

## Theoretical and Practical Issues in Team-Teaching a Large Undergraduate Class

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Attempts by universities to provide an improved learning environment to students have led to an increase in team-teaching approaches in higher education. While the definitions of team-teaching differ slightly, the benefits of team-teaching have been cited widely in the higher education literature. By tapping the specialist knowledge of a variety of staff members, students are exposed to current and emerging knowledge in different fields and topic areas; students are also able to understand concepts from a variety of viewpoints. However, while there is some evidence of the usefulness of team-teaching, there is patchy empirical support to underpin how well students appreciate and adapt to team-teaching approaches. This paper reports on the team-teaching approaches adopted in the delivery of an introductory journalism and communication course at the University of Queensland. The success of the approaches is examined against the background of quantitative and qualitative data. The study found that team-teaching is generally very well received by undergraduate students because they value the diverse expertise and teaching styles they are exposed to. Despite the positive feedback, students also complained about problems of continuity and cohesiveness.

Growing public criticism of the quality of teaching in higher education has led universities to adopt and promote better ways of enhancing students' learning experience. Over the years, the focus on higher education research has shifted from an understanding of the teacher as the omniscient authority who transmits knowledge to passive recipients to a more inclusive appreciation of students as knowledge constructors and the need for teachers to act as facilitators in that process (Biggs, 1999). In the context of providing a more constructive environment for students and the best learning experience possible, universities have increasingly been promoting the concept of team-teaching (Wenger and Hornyak, 1999). In simple terms, team-teaching aims to expose students to specialist knowledge of a variety of staff members, as well as exposure to current and emerging knowledge in different fields. Team-teaching also aims to facilitate students' understanding of concepts from a variety of viewpoints. The objectives that inform team-teaching approaches are designed to encourage a cooperative effort in which students and teachers are engaged in an intellectual exchange that ultimately benefits both parties. This is also based on the understanding that topic expertise would be broadened and classroom time for teachers reduced (Wenger and Hornyak, 1999).

The vast majority of the literature on teaching and learning at tertiary education level suggests that a team-teaching approach is beneficial to both students and academic staff, despite a wide array of definitions of what actually constitutes team-teaching and how it is evaluated (Anderson and Speck, 1998). This article discusses the particular team-teaching approaches adopted by three academic staff at the University of Queensland (Brisbane, Australia) in the delivery of an

introductory journalism and communication course (JOUR1111) in the first semester of 2007. As there exists a "cacophony of voices" (Anderson and Speck 1998, p. 672) in regard to the definition of team-teaching, the authors outline how their particular approaches were applied in the delivery and teaching of the course. The article discusses discursively how the authors perceived their team-teaching approaches and compares the approaches with evaluative student feedback.

A number of scholars have emphasized that much research into team-teaching has been qualitative, therefore underlining the lack of empirical evidence (Anderson and Speck, 1998; Carpenter et al., 2007; Austin and Baldwin, 1991). This article aims to contribute to a growing body of empirical evidence through the analysis of quantitative and qualitative student feedback. It concludes by making recommendations for improving team-teaching approaches in the delivery of a large introductory university course.

### Teaching and Learning at the University Level

The literature on teaching and learning at the university level underscores various reasons why lecturers and indeed university administrators should take teaching seriously. One of the reasons is that a symbiotic relationship exists between teaching and learning. For example, the modes of teaching adopted by lecturers in universities significantly affect the way students learn or the way students go about learning (Marton et al., 1997). This relationship also affects the nature of the learning approaches adopted by students – "surface" or "deep" approaches to learning. As

Ramsden (1992) stated: "Teaching and student learning are parts of the same whole;... Problems in learning may be addressed by changing teaching, but with no certainty of success" (p. 16).

In order to understand what teaching is all about, Ramsden (1992) posed some important questions: "What exactly is teaching about? What do we mean when we say we 'teach' someone something? What are the main problems we face in teaching? What methods should we use, and why? What helps our students to learn? What stops them learning?" (p. 13). Understanding these issues no doubt would facilitate an improvement in teaching styles and would also help students to engage with their studies. To understand why there are deficiencies in what students learn or, as Ramsden (1992) put it, "Why... students just come to classes to copy from the board?" (p. 37), it is appropriate to request students to talk about their learning and how it is influenced by teaching.

#### How Students Learn

In the higher education literature, there are two distinct and documented approaches to learning that are adopted by students. These are "surface" and "deep" approaches. In their seminal study, Marton & Säljö (1976) examined how students learned, and distinguished between two predominant ways of learning. The first one, the "surface approach", focused on a text or task itself, while the "deep approach" focused on understanding what this text or task was actually about. Or, as Ramsden (1992, p. 45) explained the concepts: "Surface is, at best, about quantity without quality; deep is about quality and quantity." To emphasize the close relationship between what students learn and the approach they take to learning, Ramsden (1992) states that "deep approaches are related to higher quality outcomes and better grades. They are also more enjoyable. Surface approaches are dissatisfying; and they are associated with poorer outcomes" (p. 53). Indeed, a number of studies have shown that deep learning approaches lead to improved, i.e. higher quality, learning outcomes in students (Dall'Alba, 1986; Prosser & Millar, 1989; van Rossum & Schenk, 1984). The implication is that if teachers want students to achieve higher quality outcomes in their studies, they must endeavour to steer students to focus on understanding the concepts and the subject rather than allow them to concentrate on completing task requirements or on merely passing the examination. This implies reflecting on, and reviewing and changing, teaching styles, including assessment tasks and materials, in such a way as to motivate students to develop deeper and sustained interest in their studies.

Although good teaching involves getting students to adopt "deep" approaches to learning, there are other

factors that impinge on students' ability to adopt "deep" or "surface" approaches to learning. This is the educational context or environment. "The educational environment or context of learning is created through our students' experience of our curricula, teaching methods, and assessment procedures" (Ramsden, 1992, p. 62). For example, in relation to assessment procedures, Chalmers and Fuller (1995) state that "the most powerful single influence on the quality of student learning is probably the assessment system that is used.... [I]n order to encourage students to adopt a deep approach to their learning and to use appropriate learning strategies it is important to ensure that the assessment system supports the type of learning promoted by the teacher and the university" (p. 47). In this regard, Race (1995) recommends that teachers "make continuous assessment very 'real life'," that teachers "ensure that students have a say in the tasks they do, how they are assessed, who assesses," and that teachers "give more detailed feedback on work, not just scores" (p. 72).

Further, student workloads have an impact on how students learn. Using data from studies of adult part-time students of the arts and humanities in the Open University, Chambers (1992) argues that "'reasonable workload' is a pre-condition of good studying and learning" (p. 141). The implication is that "when teachers overburden students, demanding more work of them than they have time to do, they create conditions in which what is to be learned is likely to be unintelligible, and in which students cannot possibly learn well" (Chambers, 1992: 144). In essence, excess workload impedes deep approaches to learning: students are more likely to do just enough to pass an assessment task and not bother with the question of whether or not learning has occurred at all.

This implies that, if a student is not interested in a particular task, he or she is most likely to adopt "surface" approaches to learning. In order to improve "deep" learning in students, universities have in recent years adopted a variety of strategies. One such strategy has been team-teaching, as it is believed that students can benefit from being exposed to a variety of specialist knowledge on related topics. One important aspect of deep learning is that it promotes thinking rather than memorizing. As such, the idea of team-teaching is that it can provide, among teachers, a space for intellectual discussions about a topic, thus providing unique insights for students in order to make them think about the topic rather than memorize information.

#### What is Team-Teaching?

There appears to exist some confusion over the use of the term team-teaching, and as a result a number of different definitions of the term exist. Firstly, team-

teaching appears to have many other names as well, such as co-teaching, co-enrollment, collaborative teaching, or cooperative teaching (Carpenter et al., 2007: 54). On a more general level, it seems to be accepted that team-teaching “consists of two or more teachers sharing, to some degree, responsibility for a group of students” (Wenger and Hornyak, 1999, p. 314). How this is applied, however, may differ in a variety of contexts. As Anderson and Speck (1998) point out, some see teams as being responsible only for instruction, while others see them as being involved in all aspects of a course. For example, Gurman (1989) defines team-teaching as “an approach in which two or more persons are assigned to the same students at one time for instructional purposes” (p. 275). Hatcher et al. (1996) see it as “two or more instructors collaborating over the design and/or implementation and evaluation of the same course or courses” (p. 367).

In addition, Carpenter et al. (2007) note that there are various grades of team-teaching, ranging from teachers dividing up lecture blocks between or among them (the serial approach) to teachers continually planning, presenting, and evaluating lectures together (the collaborative approach). The team-teaching approach gets more complex when one adds guest lecturers to the mix. Jacob et al. (2002) identify team-teaching as a method in which all instructors are equally involved and responsible for student instruction, assessment, and the learning objectives. Guest lectures, they note, are “usually an isolated occurrence within the context of a course taught predominantly by one person or by a small group of people” (Jacob et al., 2002, p. 3). There is little research on the value of guest lectures, especially as they are mostly one-off occurrences, and somewhat difficult to evaluate.

This paper reports on a team-teaching method using a combination of team-teaching and guest lectureships, which was adopted in an introductory journalism and communication course. The approach was implemented to enable the team to make use of the wide variety of expertise within the university’s School of Journalism and Communication. This mixed-method approach was based on the assumption that a combination of instructors could produce richer learning experiences for students, such as exposing students to multiple perspectives (Carpenter et al., 2007; Hughes and Murwaski, 2001; Anderson and Speck, 1998). Results from this particular study will contribute more generally to existing empirical knowledge in the field of team-teaching, as empirical studies of this nature are still missing from the literature (Carpenter et al., 2007).

### Justification of Team-Teaching Approaches

As noted earlier, the teaching approaches adopted in the delivery of an introductory journalism and communication course were designed to enable the team to engage more actively with the students in their learning, to help them to improve their learning skills, and, consequently, to assist them to achieve their learning objectives. All these were aimed to enable students to adopt deeper approaches to learning rather than surface approaches (thinking rather than memorizing) (see Ramsden, 1992), as well as to make the course more appealing to students. Other assumptions that influenced the teaching styles included

- students’ ability to cope with workload associated with continuous assessments (in some cultures, students are assessed only at the end of semester, and often examination is the only means of assessment);
- motivational factors (that is, what makes the students to study in specific ways; for example, personal attributes, learning styles adopted in previous educational institutions, the requirements of particular courses, demands by parents, and so on).

### Overview of the Course

All three authors were involved in delivering the introductory journalism and communication course (JOUR1111) in the School of Journalism and Communication at the University of Queensland during Semester 1, 2007. In that semester, the course achieved a record enrollment of 505 students, making it by far the course with the highest student enrollment in the School. Owing to the unexpected increase in enrollment closer to the commencement of semester, the course was offered in two iterations each week at short notice, as the largest available lecture venue could not accommodate such a large number of students. The main lecture was conducted every Monday at noon, with a repeat lecture on Friday at 2pm. Students were informed they could attend either the Monday or Friday lecture. The Monday lecture recorded the largest attendance, with more than 300 students on average attending each week, while a core group of around 35 students attended the Friday lecture.

In teaching the course, the team members were responsible for the planning, administration, and evaluation of the course content. The team also adopted approaches that were perhaps best described as a mix of serial and collaborative approaches (Carpenter et al., 2007). Each member of the team was responsible for

delivering at least two lectures, while the team also made use of the wide pool of specialist knowledge in the School by recruiting a number of staff members as guest lecturers. As this was an introductory course, the use of guest lecturers from the School was intended to expose students to a wide range of views on journalism and communication. This was in line with Carpenter et al.'s (2007) argument that "multiple instructors create a 'richer' learning environment, due to multiple perspectives and more effectively catering to individual learning needs" (p. 61). Almost each week the students were exposed to two one-hour lectures, conducted consecutively by a different lecturer for each hour. Tutorials were conducted by graduate students who were in close contact with the teaching team. Tutorials discussed lecture content but mainly concentrated on preparing students for assessment tasks. As this article focuses mainly on the team-teaching approaches in lecturing, tutorials and assessment have been excluded from the analysis of the results presented here.

#### Method

In order to analyze the success of the team-teaching approaches, a comprehensive evaluation of the course was conducted by way of questionnaires at the end of the semester. In a study of this nature, it was deemed important by the team members to use a combination of quantitative and qualitative research strategies in order to enhance the quality of data. Deacon et al. (1999) suggest that the use of qualitative and quantitative methods is necessary in order to collect and analyze more credible and valid data. Against this background, students were requested to respond to a total of 18 Likert-scale statements which tested their experiences in the course. The evaluation was the first team-teaching-specific questionnaire devised and used at the University of Queensland. Among other, more standard, evaluative questions related to feedback and assessment, this particular questionnaire also asked students to indicate their agreement with aspects of the team-teaching approach in the course. These included statements such as: "The team-teaching approach was effectively used in this course," "Team-teaching provided me with diverse insights into the course content," "The material covered by the different lecturers was well integrated," "The team-teaching method provided me with a valuable learning experience," and others. In responding to the statements, students were requested to choose between "strongly agree," "agree," "neutral," "disagree," or "strongly disagree". There was also an option for "not applicable."

In order to obtain some qualitative feedback from such a large number of students that would also be manageable in terms of data analysis, students were

additionally provided with two open-ended questions. The questions were: (a) "What are the teaching strengths of the lecturing team?" and (b) "What improvements would you suggest?". It should be noted that these are standard qualitative questions as stipulated by the university, hence the authors felt some additional oral direction was required. Students were therefore requested to specifically address the team-teaching aspect in their answers to the two open-ended questions. Questionnaires were handed out and briefly explained to students by the authors before the authors left the room to guarantee confidentiality of results. Questionnaires were collected by a student volunteer who subsequently posted them to the university's teaching evaluation unit.

The central research questions that underpinned this study were

1. To what extent did students appreciate team-teaching approaches adopted in the delivery of an introductory journalism and communication course?
2. Which specific approach (or approaches) did students find most useful and which did they find least helpful in achieving their learning objectives?
3. How did students perceive the use of guest lecturers in delivering the course?

#### Analysis of Quantitative Results

A total of 245 questionnaires were completed and returned by the students. This constitutes a return rate of 52 percent (based on final enrollment number of 473 at the end of semester). Of those questionnaires, 217 were completed by students in the Monday class and 28 by students in the Friday class. Of the 18 statements in the questionnaire, 13 were selected for analysis because they related directly to the teaching strategies adopted in delivering the course. Statements addressing aspects such as feedback and consultation were not analyzed.

The rating of the teaching approaches adopted in the delivery of the course shows that, overall, the students rated the team-teaching methods well above average. As Table 1 shows, each item scored a mean of well above the Likert scale mean of 3.0. Further, more than 50 percent of students either agreed or strongly agreed with each item, demonstrating general support for team-teaching. The average rating for the team was 3.92 out of a maximum possible rating of 5.

In light of the large number of students who participated in the survey, this suggests an overwhelming endorsement by the students of the teaching approaches adopted in delivering the course and the contents of the course. It is important to point

Table 1  
Quantitative Student Feedback

Statement	Mean (out of 5)	Standard deviation	% saying “agree”/ “strongly agree”
The lecturers seemed to know the course well	4.31	0.72	90
The lecturers produced classes that were well organized	4.16	0.75	84
The lecturers communicated their enthusiasm for the course	4.11	0.84	78
The lecturers involved in team-teaching were compatible	4.07	0.83	78
Teaching was well coordinated among the lecturers	3.97	0.93	75
The team-teaching approach was used effectively in this course	3.88	1.04	70
Team-teaching provided me with diverse insights into the course content	3.78	0.99	65
The lecturers emphasized thinking rather than just memorizing	3.77	0.90	61
The material covered by the different lecturers was well integrated	3.71	0.93	64
The lecturers presented material in an interesting way	3.71	0.96	62
Course continuity between the lecturers was good	3.66	0.99	59
The team-teaching method provided me with a valuable learning experience	3.59	1.08	54
All things considered, how would you rate the team’s overall effectiveness as university teachers?	3.92	0.78	73

out, however, that the average ratings should not be interpreted to imply that all the students were satisfied with the team-teaching approaches. As shown later in this paper in the qualitative analysis of the results, some students were not happy with some aspects of the team-teaching strategies. For example, using the percentage aggregate for each item in Table 1, it is obvious that only a slight majority (54 percent) of students responded positively to the statement: “The team-teaching method provided me with a valuable learning experience.” Similarly, 59 percent of the students approved the statement: “Course continuity between the lecturers was good”. Although 64 percent of the students agreed that “The material covered by the different lecturers was well integrated,” it is obvious that the percentage rating was not as high as the ratings received by other items in the instrument. The average rating of some items in Table 1, therefore, indicates clearly that more work needs to be done to identify other approaches that could be integrated into team-teaching in order to enhance students’ learning experiences, as well as their approval ratings of the team-teaching approaches.

It is encouraging to note that more than two-thirds of the students who responded to the questionnaire (78 percent) agreed that, “The lecturers involved in team-teaching were compatible.” Compatibility is very important in any teaching and learning activity that involves teamwork. If there is no compatibility among team members, students are likely to be confused about

the objectives of the course, in light of the conflicting messages they are likely to be exposed to. In addition, lack of cohesion and agreement among team members could leave students even more confused about the direction of the course, the material delivered in lectures and tutorials, and the assessment tasks in the course.

Equally encouraging was the agreement by 90 percent of the students that, “The lecturers seemed to know the course well.” This is crucial. Team members’ knowledge of a course is a confidence booster among students. Any perception by students that academic staff members involved in team-teaching lack in-depth knowledge and understanding of the basic theoretical and practical elements of the course would undermine students’ confidence in the course and in the lecturers, including the perceived value of the course to the students. Surely, no one wants to learn from someone who has no clear idea about what she/he is teaching.

The literature on teaching and learning at the university level suggests that lecturers’ knowledge of a course is not enough to ensure that learning has taken place. In essence, how knowledge is communicated is also critical to how students learn. For example, knowledge and ideas could be communicated in such an uninspiring and boring way that the methods of delivery would undermine the end purpose of teaching. It is important for lecturers to be able to communicate to, and share knowledge with, students in an interesting, more effective and engaging manner. This also implies

engaging in learning activities that promote, among students and lecturers, critical and mutual understanding of issues. It is in this context that one must note that 78 percent of the students who completed the questionnaire agreed that “The lecturers communicated their enthusiasm for the course.” However, when one examines students’ rating of the way that lecture material was presented, the results show that only 62 percent of the students agreed that “The lecturers presented material in an interesting way.” Obviously this implies that team members need to work constantly on developing interesting ways of engaging students with the lecture material.

### Qualitative Student Feedback

In order to provide a more qualitative dimension to the empirical data, responses from open-ended questions were examined by coding them into categories for comprehensive analysis. Answers were grouped in terms of dominant themes and analyzed in terms of similarity or differences. The dominant themes emerging from the analysis centered around the team’s combined expertise, the diversity of views within the team, individual lecturing styles, and continuity among lectures.

In terms of perceived positive aspects of team-teaching, it appears that a vast majority of the students appreciated the approach, as it exposed them to a wide range of perspectives, offered expert knowledge on different topics, and gave them a holistic introduction to journalism and communication studies at the university. In fact, the categories “expert knowledge” and “diversity of views” were by far the most frequently mentioned categories by students in their qualitative feedback, receiving 45 and 43 mentions respectively. The above categories emerged from an analysis of student feedback on the question: “What are the teaching strengths of the lecturing team?”

The category “expert knowledge” was developed through answers such as: “people who were really qualified in the area they spoke on”; “there were 3 different fields of study the lecturers specialised in. The enthusiasm, the ‘knows their stuff’ factor, the broadness of topics covered... every desirable aspect in a lecturer was multiplied by 3!” and “The team had a good mix of lecturers with expertise in various fields, thus providing a holistic insight into the basics of journalism.” Other issues mentioned by the students included: “Diversity: each week a different lecturer presents the lecture, so students are provided with a broader diversity of insights.” This suggested students’ endorsement of the use of guest lecturers in delivering the course. Also, another student noted that the “specialization and

familiarization within individual fields covered” gave “strength to the presentation of each specific area of discussion.”

In terms of an overall introduction and overview of the field of journalism and communication, the combined team-teaching and guest lecturing approaches seemed to be very successful in terms of providing students with expert insights. For example, one student said: “The team had a good mix of lecturers with expertise in various fields, thus providing a holistic insight to the basics of journalism”.

In terms of the diversity of views, students appeared to appreciate listening to different lecturers every week, thus reinforcing the use of guest lecturers. This diversity begins on a rather mundane level of not listening to the same person week in and week out (“The different faces made it interesting”) to a much deeper level (“More lecturers meant more and differing insights into concepts”). Another student noted that guest lecturers “made it interesting so it wasn’t coming from one person all the time”. Yet another student noted that the “teaching styles are very different which complemented the delivery of the material as it made it interesting and fresh to learn”.

The fact that team members enjoyed working as a team and coordinated the course obviously also came across in students’ responses. As Anderson and Speck (1998) noted, it is important in team-teaching that the team be a cohesive and compatible unit. From the perspective of this particular team, the members felt they worked as a cohesive and compatible team. A number of students seemed to notice this aspect, indicating that the team “worked well together, provided clear explanations and effectively involved the students through interesting methods of communication.” Similarly, one student said: “The lecturers were able to work well as a team presenting interesting topics, week to week. They all seemed to know the course well and all expressed much enthusiasm.” Another student noted the diverse backgrounds of the team members and “evident enthusiasm and experience in the field and the energy with which they communicated with each other and the obvious respect and appreciation they showed towards their colleagues.” This highlights the fact that the team members were successful in attempting to foster a learning community founded upon respect for, and trust in, all the course participants. The team members emphasized cultural and gender diversity through their multicultural experience. In fact, the team members believed that cultural sensitivity and respect not only shaped more fruitful in-class discussions but also endowed students with a more critical reception of the assigned materials.

### Negative Aspects of the Team-Teaching Approach

While responses to the open-ended questions in the survey were overwhelmingly positive, there were nevertheless some negative responses, which the team members considered useful to highlight in order to provide guidance for future team-teaching projects. The dominant negative comments centered on an issue that had also received a high number of positive feedback, namely that of individual lecturing styles (19 mentions). The second issue was about the level of continuity among lectures (16 mentions). The concern about the level of continuity resonates with the existing literature on team-teaching, particularly in terms of approaches to sequential teaching (Jacob et al., 2002).

As noted above, a large number of students appreciated the wide variety of guest lecturers and their backgrounds because they believed the two elements offered them a broad overview of the topics, the different teaching styles adopted by different lecturers, and insights into the lecturers' backgrounds. However, while most students appreciated these differences, some were critical of the quality of some lectures, which they felt did not reach the level of other lectures. For example, one student said: "Some of the guest lecturers failed to engage the students well, because of the content of their lectures and also their delivery. Some were boring or hard to understand." Another student noted that some lecturers "were not as engaging, whether it be through the tone of their voice or display of enthusiasm". One student said while the mix of lecturers was good, s/he would have preferred that the team used the same lecturer more often.

This last issue raised another concern, that of continuity among lectures, which was mentioned by a number of students. It also reflected what other scholars, such as Jacob et al. (2002) and Anderson and Speck (1998), pointed out, namely the need for team-taught lectures to be integrated very well and presented in one cohesive unit. Student comments in this area included: "Sometimes it felt as though the topics were disjointed and connections or links were made between two different topics"; "Sometimes the guest lecturers didn't deliver along the same lines as the lecture team." One student was very critical: "Guest lecturers interrupt the flow significantly, it becomes confusing". These critical comments suggest that, although a significant majority of the students endorsed the use of guest lecturers, a few students did not quite approve of the practice.

While cohesiveness and continuity can be controlled more effectively in a small team, they are much more difficult to control when one adds a large variety of guest lecturers to the mix. It should be acknowledged that each lecturer brings to a given topic his or her own background, his or her own

understanding of the topic and also his or her own unique teaching styles. Each of these lecturers may be attuned to different understandings of teaching styles. For example, some lecturers may use a transmission model in their lecturing style, while others may adopt a more engaging and interactive teaching style. It is important to mention that every guest lecturer was briefed in-depth about the team members' expectations and the proposed contents of the lecture. The team members believed, to the best of their knowledge, that all guest lecturers delivered insightful overviews of their topics to students. However, it must be acknowledged also that it is beyond the power of team members to control or influence each guest lecturer's long-held tradition of lecture presentation. All guest lecturers were colleagues of the team members, and it was a sensitive issue for the team members not to be perceived as trying to nudge each guest lecturer toward a particular or preferred mode of lecture delivery. In addition, team members did not believe that differences in teaching styles were ultimately bad. It was also important that the team members recognized the observations of a majority of students who said they appreciated the variety of teaching styles brought by different guest lecturers. The adoption of different teaching styles in a team-taught course and the use of guest lecturers remain important issues for further reflection in planning team-taught courses as well as when using guest lecturers.

### Conclusions

The results of the study reported here show there are evidently certain aspects of team-teaching that enhance students' learning experience which students appreciate. The results indicate that students responded well to most of the team-teaching strategies adopted in delivering the introductory journalism and communication course. On the basis of available evidence, this paper argues that team-teaching in the first-year introductory journalism and communication course was generally successful owing to a combination of factors: a mixture of team-teaching strategies and the use of guest lecturers, students' exposure to a variety of guest lecturers from a variety of backgrounds and a variety of teaching styles, and students' introduction to broad overviews of topics as well as the pool of academic staff within the School. Overall, the data suggest that students responded well to the team-teaching approaches and it would seem an appropriate strategy to replicate in teaching a first-year undergraduate course with a large student enrollment (example 500 and above).

Regardless of the positive comments provided by the students, however, it is important to note some aspects of team-teaching of which students were

critical, and which some may have found not very helpful in achieving their learning objectives. Some of the issues include differences in lecturing style, differences in quality of lecture contents, and the perceived lack of continuity and cohesiveness in lecture topics. It is recommended that these issues should receive priority attention in planning team-taught courses. While there are problems associated with trying to instruct one's peers about how to deliver lectures, there are also ways to overcome the problem, such as advising the guest lecturers about the need to engage the students through use of practical examples and humor. In light of the fact that a majority of the students endorsed the use of guest lecturers, we advise against completely eliminating the use of guest lecturers. There are consequences for discontinuing the use of guest lecturers. Eliminating the practice completely in team-taught courses would deny students the useful experience of being exposed to lecturers from different backgrounds, different teaching styles, and different areas of expertise. These issues need to be carefully examined in future planning of team-taught courses. Although Anderson and Speck (1998) argue that, while it may be desirable for team-teachers to have different styles of teaching, it is still important, nevertheless, to present a cohesive and compatible unit and not to give students mixed messages.

It is important to be mindful of the issues raised by Anderson and Speck (1998), including the argument made by Wenger and Hornyak (1999) that, often, the goals of team-teaching are "to broaden topic coverage, share the workload, and perhaps reduce class time for individual members. The students are exposed to multiple experts" (p. 314). However, in a deep learning context, Wenger and Hornyak (1999) warn that, while team-teaching has the potential to widen subject coverage, it also misses an opportunity to deepen the topic under discussion. This argument resonates in the qualitative feedback reported in this study, especially comments from students who criticized a lack of cohesion in the teaching format adopted in delivering the introductory journalism and communication course.

Overall, the experiences gained from the team-teaching strategies implemented here, in addition to the experiences gained from interacting with a large number of students from different backgrounds, have contributed to and enhanced the knowledge and understanding of the theoretical and practical issues associated with teaching and learning at the university level, including issues involved in teaching a large class in a first-year introductory course.

In conclusion, it is important to emphasize the usefulness of a much more holistic approach to teaching in which students and teachers are not only

present in the classroom with their intellectual abilities, but as individuals with different experiences and backgrounds. Mutual respect, honesty, willingness to explore issues, open-mindedness, and a genuine concern for learning are key principles that remain important.

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