



Review

Student teachers' team teaching: Models, effects, and conditions for implementation

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H I G H L I G H T S

- Team teaching models differ in the amount of collaboration expected from teachers.
- Student teachers' team teaching has several benefits for all actors involved.
- When implementing team teaching, several conditions should be taken into account.

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A B S T R A C T

In an attempt to provide alternative models of field experience in teacher education, this study elaborates the concept of team teaching. A literature review was conducted, which resulted into a narrative review. Five models of team teaching were distinguished: the observation, coaching, assistant teaching, equal status and teaming model. Several benefits of team teaching for student teachers (e.g., increased support, professional growth), their mentors (e.g., decreased workload, learning gains), and the learners in their classroom (e.g., increased support, rich lessons) were found. However, disadvantages were recognised as well. Further, several conditions for the successful implementation of team teaching were listed.

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1. Introduction

Traditionally, field experiences in teacher education have been characterised by student teachers observing lessons before receiving the responsibility to teach individually (Bacharach, Heck, & Dahlberg, 2010; Henderson, Beach, & Famiano, 2009). Nowadays, there is a growing need to develop alternative models of field experience (Bullough et al., 2003; Nokes, Bullough, Egan, Birrell, & Hansen, 2008), for instance models inspired by collaborative learning (Gardiner & Robinson, 2009; Nokes et al., 2008) such as team teaching.

The roots of team teaching can be theoretically framed by the socio-constructivist view on learning. According to this view, learners actively construct knowledge and social interactions with others (teachers, students, ...) contribute to the knowledge construction process (Loyens, Rikers, & Schmidt, 2007; Tynjälä, 1999). During team teaching, teachers learn through participating and engaging in a joint activity. By sharing ideas, providing alternative perspectives and receiving advice, they negotiate meaning and

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learn from each other's knowledge and skills. In this way, they achieve more than in case they would work individually (Gardiner, 2010; Wenger, 1998). Moreover, during a team teaching activity, teachers operate in – what has been called by Vygotsky – each other's zone of proximal development. By collaborating with their peers or by receiving peer support, teachers can come to higher levels of performance (Smith, 2004; Walsh & Elmslie, 2005). What they manage to do with support first, they will be able to do individually later on (Gardiner & Robinson, 2010).

Implementing team teaching of student teachers during field experiences may provide an answer to the difficulty of finding school placements (Bullough et al., 2002; Nokes et al., 2008), but, more importantly, it may help student teachers to be better prepared for the transition to practice, which is often experienced as a reality shock (Brouwer & Korthagen, 2005; Murphy, Carlisle, & Beggs, 2009). Two main reasons for teachers leaving the profession are a lack of support and feelings of isolation (Kurtts & Levin, 2000). Therefore, it seems necessary to provide sufficient support to teachers (Casey, Dunlap, Brister, Davidson, & Starrett, 2011), already during teacher education, since beginning teachers' experiences influence their retention in the profession (Anthony & Ord, 2008). This support can be provided by a mentor (Carter & Francis, 2001) or a peer (Kurtts & Levin, 2000). In this respect, the research of Hsu (2005) shows that student teachers seek more frequently help from their peers than from their mentor. They seek help from their peers with regard to lesson planning and teaching, evaluation and job preparation, and personal issues. Hence, it is considered to be worthwhile to implement team teaching of peers (i.e., student teachers) during field experiences.

In the literature, many definitions of team teaching can be found. As Anderson and Speck (1998, p. 672) state: "The disparate definitions of team teaching are a cacophony of voices." Common to these definitions is that team teaching refers to two or more teachers in some level of collaboration in the planning, delivery, and/or evaluation of a course (Carpenter, Crawford, & Walden, 2007; Crow & Smith, 2005; Davis, 1995; Hatcher, Hinton, & Swartz, 1996; Murata, 2002; Sandholtz, 2000). Central to team teaching is the sharing of teaching expertise and reflective dialoguing (Chang & Lee, 2010; Jang, 2008). According to Wassell and LaVan (2009), it is by sharing field experiences and through social interaction that student teachers have the opportunity to look critically at their own practices and learn to teach.

Synonyms of team teaching are co-teaching, cooperative teaching and collaborative teaching (Carpenter et al., 2007; Dugan & Letterman, 2008; Welch, 2002). For clarity reasons, we consistently use the term 'team teaching' in this paper.

While team teaching already has been advocated in the late 1950s and 1960s (Joyce, 2004), individual teaching is still the main teaching practice in schools nowadays. Only in the special education domain, it has been regularly applied (Bacharach et al., 2010). Also the practice of student teachers' team teaching is in its infancy (Bacharach et al., 2010; Stairs et al., 2009). The present review study aims to provide an overview of the recent research on this topic. First, the literature will be explored in order to search for team teaching models that can be used during field experiences in teacher education. Next, empirical research assessing student teachers' team teaching will be studied in order to look for advantages and disadvantages, and for guidelines to implement it. Three research questions are central to this review study:

RQ1: Which models of team teaching can be found in the literature?

RQ2: What are the advantages and disadvantages of student teachers' team teaching?

RQ3: What are the conditions for a successful implementation of student teachers' team teaching?

Before answering these research questions, the methodology used to search the literature will be presented.

2. Methodology

In order to answer the research questions, a literature search was conducted. Five electronic databases were included in the search: ERIC, FRANCIS, PsycInfo, Scopus, and Web of Science. The search terms were "team teaching", "co-teaching", "cooperative teaching", "collaborative teaching" and "paired placement" combined with "teacher education", "teacher training", "pre-service teacher" and "student teacher". By reading the abstracts of the retrieved manuscripts, relevant manuscripts were identified. In addition, the reference lists of these manuscripts were explored in order to search for other relevant manuscripts. Criteria for inclusion of manuscripts were threefold:

- (1) In order to grasp an overview of the recent literature, the literature search was limited to the years 2000–2013. To answer RQ1, one publication before the period 2000–2013, i.e. Cook and Friend (1995), was included because of its significant value to the literature on team teaching. This significant value became clear since several manuscripts included in this review study referred to Cook and Friend (1995).
- (2) In order to ensure the quality of the review study, manuscripts had to be peer reviewed.
- (3) With respect to RQ2 and RQ3, manuscripts had to address team teaching of student teachers during school placements. Regarding RQ1, this limitation was not present since manuscripts about team teaching in other contexts (e.g., inclusive education) could be helpful to answer this question.

As a result, 50 manuscripts were included in the review study: 18 to answer RQ1, 33 to answer RQ2, and 22 to answer RQ3. These manuscripts were read thoroughly in order to search for patterns in the results. Information on team teaching models, (dis)advantages of team teaching and conditions for implementation were coded into themes. This coding process was data-driven, based on our reading of the literature. The themes were further explored in the manuscripts and incorporated into a narrative review providing "qualitative descriptions of the findings from literature" (Dochy, Segers, & Buehl, 1999, p. 150).

The results of RQ1 (Section 3.1.) are applicable to teachers in general. Therefore, we use the term 'teacher' to describe these actors in the team teaching models. To answer RQ2 and RQ3, studies had to focus on student teachers' team teaching. Subsequently, in Sections 3.2. and 3.3., we use the term 'student teacher' to describe the actors in team teaching.

3. Results

3.1. Models of team teaching

In the literature, different models of team teaching can be found. Several of them have been retrieved from the literature on inclusive education, in which general educators co-teach with special educators (e.g., Austin, 2001; Cook & Friend, 1995). However, these models can also be applied to team teaching between general educators, between mentor and student teacher, and between student teachers (Murphy et al., 2009). The latter is central to this review study.

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