

Investigating a Paired Teaching Model for Transfer of Evidence-Based Teaching Practices

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Rationale:

Multiple courses in the EOAS department have been “transformed” through CWSEI to incorporate best practices in instruction strategies. We are investigating the potential of a paired teaching model to achieve transfer of these practices to instructors who have not been a part of a course transformation team.

Co-Teaching → Paired Teaching

- Differing levels of shared involvement in the class by the instructors.

Paired teaching has been used to:

- Model and develop collaborative skills for learners
- Provide doctoral candidates with experiential training in teaching
- **Disseminate effective instructional strategies between instructors**

Paired Teaching* in EOAS: Courses in 2014/15

Course (Semester)	# of Instructors
EOAS 220 Introductory Mineralogy (F 2014)	3
ENVR 200 Introduction to Environmental Science (F 2014)	2
ENVR 300 Introduction to Research in Environmental Science (W 2015)	3

*Two or more instructors sharing the planning, organization, delivery and assessment of instruction, as well as the physical space in the classroom (Bacharach *et al.*, 2008)

Data Collection & Analysis

- Semi-structured interviews with instructors: pre-term and post-term (n=8 instructors; 13 interviews to date – 3 still to be conducted at end of this term)
- Interviews recorded with permission, transcribed & coded into themes

Advantages & Challenges of paired teaching as a means of transferring teaching practices



Preliminary Findings: **Advantages**

- ✧ Shared experience sparks conversations that can highlight personal values about teaching & learning
- ✧ Allows for fostering of specific teaching skills
- ✧ Paired teaching in an already transformed course gives additional time & energy to reflect on teaching practice
- ✧ Gives insight into mechanics & logistics of instructional strategies (timing, choreography, etc.)

Preliminary Findings: Challenges

- ❖ Additional planning time required for coordination with other instructor(s)
- ❖ Power imbalances between the instructors can hinder open communication
- ❖ Novice instructors may feel pressure to emulate experienced instructor's teaching style
- ❖ Success of pairing is perceived as being dependent on personalities

Recommended Best Practices for an Effective Paired Teaching Team

At the outset, address issues of power sharing, communication, roles, appropriate matching of co-teachers, scheduling. Potential co-instructors should have a broad discussion of beliefs about teaching & learning, and a discussion of time management styles.

Novice instructors should assess their comfort level with sharing their learning process with another person. Need to be comfortable with being constantly observed and with taking risks in front of a peer.

Ongoing debriefing and shared reflection are essential – schedule regular meetings (at least once/week).

Next Steps...Collect Data on Future Teaching Practices

- The novice instructors of the pair will fill in the Teaching Practices Inventory for subsequent courses they teach.
- I will observe their teaching over the next 2 years to collect data on what is happening in their classes.
- This cycle will continue with new pairs of instructors.

References

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