

Mixing It Up! Collaborating Across the Disciplines

Interdisciplinary Team Teaching

- **Davis, J. R. (1995). *Interdisciplinary courses and team-teaching: New arrangements for learning*. Phoenix, AZ: American Council on Education, Oryx Press.**

Davis explains the benefits and pitfalls of interdisciplinary, team-taught courses, providing practical information on how to design and conduct them. He argues that such classes are an improvement over the traditional disciplinary structure and constructs an "ideal" template for practitioners interested in implementing this teaching method. Included is a listing of interdisciplinary, team-taught courses, arranged by categories, such as general education, gender studies, technical and professional programs, and electives. Each entry includes course title, offering institution, intended audience, disciplines, personnel, a general description, and distinctive features.

- **Dinitz, S., Drake, J., Gedeon, S., Kiedaisch, J., & Mehtens, C. (1997). *The odd couples: interdisciplinary team teaching*. *Language and Learning Across the Disciplines*, 2(2), 29-42.**

Two conversations between members of two teaching teams are presented. The discussions focus not on disciplinary differences around content, but on how different teaching assumptions emerged and became apparent during the process of team teaching: how to manage the classroom, the emphasis on content and process, how to use texts, how to guide students' writing, and how to evaluate and respond to students. The conversations reveal the surprises and tensions that occur during team teaching, and the opportunities these create for reflecting on one's teaching practice.

- **Fauvel, A. M., Miller, L. K., Lane, P., & Farris, J. (2010). *Reflections on an interdisciplinary, community-based, team-taught adventure*. *Journal of Continuing Higher Education*, 58(1), 40-46.**

Faculty from engineering and business developed this community-based, alternative-format course to engage students in the question: "What will the community look like in 10 years?" A 4-week-long course emerged: Socially Conscious Innovation. This article outlines the educational philosophies and guiding principles used in developing Socially Conscious Innovation, and provides a summary of faculty, administrator, and student feedback used to improve the course for the upcoming year.

- **Havnes, A. (2009). *Talk, planning, and decision-making in interdisciplinary teacher teams: a case study*. *Teachers and Teaching*, 15(1), 155-176.**

This study explores the internal structure, social meaning and resources for learning and development inherent in the coordination of interdisciplinary teacher teams. The focus of this study is not on what teachers say *about* teams, but on what teachers say *in* teams, attending in particular to interdisciplinary teams. The study illustrates patterns in team-talk, conceptualises processes of decision-making that take place, and identifies resources for development inherent in certain forms of interaction. Four patterns of interaction are identified – preserving individualism: renegotiating individual autonomy and personal responsibility; coordination: assuring the social organisation of work; cooperation: creating a shared enterprise; and sharing: clarifying pedagogical motives.

- **Krometis, L. H., Clark, E. P., Gonzalez, V., & Leslie, M. E. (2011). *The "death" of disciplines: Development of a team-taught course to provide an interdisciplinary perspective for first-year students*. *College Teaching*, 59(2), 73-78.**

This article describes the development, execution, and assessment of an effort in interdisciplinary teaching in which four doctoral candidates from widely varying home disciplines collaborated to create and teach a "truly interdisciplinary" course for first-year students centered on the pervasiveness of humankind's quest for immortality. Assessment of the course indicates several desirable student outcomes, including the development of a more mature world view and appreciation for different epistemologies. While students at times found the number of disciplines related to the central topic overwhelming, they largely identified the exposure to new perspectives as an exciting and worthwhile academic experience. Interdisciplinary efforts in the classroom are encouraged, though ample course development time is recommended to maximize success.

- **Letterman, M. R., & Dugan, K. B. (2004). Team teaching a cross-disciplinary honors course: Preparation and development. *College Teaching*, 52(2), 76.**

A literature review reveals benefits and pitfalls, but it lacks sufficient information for instructing team teachers in planning collaborative courses. In this article, we outline suggestions from a combination of sources, including informal conversations with faculty members and our own experience. Collaborators for a team-taught course should talk to experienced others, review the literature, become acquainted with one another's teaching style, open channels for communication, and plan for turn-taking strategies, potential power dimensions, and sources of conflict.

- **Little, A., & Hoel, A. (2011). Interdisciplinary team teaching: an effective method to transform student attitudes. *Journal of Effective Teaching*, 11(1), 36-44.**

A class project involved teams of environmental science and business students analyzing an industry stakeholder interested in participating in the development of a community composting network. The results of this team-taught section were compared with a traditionally taught business section with a sustainability emphasis to identify student learning gains and reflect upon the experience. Both the team-taught and traditional sections perceived gains in understanding both business and natural systems; the team-taught group alone made gains in linking interdisciplinary thinking and an understanding of both business and natural systems to future success.

- **Plant, K.M., ed. (2011). Team teaching: Across the disciplines, across the academy. Vernun, VA: Stylus Publishing.**

Team teaching – both the intellectual interaction involved in the design of the course, and the pedagogical interaction in the teaching of the course – creates a dynamic environment that reflects the ways scholars make meaning of the world. Each of the five examples shares the story of a course at a different institution, and each is designed to reflect variables in team-taught courses. They represent courses in a variety of disciplines, and at a range of levels. They also illustrate a different models for instructional teams, such as faculty from the same disciplines, from related disciplines, from two very different disciplines, from different institutions, and one pairing of a faculty member and a staff member. This book addresses the challenges, pedagogical and administrative, that must be addressed for effective team teaching.

Links

- UBC Team Teaching Examples and Opportunities
 - Arts One: artsone.arts.ubc.ca/
 - Science One: scienceone.ubc.ca/
 - ASIC 200: terry.ubc.ca/mix/?p=174
- Annotated team teaching bibliography:
<http://www.eos.ubc.ca/research/cwsei/resources/MultipleInstructors.html>