

## **Are Two Better Than One? An Evaluation of Team Teaching in Teacher Preparation**

Grace Dooley  
Undergraduate Student  
cdooley@stallions.abac.edu

Alyssa Glover  
Undergraduate Student  
aglover@stallions.abac.edu

Dr. Sallie McHugh  
Associate Professor  
smchugh@abac.edu

Dr. Farish Mulkey  
Assistant Professor  
fmulkey@abac.edu

Department of Agricultural Education and Communication  
Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College  
ABAC 8, 2802 Moore Hwy  
Tifton, Ga 31793

## **Are Two Better Than One? An Evaluation of Team Teaching in Teacher Preparation**

### **Introduction**

Team teaching has been shown to improve both learning and teaching. From the student's perspective, team teaching allows for more active learning, which contributes to greater student interest and engagement (Zadra, 1998). Team teaching is an ever-present trend in K-12 education as the disparity in the student-to-teacher ratio continues to rise across all levels (Winn & Messenbeimer-Young, 1995). Higher education and teacher preparation programs often do not model team teaching though its effectiveness is supported in the literature (Winn & Messenbeimer-Young, 1995).

Team teaching can encompass an interactive model where two or more teachers teach during instructional time. Each team member alternatively leads instruction while the other team member(s) add comments (White et al., 1998). Modeling team teaching in preservice courses can be effective as students can interact and learn from multiple instructors with unique experiences. Team teaching in a preservice teacher preparation program allows for multiple viewpoints and depth of knowledge through lived instructor experiences shared with preservice teacher-learners. Likewise, team teaching prevents only one-sided viewpoints in field experience and practicum courses. Exposure to different approaches, perspectives, personalities, and experiences proves vital as preservice teachers develop their philosophy about the teaching and learning process (York-Barr et al., 2004). The purpose of this study was to determine students' perception of team teaching utilized in the Abraham Baldwin Agricultural Education program.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Team teaching aims to improve how the material is presented to the students, and collaboration has been recognized as a foundation for professional growth (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995; Lieberman, 1995; Roth et al., 2002). The activity theory has been applied to the team teaching model by Roth and Tobin (2002, 2004). According to activity theory, the goal of team teaching may depend on a question: Are the teachers combining their efforts to offer a level of instruction that could not be accomplished independently (Roth & Tobin, 2004)? Cook and Friend (2017) defined team teaching as having two educators delivering meaningful instruction to diverse groups of students in a standard setting. This definition is used as a framework for this study.

### **Methodology**

The population for the study was 108 individuals who had been team-taught through interactive and participant-observer models from the fall of 2019 through the fall of 2022. A survey was developed by the course instructors and two departmental students to measure the effectiveness of team teaching in two courses (Agriculture Practicum and Early Field Experience). Three other faculty members in the Agricultural Education department established the content validity of the survey instrument. Former and current students who completed the courses received the Qualtrics survey via email. The survey included demographic questions, questions about prior experience with team teaching, and their perceptions of the effectiveness of team teaching. The survey was open for two weeks. Sixty-two respondents completed the survey resulting in a 57% response rate.

### **Results to Date/Implications**

Table 1 reports the overall mean scores for all participants along with the standard deviation and the percentage of respondents reporting agree or strongly agree for each team teaching indicator.

The highest reported percentages were provided multiple viewpoints (93.55%), satisfied with learning experience in two classes (93.55%), and highlighted that no two teachers are the same (93.54%). All means indicated respondents as a whole agree or strongly agree with all team teaching indicators.

**Table 1**

*Analysis of Team Teaching Indicators Mean Score (n=62)*

Indicators	Mean	SD	% agree/ strongly agree
helped keep faculty and students in a positive mindset.	1.66	0.93	87.09%
provided a great sense of comfort in the classroom.	1.54	0.98	83.87%
provided multiple viewpoints during class discussion and topics.	1.31	0.59	93.55%
allowed class to be more enjoyable due to variations of teaching styles.	1.48	0.70	88.71%
highlighted that no two teachers are the same, but each can be effective.	1.36	0.73	93.54%
is the preferred style than having only one lecturer.	2.18	1.28	64.52%
approach used in AGED courses has made me better prepared for the classroom.	2.05	1.27	69.36%
should continue to be used for AGED senior level courses.	1.52	0.89	88.72%
was successful and I was satisfied with my learning experience in the two classes.	1.38	0.88	93.55%

*Note.* Mean scores reported as 1= Strongly agree, 2= Agree, 3= Somewhat agree, 4= Neither agree or disagree, 5= Somewhat disagree, 6= Disagree, 7= Strongly disagree

### Conclusions

Overall, the respondents had positive perceptions (either strongly agree or agree) that team teaching in courses of preservice preparation programs is an effective instructional method. The respondents indicated they received more insight from multiple perspectives on the same topic, and classes were more enjoyable due to variations in teaching styles. Respondents cited the importance of experiencing different teachers and noting that each can be effective, though their teaching styles may differ. The respondents indicated that the department should continue team teaching and that they were satisfied with the experience.

### Implications/Recommendations

Based on the study findings, the faculty will continue incorporating the team teaching model with senior-level agriculture education courses and possibly expand to an additional lower-level agriculture education course. Faculty did note the lower overall score on the one lecturer-style question. Further research and analysis will be conducted to determine the cause. Continued research on team teaching will be conducted with each cohort to ensure the best learning experience for students. In the profession, recommendations are made for teacher preparation institutions to consider the application of team teaching in their programs. Team teaching is especially recommended when cohort enrollment is higher, and there is a need to lower the student-to-teacher ratio.

### References

- Cook, L., & Friend, M. (2017). Co-Teaching: Guidelines for Creating Effective Practices. *Focus on Exceptional Children*, 28(3). <https://doi.org/10.17161/foec.v28i3.6852>
- Darling-Hammond, L., & McLaughlin, M. W. (2011). Policies That Support Professional Development in an Era of Reform. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 92(6), 81–92. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0031721711109200622>
- Dieker, L. A. (2010). What are the characteristics of “effective” middle and high school co-taught teams for students with disabilities? *Preventing school failure: Alternative education for children and youth*, 46(1), 14-23. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10459880109603339>
- Hatton, E. J. (2006). Team teaching and teacher orientation to work: Implications for the preservice and inservice preparation of teachers. *Journal of Education for Teaching*, 11(3), 228-244. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0260747850110302>
- Lieberman, A. (1995). Practices that support teacher development: Transforming conceptions of professional learning. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 76, 591–596.
- Roth, W. M., & Tobin, K. G. (2002). Redesigning an ‘urban’ teacher education program: An activity theory perspective. *Mind, Culture and Activity*, 9(2), 108–131.
- Roth, W. M., Tobin, K., Zimmermann, A., Bryant, N., & Davis, C. (2002). Lessons on and from the dihybrid cross: An activity theoretical study of learning in co-teaching. *Journal of Research in Science Teaching*, 39(3), 253–282.
- Roth, W. M., & Tobin, K. G. (2004). Coteaching: From praxis to theory. *Teachers and teaching: Theory and practice*, 10(2), 161–180.
- White, C. S., Henley, J. A., & Brabston, M. E. (1998). To team teach or not to team teach – that is the question: A faculty perspective, *Marketing Education Review*, 8(3), 13-23. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10528008.1998.11488640>
- Winn, J. A., Messenbeimer-Young, T. (1995). Team teaching at the university level: What we have learned. *Teacher Education and Special Education*, 18(4), 223-229. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ530774>
- York-Barr, J., Bacharach, N., Salk, J., Frank, J. H., & Benick, B. (2004). Team teaching in teacher education: General and special education faculty experiences and perspectives *Issues in Teacher Education*, 13(1), 73-94. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ796434.pdf>
- Zadra, N., "Team teaching: A study of collaboration" (1998). *Graduate Student Theses, Dissertations, & Professional Papers*. 10539. <https://scholarworks.umt.edu/etd/10539>