



Team teaching in action.

(Courtesy of the Boston University Photo Service)

TEAM TEACHING AT THE COLLEGE LEVEL

by

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To

Judson Rea Butler

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Preface

The purpose of this book is to describe a relatively new approach to college teaching which affords unusual opportunities for the development of an educational environment fostering productive personal relationships between and among college students and faculty. We believe such an environment can be created through a skillfully taught, effectively administered team teaching program. Our efforts will be directed, therefore, to describing the nature and scope of selected team teaching programs, the manner in which such programs can be administered, the potential impact of team teaching on a developing curriculum, the role of faculty and students who constitute the teaching-learning teams, the particular housing requirements of team teaching programs, and finally, the limitations and future prospects of this emerging concept.

In the following chapters particular reference will be made to the philosophy, program, and methodology of Boston University's College of Basic Studies, where a team system was first developed in 1949 and where an entire collegiate two-year program of studies now functions on a team teaching plan. This College's extensive experience with team teaching has made possible refinements which may interest those seeking to broaden their understanding of the potential role and function of team teaching in higher education.

We do not believe team teaching is a panacea for all the ills of higher education. We see it rather as one of several systems of instruction, tested by time and marked by success, by which

many students can find unusual opportunities for personal growth and academic progress.

Finally, we wish to express our appreciation to all those generous enough to furnish information about team teaching programs in their institutions; to Professor James A. Fisher and Professor Frank H. Patterson, Boston University, for their comments on the manuscript while it was in preparation; to Professor Robert W. Hayes, Boston University, for his comments on Chapter IV; and to Mrs. Barbara V. Saunders, Mrs. Bernadette P. Beck, and Miss Linda S. LaBrec for their assistance in preparing the manuscript for publication. We especially want to thank Mr. Peter Steffian of Steffian, Steffian and Bradley, Inc., architect-planner for the present College of Basic Studies building, for his wise counsel and for the designs and renderings which grace the pages of this text.

H.M. LaFauci
P.E. Richter

Chapter 1

TEAM TEACHING: THEME AND VARIATIONS

Introduction

Team teaching has been widely used in elementary and secondary schools throughout the United States since the late fifties. At the pre-college level it has often been employed to utilize master teachers as team leaders, allowing them to teach larger groups while, at the same time, by using teaching assistants and teaching aides, it has made possible small group instruction centered on the materials presented by the master teacher in lectures. Although the team approach has been used in a number of colleges and universities since the late forties, it has not been widely practiced in higher education. There has been only limited discussion of its philosophy and methodology in educational literature. As evidenced by its name, the team system is an organizational device by which a number of persons work together in a concerted effort to perform related instructional activities and to achieve common educational goals. Implicit in the concept is a belief that goals can best be achieved through coordinated joint effort rather than through unrelated individual efforts and a willingness of members to cooperate in forming an integrated system of instruction as a means of achieving these goals. The ways in which a specific team is organized will vary with the

institution in which it operates, with the specific educational objectives for which it is designed, and with the resources—financial, human, and technological—upon which it depends.

Varieties of team approach

Team teaching has been used to achieve a wide variety of educational goals in different institutions. It has been used to teach highly selected superior students (Junior College of Broward County, Fort Lauderdale, Florida), highly selected marginal students (Boston University College of Basic Studies, Boston, Massachusetts), and students of relatively limited ability (Mercer County Community College, Trenton, New Jersey). It has been used to give instruction in subjects as diverse as nursing (Delta College, University Center, Michigan), statistics (Hofstra University, Hempstead, Long Island, New York), cosmetology (El Camino College, Torrance, California), history (El Camino College), education (New York State University at Albany), marketing (New York City Community College), and dentistry (University of Kentucky).¹

Perhaps the greatest diversity in team teaching at the college level is found in the nature and pattern of its organization.

At Delta College, where the team approach is used in an associate degree program for nurses, the objective is "to utilize the capabilities of each faculty member to the fullest in the task of assisting students to achieve specified educational objectives."² The team organization at Delta has been briefly described as follows:

The faculty group is organized with one faculty member functioning as the 'master instructor.' The other faculty in the group share teaching responsibilities with the master instructor in the classroom and clinical laboratory. The expertise of each faculty [member] is used in all areas possible. For example, one faculty [member] is basically responsible for the classroom learning experience. At the same time other faculty members are present in each class and may contribute to the classroom learning in a variety of methods; by making specific additions, by observing

student responses, by making part of the classroom presentation, or by responding to faculty and/or student questions. Each faculty member will have selected sessions for which he is responsible. Each faculty member carries equal responsibility for teaching in the clinical laboratory, small group discussion, and integrated quiz sections.³ Faculty use group prepared guidelines to ensure that each student has an appropriate learning experience. At regular intervals students are moved from one group to another to learn with each faculty member and to react with other students to enhance the total learning process. Evaluation of student progress in achieving the course objectives is accomplished through weekly quizzes, tests, clinical evaluation, and a faculty conference with all members of the team. The course is so organized that students attend one or two general assembly sessions (GAS) each week, a small assembly session (SAS) and integrated quiz session (IQS), and an auto-tutorial laboratory (ATL) session.⁴ The auto-tutorial laboratory utilizes a multi-sensory approach to enable students to learn by listening, seeing, and performing selected activities. The students use the ATL at their convenience for whatever period of time they determine is needed to achieve the defined objectives. Some students spend as little as two hours per week while others may spend six to eight hours in the ATL. The entire faculty team contributes to the selection and development of materials for use in the ATL and the master instructor prepares the audio tape recording. Behavioral objectives are developed and continuously revised by the faculty team. A faculty team conference of one or two hours is held each week to coordinate and/or revise the master planned learning experiences for the following week.⁵

A report on team teaching in marketing courses at New York City Community College suggests the extent to which careful planning, continuous implementation, and bold innovation play important roles in structuring new approaches to subject matter.

Since this was an entirely new concept of teaching, an organizational structure had to be established. Time was devoted to methods of selecting a team coordinator, and enumerating his responsibilities, as well as those of the other team members. The team believed that there should be a sharing of leadership responsibilities. Therefore, it was decided that the responsibilities of the

chairman should be rotated on a monthly basis. All administrative responsibilities were assumed by the chairman during his tenure of office The course material had to be rearranged and re-written in order to coordinate the auditorium and classroom presentations. The planning included a detailed, day-by-day schedule of work to be presented. This included instructional materials, use of audio-visual aids, and guest speakers The areas in which guest speakers could best be utilized to enrich the course content were reviewed. A tentative list of topics and dates was arranged. . . . A program schedule was developed in which it was possible to combine individual classes when deemed desirable, in order to utilize the knowledge of a specific team member or in order to relate directly to auditorium presentations.⁶

After the planning for team teaching had been completed and visits to nearby team teaching programs had been made, a pilot team at New York City Community College proceeded to implement plans.

Students were scheduled for a two-hour auditorium session plus two individual class sections Individual classes were programmed so that combinations were possible to allow for uniform presentation in specialized areas. In several instances classes . . . were combined to allow for specialization of instruction In order to coordinate those instructional activities in a professional manner, the team met before and after each auditorium session for purposes of planning current and subsequent meetings. In addition, each auditorium session was evaluated at its conclusion. An additional meeting was scheduled for the latter part of the week.⁷

The pilot team used a variety of techniques—lectures, panels, visual aids, and guest speakers. Finally, in evaluating the success of the program the faculty administered a series of three one-hour examinations, as well as a two-hour comprehensive final examination. In addition, a term report on assigned reading was required of all students.

As might be expected, the opportunities inherent in the team organization have been of particular interest to faculty in schools

of education who generally are aware of the impact of team teaching on secondary and primary education. At the University of Hartford, Hartford, Connecticut, a team consisting of one elementary and one secondary education specialist, one social and one urban psychologist, an administrator, and two graduate assistants created an introductory education course for education majors in 1966. The University of South Florida in Tampa has also used an inter-disciplinary team in a program for preparing elementary teachers. At the University of Maine, new courses in education served as a stimulus for developing a team approach. The origin and subsequent development of the team organization is described in the following report:

Three college faculty teams were created to develop and present the three new core courses for prospective teachers beginning in 1961-2.

THE AMERICAN SCHOOL (Ed B 2), was to be taught by an educational historian who also taught social studies methodology, a secondary curriculum expert, an elementary curriculum expert with an interest in the gifted student, a reading-language arts specialist, and an authority in school law and organization.

THE GROWTH-LEARNING PROCESS (Ed B 3), was taught by an inter-disciplinary team, including a learning theory specialist from the psychology department, a child-growth expert from home economics, and three members of the education faculty, two from the field of guidance and one a science educator.

THE TEACHING PROCESS team (Ed B 4), consisted of a language arts specialist, an elementary arithmetic expert, the director of the University of Maine Audio-Visual Center, and two measurement-evaluation specialists.

It will be noted that several fields of interest and specialization are represented by the members of the teams, but that no hierarchical structure was created in which teams included members

with different levels of preparation and experience. Three-week workshops were scheduled by each team in the summers of 1962 and 1963 to develop further plans, evaluate their team work and participate in group dynamics training at Bethel, Maine.

Each of the three team courses was scheduled for a large group session each week for all students in the course plus two small group sessions. Five small groups, each with a team member as discussion leader, met simultaneously on this twice-weekly schedule. In the original plan, one team member presented a lecture from his specialization at the large group session. Discussion of the lecture and related material was conducted in the small group sessions by each member of the team.⁸

Later, the availability of closed circuit television (CCTV) facilities and video tape recording equipment allowed the team courses to take on new dimensions. Lectures could be televised to large groups of students; and lectures, demonstrations, and actual public school classes could be taped and stored as permanent teaching aids. The report continues comment on the evolution of teaching teams:

Several factors motivated this evolution. Among these was a turnover of personnel in the teams necessitated by a variety of outside events. While some team members remained to provide continuity, annual replacements of other members represented a transfusion of new ideas and philosophies . . . and produced significant modifications in both course content and procedures. Annual election by team members of a chairman for each team resulted in more or less of a rotation system and each chairman during his tenure sought to put his stamp on the course leading to other modifications. From the interaction of team members in friendly criticism and professional support emerged both a willingness to abandon the familiar and comfortable and to attempt the new and uncertain in teaching methods. The criticisms of students were sought and respected as motivations for change From these experiences came important modifications in the course and teams. To gain flexibility, the three-period schedule was abandoned by two teams in favor of two 75-minute periods per week. With CCTV as an aid it was no longer necessary to schedule a large group session

in order to communicate with all students. Instructors of small group sections were increasingly freed to follow the lead and accept the pacing of their own groups within the master plan for the course. Specialization among staff was further utilized by a more flexible approach to grouping which allowed the specialist to meet with those students for whom he could be the most significant resource on the team. Television presentations were shortened in most cases to a maximum of twenty minutes with the presentations intended to raise issues or provide an experience which could be followed by discussion in contrast to the more traditional didactic lectures. . . . Finally, the team structure was altered by introducing selected doctoral students as team members thus freeing some senior faculty for other assignments and also providing supervised practice in college teaching for novices.⁹

The organization of a teaching team may be more complex or less complex than those just described, depending on its function and purpose. Teaching teams may consist of any number of teaching and supportive personnel. A two-member team offering instruction in a single subject to the same group of students has also been used to teach chemistry (Santa Ana College, Santa Ana, California), education (Claremont Graduate School, Claremont, California), and philosophy (Florida State University, Tallahassee, Florida). Occasionally, three instructors have cooperated in teaching common classes, as in a course in History of Civilization (Fashion Institute of Technology, New York) and Introduction to Literature (San Diego City College, San Diego, California). When a team consists of only two or three instructors the organizational pattern can be both simple and informal yet still allow for the presentation of material to be broadened and varied as one instructor's knowledge of a field complements another's. This apparently was the case when an introductory psychology course was taught at Hofstra University, Hempstead, New York, by two faculty members utilizing a team approach. One of these faculty members writes as follows:

Our use of the term *team teaching* may be somewhat different from the usual definition. Each of us is an experienced faculty

member with in fact somewhat similar backgrounds. Each of us had successfully taught the course in the past. We attempt to present our lectures in concert with one another, much in the way many disk jockeys perform, with a dialogue approach, rather than having each of us talk about a particular specialty. We use a common set of lecture notes and before each class decide that, if one of us feels more comfortable with the particular topic for the day, the *other* presents the basic lecture. Since each is sufficiently sophisticated to present the material alone, the relatively more experienced person serves as an 'interrupter' or as 'clarifier.' We feel that the more experienced individual would be better able to interrupt and give illustrations, while the relatively less experienced, but still fully qualified individual, can take the basic responsibility for presenting the overall content.¹⁰

Uses of team instruction

One reason for team teaching is that it allows instructors to share their knowledge and teaching techniques in dealing with a comprehensive and complex field. This was true at Edison Junior College, Fort Myers, Florida, where a teaching team developed and conducted the Frontiers of Science Course described below by one of its instructors:

The Frontiers Course is essentially a college-level general science course for non-science majors. It is keyed to the current developments in science, and necessarily must curtail emphasis on the historical or developmental aspects. This emphasis places a heavy demand on the instructor, since it requires him to be up-to-date in the fields of chemistry, physics, and biology, and the more derivative fields of geology, astronomy, and medicine. The impact of science on society is also stressed, both as to good and bad effects.

The course is a two-session, four-credit sequence, requiring three hours of lecture and three hours of laboratory per week. It should be apparent why team teaching is used here. A course leader actually carries all the details of running the course, using other teachers to help lecture in the areas of their specialties. For example, one teacher can handle physics, elementary chemistry, geology, and astronomy. He needs help in organic chemistry and in biology, and teachers in those fields may lecture as much as 25 per cent of the time. The department head acts to equalize the

course load in a suitable manner. One teacher is 'in charge' of the grades, attendance, quizzes, exams, etc.

We have observed that as time goes on, the principal teacher tends to take more of the load. His increasing familiarity with the material permits this. Nevertheless, we do not expect the team teaching aspect to disappear, because new course material will be introduced by those most expert in the field.¹¹

Team teaching has also proved useful to the development of a far-ranging, four-year program in Christianity and Culture at St. Andrews Presbyterian College, Laurinburg, North Carolina. This program is taught by faculty representing the fields of religion, philosophy, literature, social sciences, art, music, and theater. A report from St. Andrews explains why the faculty favors team teaching for such a program:

By the use of such interdisciplinary teams we believe that departmental and divisional lines are successfully bridged and that students are helped to discover the unity of knowledge as a tool of understanding. We also believe that the development of these teams leads to a greater sense of unity within the faculty itself since these teachers continue to be members of regular departments and help to correlate the departmental work with that of the Christianity and Culture Program.¹²

For faculty in the program, teaching not only means leading small discussion groups, but is part of a total team effort. The courses are planned by the team; lectures are attended by all team members; panels are often presented by the team; and all tests are made out by the team as a whole. The organization of this team-taught program is described by the report as follows:

In organizing materials for the course, we draw upon all the resources of history, philosophy, religion, and the social sciences and upon all the evidences of human creativity preserved in literature and the arts. But it is obviously impossible to manage an unbroken survey of man's cultural history in depth. Our intention

therefore is to focus on a few rich epochs. These major periods have been selected and arranged semester-by-semester in a roughly chronological order to provide a sense of perspective. The gaps themselves suggest to the student the infinite richness beyond the scope of any formal survey; yet we try to integrate the selected 'blocks' of material so as to provide a sense of continuity. Within each period, we do not ignore the historical dimension. But we are not so much interested in the detailed examination of origins and influences as in understanding a cultural climax in the experience of mankind.¹³

A team approach was also used by a group of faculty members at the University of Florida in Gainesville when a new course, "Cybernetics and Society," was inaugurated in 1967. This course, the aim of which was to confront students with the meaning of computer technology in handling information, was developed by a committee of five professors who represented the areas of social science, the humanities, and mathematics in the general education core curriculum. During the first quarter in which the course was offered, these five professors as a team taught only seven students, providing an unusual opportunity for effective course development. Later it was decided that the course was to be taught on a rotational basis by three of the original team of five. Consisting of three weekly lectures and one weekly two-hour laboratory session, the five quarter-hour course explores the historical development of computers, introduces students to computer operations and programming, discusses the present applications of computers, and concludes with a consideration of the philosophical and social impact of computer technology.¹⁴

Another reason for team instruction is that it allows instructors to use new approaches not only to subject matter but also to relationships between different learning situations. For example, team teaching has been used to relate lectures and laboratory work in an introductory biology course at San Diego City College:

On an experimental basis, the Life Science Department decided to attempt a team teaching approach to the introductory biology

course in the fall semester of 1966-67. Only one section of lecture was offered. All students were expected to take the biology laboratory concurrently, although a few did not. Lecture was three credits, the laboratory one.

All four instructors gave lectures on various subjects, the topics settled in advance by mutual consent. In general, each instructor chose the areas with which he felt most familiar. Each lectured the total period and completed the particular topic in the number of lectures necessary. The three instructors who were not lecturing also attended the lectures in order to follow the content for later discussion and to offer constructive criticism. By occasional reference to each other in the lectures, the instructors also created a mood of total involvement of the staff.

The laboratory (a three-hour period) was divided into a one-hour discussion period followed immediately by a two-hour laboratory. The intent of the discussion was to give the student a feeling of personal contact with a staff member, to permit him to ask questions concerning lecture or laboratory material, and to cover any necessary explanation for the following laboratory. The same instructor had the block of discussion-laboratory, and all instructors had such sections.¹⁵

Team instruction permits a group of instructors representing diverse fields to construct and present a program which has a coherent pattern, a meaningful structure of interrelated concepts and ideas. Thus, it is not surprising that programs in basic studies and in general education have turned to a team approach as their *modus operandi*. Austin College, Sherman, Texas, for example, developed a five-course program in basic studies comprising four lower division courses at the freshman and sophomore level and a senior colloquium.

The purpose of the first three courses was to examine under the theme 'Faith and Order' the major idea and belief systems of the western world as they had come to shape the institutional development of our civilization. The senior colloquium attempted to structure a dialogue concerning contemporary 'dilemmas' which did not have any answers but involved sharpening students to a point of being able to ask the right questions about their own age. The first three courses were taught in combined lectures and weekly 'case

studies' (meeting eighteen students in each). Their purpose was to interpret the development of Western Civilization: B.S. 101-102, the ancient world—Mesopotamia, Egypt, the Judeo-Christian culture and its relationship to the developing of the Greco-Roman world through the fourth century A.D.; B.S. 201-202, a full treatment of the development of the medieval and early modern thought through the seventeenth century (B.S. 201), and the seventeenth-nineteenth centuries (B.S. 202) which introduced students to primary material related to the formation of our own modern world. The basic disciplines in all four of these courses are history, religion, and philosophy¹⁶

The faculty team teaching the basic studies course consisted of four lecturers, one from each of the three major integrated disciplines and one from literature, who lectured alternately throughout the courses. The report from Austin College continues:

This does not mean that each lecture simply deals with a segment of the material; rather the course developed and the lectures followed from the demands of the particular subject. For instance, as we introduced the unit on seventeenth century absolutism, the first lecture was on the Palace of Versailles as an example of 'absolutism in stone.' This lecture was given by the art historian who also related to the historical materials to be given in a lecture on political absolutism in France and England. Such a lecture given by the art historian is not simply a treatment on Baroque art; rather it becomes a sophisticated chance to place the building within the context of a seventeenth century political and philosophical movement. The staff of lecturers in these courses naturally had to be augmented by other members of the faculty. Since these four courses were offered during the freshman and sophomore years on a required basis, we needed for each course a staff of approximately eight to nine men, which satisfied our requirements of approximately 280 to 300 students in the freshman course and 250 to 270 in the sophomore course.

In the senior colloquium which operates on a one-meeting-a-week basis, together with one assembly in the evening each week, five to six colloquia are offered to a group of seniors numbering approximately fifteen who meet with two faculty members. The seniors are chosen from a cross section of disciplines thereby providing an interdisciplinary character to each colloquium. The two

faculty are likewise chosen from different disciplines and are urged to deal with the contemporary materials from the stance of their own disciplines.¹⁷

Colleges with general education courses have also used team approaches. Among these are Delta College; Stephens College, Columbia, Missouri; Santa Ana College; Scripps College, Claremont, California; and Monteith College of Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan. At Delta College, the courses in humanities, science, and social studies are taught by teams of instructors whose lectures are telecast over closed circuit television to small sections of students clustered as groups in a large but informally furnished concourse. After the televised lectures, instructors direct group discussions and sometimes change groups to discuss various topics related to their individual fields of interest. Stephens College combines general education and team instruction with a house plan by which a large group of students (about one hundred) can take the same general education courses and live in the same dormitory. Instructors in the courses—Communications, Basic Beliefs in Human Experience, General Humanities, and Contemporary Social Issues—have their offices in their students' dormitory and also meet their classes in an instructional suite there. Along with the residence hall counselor, they serve as advisers to their students.¹⁸ At Santa Ana College a team of instructors representing various areas—counseling, English and reading, science, and social science—work with the occupational majors in a general education program. Scripps College's general education courses in the humanities are taught, through a series of lectures and seminars, by teams of instructors representing the fields of classics, art, religion, and philosophy. At Monteith College of Wayne State University, team teaching, in a broadly conceived fashion, is employed in three general education divisions. For example, in a natural science course, students share the same large group presentations (lectures, panels, films, etc.) and have some common reading assignments and examinations. Apart from the

general limits of the course, however, each instructor has considerable latitude to assign supplementary reading and to conduct his discussion sections in his own way.

The team system can be the pivot of an entire two-year college program. This is true of Boston University College of Basic Studies, which has used a team system from the very beginning of its existence. This College, originally called Boston University Junior College, was established in 1952 in order to meet the needs of students who were, for various reasons, unable to meet the admission requirements for the four-year colleges in Boston University. Then, as now, the chief features of the College were: first, a two-year integrated core curriculum, comprising general education courses in humanities, social science, science, psychology and guidance, and rhetoric; and second, a team system of instruction. Originally, the team approach was introduced as a means of helping faculty members to integrate the various subjects in the curriculum; later it was kept not only because it proved indispensable to this end, but also because it strengthened and individualized relationships between teachers and students and enabled students to progress more rapidly. In 1966, the College moved to a new building which was specifically designed for team teaching. The team system, however, remains essentially the same as when it was initiated. A team consists of five instructors, one from each of the departments of the College. All of these instructors teach the same sections (usually four sections with approximately thirty students in each) and, of course, the same students throughout an entire academic year. Thus, even with increasing enrollments, the teacher-student ratio at the College has remained constant, and a larger student body has by no means affected adversely personal contact between student and teacher. In 1956, an enrollment of 750 students required six teams; in 1968, an enrollment of 1080 required ten teams. Theoretically, the College could increase its enrollment indefinitely without having to sacrifice personal student-teacher relationships as long as teams were added proportionately to maintain a network of miniature "colleges" within the framework of the larger College.¹⁹