and composition: The present size of the class will decide the objective of team teaching. The size and composition will decide the learning outcomes of the group.

- Appropriate duties to be assigned to the teachers: The division of duties and responsibilities of the teachers should be appropriate. The duties should be assigned to each of the teachers according to their academic merit, interests and personality traits. Hence the team members are to be selected very carefully in order to bring about an effective team teaching.
- Learning environment: Team teaching will be successful only if a proper learning environment is provided, such as provision of a library, laboratory, workshop, etc.

## **ORGANIZATION OF TEAMS**

According to John Wallace (2007), the two-teacher team model is usually done with sixth graders, “as a sound transition from a single teacher, self-contained classroom in the elementary school to the four- or five-teacher team commonly found in seventh and eighth grade.” In this model of team teaching, the teachers are usually certified in two content areas or are certified in elementary education and teach two subjects. Because there are fewer children in this model, there are more opportunities for flexibility and combining subject areas into one lesson.

A number of specialist teachers may join hands in a single subject throughout the school.

Specialist teachers may join hands but restrict their efforts to a particular age group. Or subject specialists from different fields may work together with a mixed age and ability group.

The four-teacher team is “the most commonly used and most logical composition, with one teacher specialist in each of the four core areas.” In this model, educators teach in the content area in which they are certified, and they plan interdisciplinary units. This model of team teaching is generally used in the middle school after sixth grade.

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

Teams can be single-discipline, interdisciplinary, or school-within-a-school teams that meet with a common set of students over an extended period of time. New teachers may be paired with veteran teachers. Innovations are encouraged, and modifications in class size, location, and time are permitted. Different personalities, voices, values, and approaches spark interest, keep attention, and prevent boredom.

Working as a team, teachers model respect for differences, interdependence, and conflict-resolution skills. Team members together set the course goals and content, select common materials such as texts and films, and develop tests and final examinations for all students. They set the sequence of topics and supplemental materials. They also 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 interdependent and coordinated.

## **PATTERNS OF TEAM TEACHING**

Various patterns of over-all planning can be used according to the age of the pupils, the area of the curriculum, and the nature of the materials. Four approaches have been suggested by David Warwick as under:

- Thematic approach
- Concurrent themes
- The cumulative sequence
- The concentric pattern
- 

**THEMATIC APPROACH:** In this approach, there is a running general theme throughout the work. It might have a string of factual content- 'Our Community', 'Early Civilizations'. Starting from this theme are a series of linked topics and the students will study each of the topics in turn so that their actual presentation takes the form of a large lead lesson and follow up work suited to the needs of the pupils.

**CONCURRENT THEMES:** In this approach two or more themes are in operation together with the same group of children. For instance the mathematics department may decide to complement a geographical study of rainfall and temperature with one of its own graphs. In this way courses will run on independent yet parallel lines having continual cross reference and links with each other. Exchange of classes and the joint use of equipment and materials could be arranged yet maintaining their independence of them.

**THE CUMMULATIVE SEQUENCE:** It is another way of organising the contribution of various departments to a team teaching scheme. In this sequence no theme is presented to the pupils at the outset but an overall pattern is built up as the work proceeds. Programmes are linked consecutively. This approach is more suitable for older or more academic pupils but it can be adapted with younger children also.

**THE CONCENTRIC PATTERN:** In this approach the starting point is something the student knows well. From this something the syllabus radiates outwards and can be related at any point to the daily life of the pupils concerned.

## **TYPES OF TEAM TEACHING**

Johnson and Hunt (1968) identified the nature of team teaching by locating three different types of team teaching programmes. They are:

- Team teaching within a single discipline: This type of team teaching involves the co-operative teaching done by teachers of the same subject.
- Different team specialists related to the course: This type of team teaching calls for the use of teachers from different disciplines.
- Combining team teaching with related innovations: This type of team teaching combines several new practices, e.g. Individualized study packets for each discipline, etc.

## **PROCEDURE IN TEAM TEACHING**

Team teaching involves three major stages:

### **Stage 1: PLANNING**

### **Stage 2: EXECUTION**

### **Stage 3: EVALUATION**

Each of the above mentioned stages in the entire procedure of team teaching consists of several general activities which are given as under:

**STAGE 1: PLANNING:** In this stage, a number of activities are undertaken by the administrator and the teaching team,

- Deciding the topic to be taught
- Defining objectives in explicit terms
- Identifying initial behaviour of students
- Identifying the resources available, namely teachers, aids, buildings etc.
- Selecting a teaching team
- Assigning duties to each member of the team, considering their competence, skills and instruction
- Preparing a tentative schedule of teaching
- Fixing up the level of instruction
- Selecting teaching strategies



- Deciding ways and means of evaluating the educational outcomes of pupils.

**STAGE 2: EXECUTION:** This stage involves the following activities:

- Diagnosis of the learner's state
- Adopting appropriate communication strategy
- Presentation of lead lecture by a competent teacher of the team
- Follow up work. The other teacher supplements the lead lecture by explaining the elements of the topic in a more simple way.
- Providing motivation by the teachers
- Supervising student activities

**STAGE 3: EVALUATION:** At this stage an attempt is made to ascertain whether the objectives of the team teaching have been realized or not. This information provides feedback, both to the students and the teachers. This stage involves the following activities.

- Based on the objectives of the topic taught, work is assigned to the student.
- Evaluating the level of performance
- Diagnosing the difficulties of the pupils and providing them with remedial treatment.

### **ADVANTAGES OF TEAM TEACHING**

Team teaching has the following advantages:

- It contributes flexibility in teachers.
- There is a lot of opportunity for free discussion.
- It can be organised in a number of ways to meet the needs of the particular school and the course content.
- It is helpful for the development of human relations. It can help in paying special attention to students.
- It can be effectively used for teacher training. One or a team of trainee teachers can work with an expert teacher.
- It can help to develop professional status of teachers. Students can benefit from instruction by the most skilled and proficient teachers.
- Team teaching utilizes space, materials and equipment more effectively.
- Behaviour problems are easier to resolve in team teaching.

- Under the team teaching programme, multi-media devices are used in the best manner.
- It can be successfully undertaken at secondary, higher secondary, college and university levels.

## **LIMITATIONS OF TEAM TEACHING**

Some limitations of team teaching are as follows:

- Team teaching demands some changes in the existing school organization and teaching practice.
- Curriculum needs to be changed.
- Theoretically it seems perfect but there is a problem of coordination, planning and implementation.
- Attitudes and willingness to share responsibilities influence the effectiveness of team building.
- Success of team teaching depends on the ability of the members of the team to work together harmoniously. The programme suffers if friction develops in interpersonal relations.
- A lot of time has to be spent on plans for scheduling for group activities and for individual projects.
- Opportunities for pupil relationship may be lost because of the complexities of the programme and size of the group.
- It is a costly affair.
- The frequency and intensity of contact of the team members leads to complex problems of human relations.

## **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, we can say that team-teaching approach allows for more interaction between teachers and students. It allows faculty to evaluate students on their achievement of the learning goals; and students can evaluate faculty members on their teaching proficiency. The increasing diversity of student populations in schools today makes it imperative that teachers in all disciplines develop classroom strategies to address the needs of a broad range of teaching methods. Thus arises the need for inclusive teaching methods. The emphasis is on student and faculty growth, sharing responsibility and broadening horizons. There is a clear and interesting presentation of content and student development and it has democratic participation and common expectations, with cognitive, affective, and behavioural outcomes. This combination of analysis, synthesis, critical thinking, and practical applications can be

done at all levels of education, from kindergarten through graduate school. The team cuts teaching burdens and boosts morale. All things being considered, team teaching enhances the quality of learning and it is sure to spread widely in the future.

.....