Multiple Instructors in Single Courses:
Impacts on Students, Instructors & Departments

Francis Jones, Sara Harris - April, 2010
Purpose

We have seen ...

- Increasing use of multiple instructors at EOS.

- Anecdotal evidence for true TEAM teaching benefits.

- “Scientific teaching” ...
  Measure the effects of what we are doing on learning, AND react accordingly.
Questions to students:
1. What do you think are the ADVANTAGES of having multiple instructors in this course?

2. What do you think are the DISADVANTAGES of having multiple instructors in this course?

3. All things considered, how do you think having multiple instructors affected this course? It was ...
   - a) a large advantage
   - b) a small advantage
   - c) neutral
   - d) a small disadvantage
   - e) a large disadvantage

Instructors (17):
Q1 and Q2, but ...
   - a) From students’ point of view
   - b) From instructors’ point of view
   - c) From the Dept’s point of view

Method:
- Incorporate questions with End-of-Term Surveys.
- Categorize all responses.
- Two people coding; duplication of better than 3% (Q1) and 7% (Q2).
- Summarize trends and correlate responses for three questions.
## Data: courses and size of the data set

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<td>TT, 2</td>
<td>CT, 2</td>
<td>SM, 2</td>
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*Teaching models:*
- (SM) Sequential Model: one instructor present at a time.
- (TT) Team-Teaching: all instructors present for all classes, sharing lead role.
- (CT) Co-Teaching: all instructors present sometimes, one at other times.
Are multiple instructors generally an advantage or disadvantage (Q3)?

Choices for all are:

- a = a large advantage
- b = a small advantage
- c = neutral
- d = a small disadvantage
- e = a large disadvantage
Advantages to students 1

v = Variety (three types; see the Discussion section)
e = Expertise
o = Other
n = No comment; or Not true; or Conditional (works if…); or Makes no difference.

t = teaching style, assessment or expectations
p = perspectives or passion for the subject
o = “other”
Advantages to students 2

Figure 5. Coded feedback from 17 instructors about the advantages of MI to students. As with students, some instructor comments were coded into more than one category.

Figure 6. Percentages of individuals who identified each of three types of “variety”, or expertise, as an advantage.
a = Adjustment (three types; see text for discussion)
k = caused some confusion; or Lack of effective communication between instructors
o = Other
n = not true, no comment, no difference, or conditional.

t = teaching style
a = assessment or expectations
p = personality or accessibility
DISadvantages to students 2

**Figure 9:** Coded feedback from instructors’ open ended responses to being asked what are the disadvantages of multiple instructors to students.

**Figure 10**  Percentages of people who identified any of 3 types of “adjustment”, or “confusion & communication”, as disadvantages.

**Figure 11.** Total numbers of students identifying personal aspects and teaching aspects as advantages or disadvantages of multiple instructors.
Correlations

- Q3 and responses
  - Usually, specific benefits or drawbacks were NOT correlated with general impressions
  - e.g. here shows both corr’In & no corr’In.

- Disadvantages versus advantages
  - Correlations occasionally augment basic data
Recommendations

**Note:** M.I. = “multiple instructors”

- M.I. must bring passion or expertise that is unique and relevant.
- Actively and visibly reduce variability in learning experiences.
  - e.g. consistent class-room strategies, sources of content, & assessments
  - All team-taught segments must be clearly resolved.
    - .... Etc ..... 
- Allow additional time for instructors to coordinate / collaborate.
- Designate one lead instructor + adequate time & resources.
- Balance benefits of expertise and drawbacks of complexity.
- Do NOT assign M.I. Teams must *self-select.*
- True *TEAM* teaching is rewarding for students AND instructors.