

# Team-teaching: Rewards and Challenges

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# Overview

The 2016 Mellon Grant model for team-teaching

Why team-teach a class?

Rewards of team-teaching

Challenges of team-teaching

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# The 2016-18 Mellon Grant Model

**Model** supported by the 2016-2018 Mellon Grant *Engaging Tomorrow's Students*

- two faculty teaching one course over one semester
- each faculty gets a full course credit
- replacement for one course provided
- initial course development funds available (\$1000 for each faculty)

Full grant proposal:

<https://www.iwu.edu/melloncenter/faculty-development.html>

# Why Team-teach?

The purpose of a team-taught course, from an educational standpoint, is to **push students to achieve higher levels of synthesis and integration** in their study of new material.

Team-teaching allows students to observe **high-level intellectual debate among colleagues**.

(From Stanford University, CTL)

Faculty collaboration can foster integrative learning by

--connecting skills and knowledge **from multiple sources and experiences**;

--applying skills and practices **in various settings**;

--understanding issues and positions **contextually**;

--**making connections** within a major, between fields, between curriculum, co-curriculum, or between academic knowledge and practice.

(From Prof. Sebastiaan Faber, Oberlin)

# Rewards

Having two minds facilitate a classroom community that allows students to connect with different personalities.

Co-teaching allows more opportunities for small group and one-to-one learning, and stronger modeling during lessons.

The co-planning process encourages two teachers to bounce ideas off each other in order to deliver the strongest, most creative lessons. I always enjoyed using my partnerships to model behavior and positive peer-to-peer interaction for students. When students experience their teachers working together, they understand the power of respect amongst peers.

Let's not forget the most important part: it is nice to have another adult in the room! And it is fun!

[...] team-teaching achieves goals that could not be achieved by working alone. Efficient planning, mutual trust, careful coordination, intellectual compatibility, and willingness to reassess one's own intellectual presuppositions were some of the elements that panel discussants considered essential for the success of a team-taught course. Panel discussants concluded that team teaching is an ideal pedagogical tool to encourage students to shift interest from mastering one method of inquiry to developing the critical perspective necessary to exploit and evaluate several cognitive methods.

[http://cte.virginia.edu/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/Fall03\\_playing-well-together.pdf](http://cte.virginia.edu/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/Fall03_playing-well-together.pdf)

# Challenges

- Adapting to different teaching styles: it is difficult to work with someone whose teaching style and philosophy differ from your own. make sure to talk about it. Look at it as a chance to widen the scope of your practice by incorporating multiple styles into your teaching.
- Teaching out of one's comfort zone; sharing the stage
- The issue of grading. <http://www.edutopia.org/blog/collaborative-team-teaching-challenges-rewards-marisa-kaplan>
- Part of the challenge of team teaching is putting yourself in a position where your own authority and expertise are challenged, and sometimes you have to take a backseat
- Modeling: it “takes students out to the leading edge of knowledge” and shows them “what the production of knowledge is really like.” Fall 2006 Vol. 16, No.1 Speaking of Teaching
- Faculty must make the shift from being “experts” to being “expert learners,” for in the collaborative classroom, teachers and students join in a shared process of intellectual discovery (Stanford)
- Sheer amount of material: tricky to manage load of readings & assignments
- Students' mixed, uneven backgrounds (perhaps exclude freshmen)

# Tips for team-teaching

- ❑ **Plan everything with your co-teacher (assignments, grading procedures, and teaching strategies)**
- ❑ **Attend your co-teacher lectures**
- ❑ **Refer to each-other's ideas (model integration)**
- ❑ **Model debate with your co-teacher**
- ❑ **You should have something to say, even when you are not in charge**
- ❑ **You should apply common grading standards (students get more and different feedback)**
- ❑ **You should meet often to discuss the “pulse of the course”**
- ❑ **Let the students speak (team-teaching increases instructor-student interaction)**
- ❑ **Ask open questions**
- ❑ **Be willing to be surprised**

<https://web.stanford.edu/dept/CTL/Newsletter/teamteaching.pdf>

# Models for faculty collaboration across disciplines

- Team-teaching (Mellon Grant)
- Rotational model: A series of instructors rotate (disadvantage: students have to adjust to teaching strategies and styles) . Examples from Oberlin:
  - 14-day interdisciplinary mini-course on transitions to democracy (2005); Eight countries (Germany, Spain, Chile, Argentina, South Africa, Yugoslavia, Russia, Iraq ): eight lectures, six films.
  - Idea in the works:* Use this model for sophomore courses around “big problems”
  - Bridge between First-Year-Seminar program and the moment of major declaration
  - from Prof. Sebastiaan Faber, Oberlin
- Dispersed team model: course meets 2 or 3 times per week, once with all instructors present (disadvantage: students don't hear a multiple perspective)
- Course clustering (IWU)
- Linked courses (different courses are linked with a common theme; similar to IWU course clustering)
- Other models here: <https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/teamcollaborative-teaching/#models>

## Resources for team-teaching and collaboration across disciplines:

Stanford University, Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL)

<https://web.stanford.edu/dept/CTL/Newsletter/teamteaching.pdf>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=avxAskY8b-U> 3 mins. Youtube video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dbzpq3S3g> One hour on team-teaching

Center for Teaching at Vanderbilt University

<https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/teamcollaborative-teaching/#models>