

45th Biennial Convention (16-20 November 2019)

Exploring Nurse Academics Experiences of Team Teaching in an Undergraduate Nursing Curriculum

Naomi F. Tutticci, PhD, MEd, BN

Judy Munday, PhD, BA (Hons) (AcuteCritCare), DipEd (Nurs)

School of Nursing, Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane, Australia

Abstract

Background/Introduction Team teaching is a less traditional but increasingly used method for teaching undergraduate students in higher education (Hellier & Davidson, 2018; Robb & Gerwick, 2013; Crawford & Jenkins, 2015; Lock, Rainsbury, Clancy, Rosenau & Ferreira, 2018). The proposed benefits include collaborative learning, role modelling opportunities (Clancy, Ferreira, Rainsbury, Rosenau & Lock, 2017), exposure to different teaching styles, and active engagement via discussion (Hellier & Davidson, 2018). Additionally, there may be benefits in terms of resource implications. Team teaching has been recently adopted in several teaching units in the redesigned Bachelor of Nursing degree within our institution. However, there is little empirical evidence investigating nurse academics' experiences and perspectives of this approach. Therefore, this study sought to investigate the experience and perceptions of nurse academics who are involved in team teaching in an undergraduate nursing curriculum.

Aim To explore the experiences and perceptions of team teaching by nurse academics within an undergraduate nursing curriculum.

Methods A qualitative approach was used to survey a purposive sample of nurse academics who have been involved in team teaching in the revised undergraduate nursing curriculum since January 2017. Open-ended questions were used to elicit their perspectives of team teaching. A thematic approach was used to analyse their responses, by two independent researchers. After initial coding, a consensus approach was used to generate overarching themes. Within these, sub-themes were also generated.

Results The survey yielded a response rate of 32 % (10 participants) who had 1 – 22 years (\bar{x} = 9.7 years) of experience of teaching in higher education. Two overarching themes emerged from the data: *community of learners* and *prerequisites for success*. Within these, sub-themes of *zone of proximal development and role modelling*, *benefits for learning outcomes and organisation*, *preparing for team teaching* and *challenges were identified*. These themes provide an insight into the experiences and perceptions of nurse academics.

Discussion Themes arising from this project are congruent with themes in the literature in regards to the benefits of team teaching for both teachers and students. The perceived promotion of a community of learners is experienced by nursing academics involved in team teaching (Fink & Inkelas, 2015; Lock et al, 2018). The ability to collaborate inter and intra-professionally is an integral part of nursing practice: team teaching is perceived to allow teachers to model this approach in the classroom, whilst teaching across different subject areas. For teachers, team teaching provides an opportunity for vicarious learning and, for less experienced teachers, cognitive

apprenticeship of a more experienced other (Hellier & Davidson, 2018). Team teaching provides the opportunity to be mentored (and to mentor), to assist in the adaptation to and learning from the team-teaching approach, as well as facilitating integration into the broader academic community (Evans, 2013).

Most clearly, it is evident that ensuring a well – balanced team composition, which includes ensuring pairs of teachers are well-matched, is a part of this requirement. While, it was not well-defined how this matching should occur, it was emphasized that the relationship between the teachers, and levels of experience were important considerations. Lack of clarity around team composition and interactions was also highlighted by Hellier and Davidson (2018). As Clancy et al (2017) emphasize, how team teachers are selected is worthy of investigation. Importantly, Lock et al, (2018) confirm that the capacity to team teach should not be assumed. The challenges highlighted in this project can be offset, in part, by effective preparation and planning before embarking on team teaching (Money & Coughlan, 2016).

The study did not find reluctance to engage in team teaching amongst academics as reported by Ulrich and Nedelcu (2013) – as stated, the perspectives of team teaching were predominantly positive and enthusiastic. However, it should be noted that all respondents had already engaged and shown willingness to engage in team teaching, by virtue of our inclusion criteria which only sought those who had team teaching experience.

Conclusion Team teaching is perceived as a positive teaching strategy due to the opportunity it provides to model collaboration, facilitate deep learning, and establish a community of learners that is built when teachers learn from each other whilst teaching others. Team teaching can present challenges for both teachers and students, which need to be managed and prepared for. Future research could explore the experiences of students who have knowledge of team teaching.

Title:

Exploring Nurse Academics Experiences of Team Teaching in an Undergraduate Nursing Curriculum

Keywords:

Nursing, Team teaching and Under-graduate

References:

Clancy, T. L., Ferreira, C., Rainsbury, J., Rosenau, P., & Lock, J. (2017). Influence of Co-Teaching on the Development of Transformational Leadership Skills in Undergraduate Nursing Students: A Pilot Study. *College Quarterly*, 20(3). Retrieved from <https://gateway.library.qut.edu.au/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip,sso&db=eric&AN=EJ1161896&site=ehost-live&scope=site>

- Crawford, R., & Jenkins, L. (2015). Investigating the importance of team teaching and blended learning in tertiary music education. *Australian Journal of Music Education*, 2, 3-17.
- Evans, J.D. (2013). Factors Influencing Recruitment and Retention of Nurse Educators Reported by Current Nurse Faculty. *Journal of Professional Nursing*, 29, 11-20.
- Fink J.E, Inkelas K.K. (2015). A History of Learning Communities within American Higher Education. *New Directions for Student Services*, 149, 5-15.
doi:10.1002/ss.20113.
- Hellier, S. & Davidson, L. (2018). Team Teaching in Nursing Education. *The Journal of Continuing Education in Nursing*, 49, 186-192.
- Lock, J., Rainsbury, J., Clancy, T., Rosenau, P., & Ferreira, C. (2018). Influence of Co-Teaching on Undergraduate Student Learning: A Mixed-Methods Study in Nursing. *Teaching & Learning Inquiry*, 6(1), 38–51. Retrieved from <https://gateway.library.qut.edu.au/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip,sso&db=eric&AN=EJ1174871&site=ehost-live&scope=site>
- Money, A. & Coughlan, (2016). *Journal of Higher Education*, 72, 797.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-015-9976-5>
- Robb, M. & Gerwick, M. (2013). Team teaching: a resource guide for nurse educators. *Teaching and Learning in Nursing*, 8, 78-82.
- Ulrich, C., & Nedelcu, A. (2013). Team-Teaching and Team Work: Perceptions amongst Students and Staff (a case study). *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 76, 853-857.

Abstract Summary:

This study investigated nurse academic's experiences and perceptions of team teaching in an undergraduate Bachelor of Nursing curriculum. Nurse academic experiences (n=10) endorse team teaching, but with caveats. Results inform future approaches to team teaching in nursing education at both organisational and international levels.

Content Outline:

Introduction/Background

Team teaching is a less traditional but increasingly used method for teaching undergraduate students in higher education.

There is little empirical evidence investigating nurse academics' experiences and perspectives with team teaching.

Research Aim & Design

To explore the experiences and perceptions of team teaching by nurse academics. A qualitative approach using a purposive sample of nurse academics who team teach were surveyed using open ended questions to explore their perceptions and experiences of team teaching.

Results & Discussion

The survey yielded a response rate of 32 % (10 participants), and two overarching themes emerged: *community of learners* and *prerequisites for success*. Nurse

academics experienced a collaborative learning experience, with peer support and review being central to the perceived success of team teaching. A well – balanced team composition, which includes ensuring pairs of teachers are well-matched, along with pre-planning and preparation are critical factors for the success of team teaching.

Conclusion

Team teaching is perceived as a positive teaching strategy, which requires intentional preparation and planning of nurse academics and resources to ensure it's success at an organisational level. Research on student's perception and experience of team teaching will increase understanding of this teaching methodology.

First Primary Presenting Author

Primary Presenting Author

Naomi F. Tutticci, PhD, MEd, BN
Queensland University of Technology
School of Nursing
Lecturer
Brisbane
Australia

Author Summary: Naomi Tutticci is an early career academic and lecturer in the School of Nursing, QUT, Brisbane, Australia. Her clinical background is in critical care, and in her current role she is actively engaged in teaching undergraduate students, including coordinating clinical units and researching clinical reasoning and simulation.

Second Author

Judy Munday, PhD, BA (Hons) (AcuteCritCare), DipEd (Nurs)
Queensland University of Technology
School of Nursing
Lecturer
Brisbane
Australia

Author Summary: Judy Munday is an early career academic and lecturer in the School of Nursing, QUT, Brisbane, Australia. Her clinical background is in post-anaesthetic care, and in her current role she is actively engaged in teaching undergraduate students, including coordinating evidence-based practice and research units.