Team Teaching Challenge : Professionalism or Personality Issue?

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Background

Traditional teaching in higher education is often exercised individually behind classroom doors; therefore, introducing team teaching to pool the teachers' talents, knowledge, and instructional resources can be a real challenge.

Objective

To identify and explain the challenges faced by the team-teachers, analyzing whether these were of professionalism or personality concerns.

Method

Thirteen lecturers – 2 males and 11 females – participated in an inaugural implementation of team teaching, in which they paired their 40-student classes to make one larger class of 80, and jointly delivered instruction. These lecturers were assigned to one of two available team-teaching scenarios: the full-semester length and the supplementary four-meetings. The qualitative data collected from lecturers' self-reports were examined using theme identification (Ryan & Bernard, 2003), and were analyzed against student's responses from the respective class. A retrospect look on lecturers' personality typology (MBTI) and lecturer's professional records was used to confirm the themes and the sub-themes revealed.

Results

- Despite the positive responses from most classes, the responses from team-teachers were largely found to be less enthusiastic.
- The findings suggested that the longer team-teachers collaborate, the challenges tend to be more of personality concerns – of self and others – rather than professionalism.
- Personality concerns were less evident among lecturers with certain state of security relative to peripheral factors such as tenure, leading to more apparent concern to self and other's professionalism.

Conclusion

The fact that team teachers have new challenge to use all the resources at their hand to become more professional should be well balanced with an awareness of personality match and mismatch prior to joint instruction.

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