Co-teaching: Supporting participation, engagement and learning in a large university class

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Dr Anna Logan & Ann Marie Farrell
School of Inclusive & Special Education, DCU
Institute of Education, St. Patrick’s Campus

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Context of & rationale for study

- Two class groups of 400 first year BEd (primary) students (Revised 4 year programme)
- Carried out over a two-year period i.e. with two student cohorts
- Introductory module on special education / inclusion
- Concerns of lecturers
- Consideration of formative and summative assessment
- One of 30+ teacher education projects within the Centre for Collaborative Research Across Teacher Education for the 21st Century (CREATE 21)

Aim of Study

- To use co-teaching to create a platform for workshop based activities to increase student participation, engagement, learning and voice
- To model the practice of co-teaching for student teachers.
- To systematically document and evaluate our practice in this endeavour and add to the scholarship of teaching and learning.

Methodology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cohort 1 (Response Rate = 156/400 = 39%)</th>
<th>Cohort 2 (Response Rate = 171/405 = 42%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 co-taught workshops</td>
<td>4 co-taught workshops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- analysis of pupil profile</td>
<td>- at least 3 sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- analysis of child’s work (diagnostic assessment)</td>
<td>- 2 sessions + diagnostic assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- writing learning targets</td>
<td>- Teacher educator reflections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- samples of student's collected work and feedback</td>
<td>- Samples of students' work collected and feedback provided in classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Student survey at end of module: Including questions related to co-taught sessions (liberal and open questions)</td>
<td>- Student survey at end of module: Including questions related to co-taught sessions (liberal and open questions)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Content analysis of data

Analysis of Peer Observations (with cohort 2 only)

Both observed the usefulness of co-teaching in relation to:

- Monitoring … physical presence and proximity
- Supporting student engagement
- Focus on student learning
- Interjecting … teasing out concepts
- Provision and management of formative feedback

But …

- Need to consider meta-learning … be explicit about the co-teaching strategy
- Extend the range of co-teaching strategies in use

Dr Anna Logan & Ann Marie Farrell
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Anna.logan@dcu.ie
logananna11
annmarie.farrell@dcu.ie
Analysis of videos
- 2 x 50 minutes
- Observations
  - Attention
  - On task behaviour
  - Our reliance on two co-teaching models … one teach-one assist and teaming
  - Person keeping time
  - Body language
  - Explicit explanation of co-teaching not present
  - Movements of lecturers limited when teaming … greater movement when moving around room while students engaged in task

Student Participation & Engagement
- Enables a more interactive session between teacher and students. More interaction among peers with the topic rather than consuming information all at once [with] no interaction?
- Co-teaching can make the class feel less like a normal class – it becomes more interactive
- It’s an effective methodology for teachers as it encourages interaction and keeps students actively engaged

Student Learning
- It is very effective as it allows the students to benefit from the expertise and shared knowledge of the both teachers
- I learned that much more information is taught to students when co-teaching is used as both teachers remind each other of different things as well as adding additional information that may not be taught if there is only one teacher.

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School of Inclusive & Special Education, DCU
Institute of Education, St. Patrick’s Campus

Dr Anna Logan & Ann Marie Farrell
anna.logan@dcu.ie
logananna11
annmarie.farrell@dcu.ie

Overall Conclusions
- Co-teaching allowed for workshop approach
- Small group work possible in the large class (Cooper & Robinson, 2000)
- Provision of formative feedback
- Importance of teacher educators being explicit with regard to their own work, teaching approaches etc. (Hallett, 2010)
- Opportunity to model co-teaching (Hallett, 2010)
- Increased participation and engagement … provides a ‘safe’ method for students to volunteer suggestions / answers to questions without being embarrassed if response is ‘incorrect’
- Need more effective use of technology
- Allows for more than one perspective … sometimes we questioned each other
- Expectations of ability of first year students
Overall Conclusions

- Allowed for direct link to be provided between formative and summative assessment.
- Very supportive way of working with another lecturer … need to be comfortable with each other from the outset though. Great learning context for us as teachers.
- Students were able to identify key characteristics of co-teaching through observation.
- Students asked questions of lecturers as they walked around the room during the tasks.
- Provided opportunity to model specific skills such as diagnostic assessment of a child’s work; writing learning targets and so on … demystified the individualised approach to assessment in primary school … illustrated how base planning and teaching on evidence and how and why the class teacher must assume responsibility for inclusion of all children (Porrian & Rouse, 2009).
- Over time, lecturers increased mastery of the co-teaching approach … much more skilful the second time.

2. What might be the potential for co-teaching in your context?

Think: Pair: Share

Images sourced from Unsplash & Pixabay

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- JakobOwens

Pixabay
- johnhain
- Engin_Akyurt
- nikolayhg
- jplenio

Thank You
annmarie.farrell@dcu.ie
anna.logan@dcu.ie