

TEAM TEACHING AS A TOOL OF MASTER STUDENTS' PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE FORMATION

Studied in the article is team teaching technology as a tool of Master students' professional competence formation. Application of this technology in Chernihiv National Pedagogical University for more than a dozen years proved of its appropriateness and effectiveness. Using team teaching during master students' teaching practice fosters the development of such professional qualities and skills as: corporative learning, personal interaction and sharing insights, creativity, shared responsibility, democratization of teacher-student relationship, broadening horizons etc. The results of long-term observation are summarized and the conclusion about the expediency of applying this technology in practice is drawn.

Key words: *Master students' professional competence, team teaching technology, teaching practice, mutual learning, personal interaction, creativity, observation.*

Introduction

Having first come across 'team teaching' technology abroad a quarter of a century ago the author took to it so much that the idea to implement it in her University never abandoned her. Two young American teachers, Peace Corp volunteers, were giving a class of English as if they were playing a ball – kicking it to each other, involving students in the game, splitting them into teams and organizing competition, working with small groups or with all the players at a time. Their actions were so well coordinated, they took turns and assisted each other so easily and naturally that the lesson seemed a well-rehearsed performance every moment of which mattered, and each student was not left alone but was given as much attention and support as they needed. The teachers enjoyed what they were doing and so did their students; the lesson was a great success.

The attempts to implement team teaching in the author's University failed because it didn't fit the standard requirements and it demanded extra funding: two teachers were to be paid for one class which was incredible in state universities at that time and is still impossible. No other arguments were considered. But professional interest did not vanish, and soon the opportunity to try and use team teaching emerged. In the mid 90s Ukraine joined the Bologna process and master students majoring in "Language and Literature (English)" began to be prepared in Chernihiv National Pedagogical University. Their curriculum presupposed teaching practice in higher educational establishments, and here appeared the chance to experiment with the most advanced methods and technologies. Along with single-teacher classes master students were recommended to plan and conduct some of their classes in pairs. As there was no room for an additional optional course in the curriculum teacher trainees were briefly familiarized with the team teaching technology in the course of Methods of teaching FL in higher educational establishments. Ukrainian students could also observe team teaching technology in action when Peace Corps volunteers were having their teaching practice in the University. Each year for more than two months American teachers mastered their professional skills conducting their lessons of English in pairs for it bolstered up their confidence. Team teaching provided more comfortable conditions for novice teachers, and Ukrainian students taught by them had a chance to get acquainted with a new technology and critically assess it.

The usage of team teaching technology by master students during their teaching practice was optional for a good dozen years, students were free to choose or reject it. This gave us an excellent opportunity to observe the classes conducted by them in pairs from different angles and in different environment – linguistic and non-linguistic. Teacher-trainees were not restricted by any rigid rules or directions; they could exploit their fertile imagination to the full. Only lately we began to recommend their using team teaching more persistently due to the growth of a number of master students, on the one hand, and the reduction of the quantity of junior students caused by a demographic gap and consequently shortening the number of groups, on the other. Team teaching allowed for more teaching experience within the same time limits than single-teacher classes. Such optional usage of team teaching enabled our free observation of the students and teacher trainees' interaction, study their own and their supervisors' opinions, take notes of the advantages and disadvantages of this technology; seek its optimum variant. Now we try to summarize the results of our research and make some conclusions, which is the purpose of this article.

What is team teaching?

The dictionary defines team teaching as 'a method of coordinated classroom teaching involving a team of teachers working together with a single group of students' [2]. The presence of the term *method* in this definition may confuse the reader because there can hardly be traced any principles of teaching, goals, content of teaching and

others characteristic of a method. Team teaching does not set any specific goal nor has it a different content or principles; it may be rather a technology than a method. Wikipedia encyclopedia defines technology as 'the methods and tools that a society has developed in order to facilitate the solution of its practical problems' which is too abstract in our case. That is why we addressed the latest manual "Methods of teaching foreign languages and culture: theory and practice" (2013) [3]. Teaching technology is defined in it as a handful of the most rational ways to organize the actions so that the goal is reached in the shortest possible time with minimum efforts and means; the selected and arranged in a certain order techniques used by the teacher [3, c. 567]. These are the very features of team teaching, so we have all the grounds to regard team teaching as a technology.

Now let us analyze the scope of meanings of the notion *team teaching*. Let us start with the review of some sources.

Janel Flynn considers traditional team teaching as a model in which two teachers within a classroom take equal responsibility for teaching one subject and are actively involved at all times. Both the teachers are supposed to be equally competent as professionals [8].

Bradley James Bryant, on the contrary, *thinks that* teams should comprise staff members from different backgrounds of expertise and one partner should teach the other. This peculiarity is considered the most valuable feature of this technology because both of the partners can improve their professional skills imperceptibly at the expense of sharing experience and adoption of the effective ways of teaching and techniques. When creating roles, teachers usually keep in mind their strengths and weaknesses and may choose the role that fits them best. Each teacher may focus on that phase of the course that they can handle best [10].

Janel Flynn enumerates and describes different variants of the partners' collaboration: "Supportive Instruction", "Parallel Instruction", "Differentiated Split Class", and "Monitoring Teacher".

"Supportive Instruction" is a model of team teaching in which one teacher teaches the material and the other provides follow-up activities. "Parallel Instruction" is a form of team teaching in which students are split into two groups and each teacher is responsible for teaching his group. "Differentiated Split Class" is a model of team teaching that involves splitting students into two groups based on achievement. One teacher provides remedial instruction to students who are struggling on a skill while the other teacher provides enrichment to those who have grasped the skill. The "Monitoring Teacher" is another form of team teaching. In this model, one teacher assumes the role of instruction while the other teacher walks around the class and monitors students' behavior and progress. Within one class period different types of team teaching may be used [8].

Anthony Bynom and Lori Furgerson, in their turn, describe the model of team teaching when students are taught by different teachers based on the teachers' expertise in a subject area. For example, one teacher may specialize in teaching languages, while another may be an expert in teaching history. In team teaching, each would teach their specialty to the same group of students. It provides students with a more holistic vision of the world in its integrity [5; 9].

As we can see, the meanings of the notion *team teaching* are different, so are its models. We singled out three most widely used models – teaching one subject by two equally competent teachers, teaching one subject by two teachers who have different backgrounds of expertise, and teaching by different teachers based on their expertise in a subject area.

The factors that favor using team teaching technology during teaching practice of Ukrainian master students

In order to choose the most adequate model we should take into account three main factors – the students' needs, the goals of teaching practice and the conditions in which they are having it.

Let's analyze students' needs first. What do prospective masters of education, majoring in English, want? The answer is evident; they want to have a sufficient theoretical and practical basis for performing the basic functions of a University instructor. Theoretical preparation has been their main concern throughout all the years in the University, and they feel more or less on the safe side. As for their practical preparation, master students feel less confident because they cannot rely on their previous experience or knowledge. Teaching children and adults requires the background knowledge of the goals, content, psychological peculiarities of the learners and the conditions which are absolutely different. Moreover, there exist linguistic and non-linguistic universities which set different goals and provide different content; the learners being of the same age have their own psychological peculiarities and preferences which should be taken into account. The conditions differ too: from being a core subject in a linguistic university the foreign language turns into a general subject serving the specialty in a non-linguistic one. It is evident that the methodology of teaching it in the two types of institutions must be different too. To master all the nuances of the two methodologies in the time allotted by the curriculum is extremely hard, and there remain certain gaps in the students' knowledge. This is the reason why teaching practice is regarded as a valuable tool to complete formation of the basic professional competence in prospective FL teachers.

Alongside with the main task there are some other tasks that the teaching practice is supposed to realize. They are as follows:

- to familiarize master students with a wide range of professional activities of an FL teacher and master the newest forms of their organization;
- to develop readiness and capability to solve specific methodological problems that arise in real educational environment;

- to urge the need in life-long self-development and practical application of the new knowledge in typical and non-typical situations;
- to improve research skills [1].

As we can see, the goals and tasks of teaching practice are rather complicated.

Now let us consider the conditions in which master students are having their teaching practice – the time allotted, the content of a teacher-trainee's activity, the site and the psychological difficulties which confront them.

The first difficulty is the shortage of time. Teaching practice is limited by five weeks only which are divided into two parts – three weeks teaching English as a core subject and two weeks teaching it as a general subject. The content of each part is arranged into two complete and independent modules. Accordingly, each module requires preparing a certain amount of reporting documents and procedures.

The second difficulty is the scope of tasks that the syllabus sets and which are relevant to the goals mentioned above. The most important of them are: participation in the conferences (instructional and final), planning and conducting the classes, observing the mature and experienced teachers' classes and writing reviews, observing the classes conducted by their fellow-students and participating in their analysis, filling in the diary and many others. Besides, teacher trainees have to see to a great amount of organizational questions connected with supplying their lessons with the necessary equipment and supplemental materials, consultations with the subject teacher and their supervisor, collaboration with their partner, self-development and browsing the Internet for resource etc.

The third difficulty is the necessity to quickly adapt to the new environment – university, department, course, and group – and make a psychological contact with the students which is vitally important for conducting successful FL classes. It is especially hard to do with non-linguistic students for their mentality differs drastically from philologists'. We can only mention one fact that even the inner rules in another university may confuse the teacher trainees, nothing to say of the location of the buildings and class-rooms, numbers of the groups, time-tables and the like. Getting adapted requires time.

Thus, our choice of team teaching technology is bolstered by the following factors: master students' need to get a sufficient theoretical and practical preparation for further professional work, a wide range of goals and tasks pursued by teaching practice, complicated conditions in which the teaching practice is held, and the difficulties that teacher trainees have to overcome.

Team teaching technology as a tool of master students' professional competence formation and its advantages

Keeping in mind master students' needs, goals and tasks, and the conditions in which the teaching practice is held, its definitions given above, we shall try now to tackle the essence of team teaching technology as we understand it. Let us turn to the main meaning of the word *team* first which we regard the key issue in our case – 'a group of people who work together effectively'. Team teaching involves a group of instructors working purposefully and cooperatively; they set goals for the course together, design a syllabus, prepare lesson plans, teach students, and evaluate the results. Teachers complement one another. Working as a team, they model respect for differences, interdependence, shared responsibility, and conflict-resolution skills. They share insights, argue with one another, and even challenge students to decide which approach is better. Team-teaching allows for more interaction between teachers and students.

Further we shall briefly describe the advantages of using team-teaching technology during teaching practice which give us all the grounds to consider it a good tool of master students' professional competence formation.

The first advantage of team-teaching technology is its ability to *enrich the scope of teaching techniques from watching one another, collaborating and sharing personal experience*. As this exchange takes place in the real teaching process new teaching techniques are very well learned. In spite of little personal experience students learn from one another very willingly and highly effectively because their paradigms of life experience are unique. They teach each other when designing their lesson plan and debating about its details, conducting lessons and then reflecting on their strengths and weaknesses. They disagree with premises and conclusions, raise new questions and point out consequences, seek arguments and counter-arguments to prove of their viewpoint. Such discussions help them complete the gaps in theoretical knowledge and in this way develop their professional competence.

Another advantage of team-teaching technology is its orientation on *interaction* in a broad sense: interaction with the partner, interaction with students, subject teachers, the supervisor and the faculty, interaction with lab assistants and others. While elaborating the lesson plan they have to decide on the roles – who will conduct this or that exercise and what the other partner will be busy with meanwhile; what technical equipment and appliances to prepare; what resources to select and duplicate; how to rationally distribute time; what 'links' between the stages of the lesson to choose; what tests to develop for students and many others. They have to work cooperatively very much, to agree on common decisions, to persuade their partner or to change their mind in favor of his decision, to be tolerant and respectful with one another, to cultivate readiness to sacrifice their own viewpoint for the sake of the common goal. Such interaction helps elaborate professionally significant skills to make and maintain contact with people and interact with them. Unfortunately, a dominating nowadays student-centered model of higher education oriented at individual style of learning hinders such professionally valuable skill as making and maintaining contact with people, so this gap can be filled in with the help of team-teaching technology too.

One more significant advantage of team-teaching technology is its encouraging teacher trainees' *creativity*. It can be explained by two reasons – the natural desire to make a good impression on their fellow-student and the desire to look as good as their partner in the eyes of the learners. Working together urges prospective teachers to experiment with well-known techniques and to invent new, to update the content of the material, and to suggest new ways of class management. Innovations and modifications are encouraged; there is no place for routine and tiredness at such classes. Different personalities, voices, values, and approaches spark interest, keep attention, and prevent boredom. Teamwork improves the quality of teaching as compared with a single teacher class.

There is one more interesting conclusion concerning the relationship between teachers and students, they become more *democratic*. Team-teaching allows for more interaction between teachers and students. They become more interdependent – teachers delegate some of their responsibilities to their students thus making them responsible for their achievement of the learning goals, and students evaluate faculty members on their teaching proficiency which result in student and faculty growth. As a rule, after each class students are reluctant to leave the room before they share their impressions with teacher-trainees and even with their supervisors. Team-teaching technology obviously attracts them and stirs up their critical thinking; more than once they made interesting remarks and put forward interesting ideas. It proves of our hypothesis that team-teaching stimulates students' initiative, critical thinking and responsibility for the results of their cooperative work.

We cannot but mention one more advantage of using team teaching technology – *broadening horizons* of master students. Ambitious goals and difficult circumstances enhance their intensive self-development. They are urged to master information and communication technologies (ICT) as best they can. As the classes held by two teacher trainees require more teaching materials than single-teacher classes, a greater variety of teaching techniques and an active interaction of the partners when they elaborate the lesson plan and prepare for the class ICT become invaluable for them. Teacher trainees can not only browse the Internet for the resources but interact distantly via the e-mail, Skype, social net-work, mobile devices and the like. In class they also use a wide variety of ICT.

Thus, as we can see team teaching technology may be a highly effective tool to form master students' professional competence.

Conclusion

With the goals and tasks of master students' teaching practice in mind and the tough conditions it is held in we suggest using team teaching technology as a highly effective tool to form master students' professional competence. Well-known in the world since the beginning of the 20th century this technology remains unpopular in Ukraine because of its expensiveness. But it can be easily implemented in master students' teaching practice and contribute to their professional growth significantly. This hypothesis was checked by a long term experience and approved of by the results obtained.

Using team teaching technology during master students' teaching practice fosters the development of such professional qualities and skills as: corporative learning, personal interaction and sharing insights, creativity, shared responsibility, democratization of teacher-student relationship, broadening horizons and others. It is worthwhile studying the other characteristics of this technology and the advantages and disadvantages of its application in higher educational establishments of Ukraine.

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**TEAM TEACHING
ЯК ІНСТРУМЕНТ ФОРМУВАННЯ
ПРОФЕСІЙНО-МЕТОДИЧНОЇ КОМПЕТЕНТНОСТІ МАГІСТРАНТІВ**

У статті розглядається технологія team teaching як інструмент формування професійно-методичної компетентності магістрантів. Застосування цієї технології в Чернігівському національному педагогічному університеті впродовж п'ятнадцяти років підтвердило її ефективність та релевантність. Використання team teaching під час педагогічної практики магістрантів посилює розвиток у них таких професійних якостей і вмінь, як: взаємне навчання, взаємодія з іншими, креативність, взаємна відповідальність, демократизація стосунків зі студентами, розширення світогляду та ін. Підсумовуються результати довготермінового спостереження та робляться висновки щодо доцільності запровадження цієї технології у вітчизняних вишах.

Ключові слова: професійно-методична компетентність магістрантів, технологія team teaching, педагогічна практика, взаємне навчання, взаємодія, креативність, спостереження.

Бобырь С. Л.

**TEAM TEACHING КАК ИНСТРУМЕНТ ФОРМИРОВАНИЯ
ПРОФЕССИОНАЛЬНО-МЕТОДИЧЕСКОЙ
КОМПЕТЕНТНОСТИ МАГИСТРАНТОВ**

В статье рассматривается технология team teaching как инструмент формирования профессионально-методической компетентности магистрантов. Применение этой технологии в Черниговском национальном педагогическом университете на протяжении пятнадцати лет подтвердило ее эффективность и релевантность. Использование team teaching во время педагогической практики магистрантов усиливает развитие у них таких профессиональных качеств и умений, как: взаимное обучение, взаимодействие с другими, креативность, взаимная ответственность, демократизация отношений со студентами, расширение кругозора и др. Подводятся итоги долголетних наблюдений и делаются выводы относительно целесообразности внедрения этой технологии в практику.

Ключевые слова: профессионально-методическая компетентность магистрантов, технология team teaching, педагогическая практика, взаимное обучение, взаимодействие, креативность, наблюдение.

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