

# Team Teaching Models for Professional Development and Peer Learning



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## Abstract

Our team-teaching instructional practice led to two outcomes beneficial to teaching faculty. We identify how team-teaching serves as professional development within the contours of course planning. This is important as state support for public universities and resources for teaching-faculty professional development needs—such as summer stipends to develop courses or course releases to improve existing skills—shrink. Second, our model for collegial review of instruction for faculty learning expands the range of the university-required peer observations by widening the observer’s gaze from one to two people and inviting co-current reflection on the team-teaching process itself. We build upon Boud et al’s 2001 discussion of peer learning and view faculty learning, and not just student learning, as a “two-way, reciprocal learning activity” that involves “sharing of knowledge, ideas and experience between participants” (p.3). We draw upon our team teaching of first-year students who used immersive learning to engage with art, science, history, and journalism archives and met with 20-plus community partners during two autumn quarters. Our heavy teaching loads and service commitments and our positions as contingent, contract faculty make finding time to improve skills through education and training difficult. Team teaching, in this context, provided us professional development through tasks already required—writing syllabi, structuring lessons, developing assessment strategies, and integrating community partners. Our observations of the process demonstrate how we grew professionally by challenging and translating assumptions, norms, practices, collections, artifacts, and epistemologies of our different fields within our interdisciplinary program. Additionally, we created a new model of collegial review of instruction that supports team teaching. The model emerged from an observation experiment with three lecturers. We rotated three roles as observer, observed, and witness and saw how this third role deepened us professionally. We further developed our prompts for two teachers observing a team-taught course.

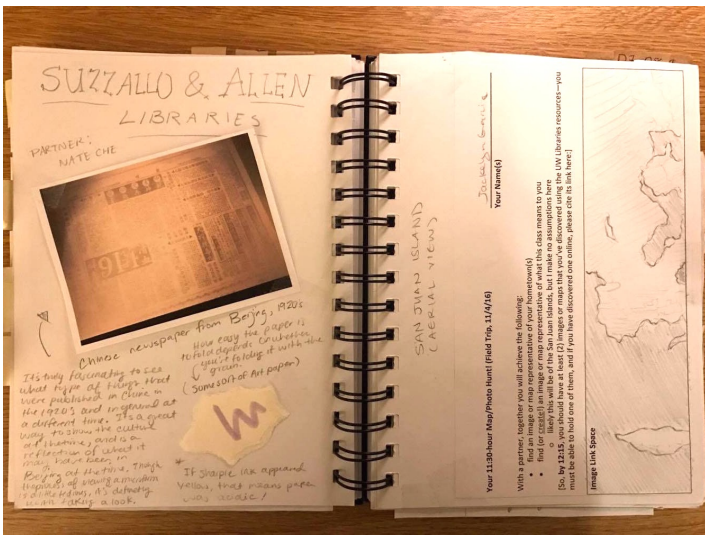
## Team-teaching instructional practice led to two outcomes beneficial to teaching faculty

1. We identify how team-teaching serves as professional development within the contours of course planning
2. Our model for collegial review of instruction for faculty learning expands the range of the university-required peer observations by widening the observer’s gaze from one to two people and inviting co-current reflection on the team-teaching process itself

## Teaching across disciplines together

- Two classes for first-year students
- Immersive learning
  - Interdisciplinary epistemologies
  - Art, science, history, and journalism archives
  - 20-plus community partners

- Our positions
- Heavy teaching loads and service commitments
  - Contingent, contract faculty
  - Difficult to find time to improve skills through education and training



Students created Discovery Logs to investigate the gaps in the record on San Juan Island. We asked: What happens when a butterfly species disappears for 90 years? Or a community’s newspaper record cannot be found?



## As professional development

- Through tasks already required
- Writing syllabi
  - Structuring lessons
  - Developing assessment strategies
  - Integrating community partners

Observations of how we grew professionally by challenging and translating

- Assumptions
- Norms
- Practices
- Collections
- Artifacts
- Epistemologies of our different fields

Instructors’ research projects were central to the development of the Discovery Core course and included an experiential three-day, two-night field experience on San Juan Island.



## Adding faculty to theoretical discussions of student peer learning

Faculty learning, and not just student learning, as a “two-way, reciprocal learning activity” that involves “sharing of knowledge, ideas and experience between participants” (Boud et al., 2001, p.3)

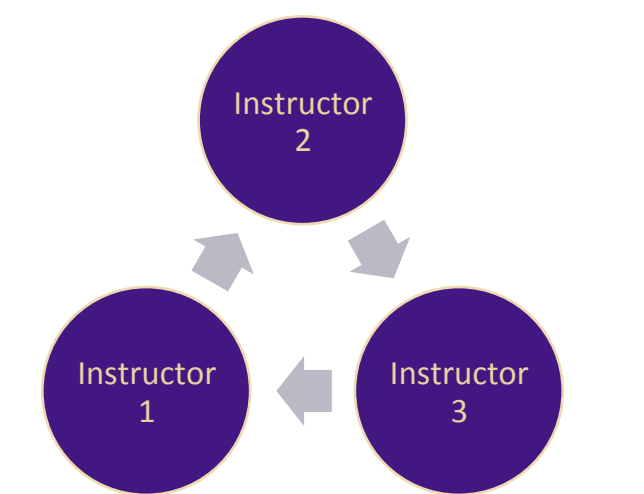


First-year students drawing from observation at University of Washington Friday Harbor Labs (left). Students examining The San Juan Islander historic newspaper collection on San Juan Island (right).

## As a model for collegial review of instruction that supports team teaching

- The model emerged from an observation experiment
- Three lecturers rotated roles as observer, observed, witness
  - Deepened us professionally

EMERGED FROM AN OBSERVATION EXPERIMENT



Collegial review of instruction by three lecturers as they rotate roles as observer, observed, and witness

Developed 3-step process

1. Two teachers observe the others’ team-taught course
2. Team teachers confer about simultaneous observations, build upon shared expertise gained through team teaching
3. Four-person discussion and reflection on observations

Observation of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

BCISP: \_\_\_\_\_

Observed: \_\_\_\_\_

Written by Kristin Gustafson and Amy Lambert

**Overall course design and organization observed:** The two of us, Dr. Gustafson and Dr. Lambert, first observed \_\_\_\_\_’s course design and organization. We created documents to record the \_\_\_\_\_’s observations. These included the following: a brief description of the \_\_\_\_\_’s based description of the Reading Assignment, a brief description of the \_\_\_\_\_’s based description of the Reading Assignment, a brief description of the \_\_\_\_\_’s based description of the Reading Assignment. The following table contains our observations, given us a clear understanding of the experience provided for students. The course itself is described here as we see it.

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LED TO A MODEL: A TEAM OBSERVING A TEAM NO LONGER 1:1 OBSERVATIONS

