



Plenary Session

Using Team Based Learning to Teach Collaborative Practice Skills

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Teaching Law Practice Across the Curriculum

Plenary Session

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Using Team-Based Learning to Teach Collaborative Practice Skills

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Team-based learning is "group work on steroids" and is an exciting and effective teaching strategy for not only engaging students but also for teaching them an essential professional skill: collaboration. Through video clips and interactive exercises, this session focuses on how to design courses and classes that enable students to become self-regulated, powerful learning teams. Because it applies the best practices about teaching and learning, team-based learning can be used across the curriculum to help students achieve deep understanding and mastery of doctrine, skills, and values — in classes of nine to 199.

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Team Assignment #1: Make a List

This first exercise is a brainstorming exercise. Brainstorming is a technique for generating ideas and solutions that Madison Avenue advertising executive, Alex Osborn, first promoted in the 1950s and used by attorneys in every type of practice. The technique has been researched extensively and there are many variations on how you can conduct effective brainstorming. Here are the instructions for brainstorming we will use in this class:

- Generate ideas without criticism (either of your own or other's ideas). Don't be concerned if ideas are right or wrong. Accept all contributions.
- Appoint one person to record the ideas that come from the session.
- Make sure that everyone gets a fair opportunity to contribute ideas.
- Feel free to build on other people's ideas.
- Welcome creativity!

Don't get stuck on one idea.

Here is the topic of your brainstorming: **Advantages of Group Learning**

Team Assignment #3

Suppose you are teaching a first-year, first-semester course in civil procedure. The class meets for 50 minutes three times a week for 14 weeks (or about 2100 minutes of class time). **What percentage of that time should you devote to group work?**

Choose one of the options below. Work toward consensus for your selection and identify one person in your group who will report the reason for your group's choice.

- A. less than 10 percent
- B. 10-25 percent
- C. 26-40 percent
- D. 41-60 percent
- E. More than 60 percent

Video Clips and Questions

Imagine the video scenario occurs in your classroom. Each team began the semester by setting collaboration guidelines specifying the type of behavior teammates would use while they were working in teams. In two weeks — about half-way through the course — teammates will provide each other with formative feedback (ungraded feedback to help students learn) about how well each one of them met their team guidelines. At the end of the semester, each member of the team will provide their teammates with a grade on how well they met their agreed-upon guidelines.

You know that this team's guidelines state that they will all participate equally, listen to each other's reasoning, and reach consensus before answering questions.

Question 1.

You have heard and observed the dominator (woman with long blond hair and glasses) for the first part of the quiz, but the team still has two questions to answer. **What would be the most effective way to stop the domination while promoting effective teamwork?**

- A. Approach the team during the quiz. Remind students to participate equally and tell them that you expect professional behavior. Emphasize that what you have heard does not meet your expectations.
- B. Do nothing during class, but meet with the dominator to discuss her behavior. When you meet, review the team guidelines with her. Remind her that it is important that she follows the guidelines or it will affect her grade.
- C. After the quiz, remind the whole class that formative peer feedback is coming soon, and graded peer feedback will come at the end of the course. Ask students to review their guidelines for the next class.
- D. Do nothing. The teams are aware of their collaboration guidelines, and their opportunities to give formative and summative feedback to their teammates. The dominator will receive the appropriate feedback from her peers.

Question 2.

Which aspect of peer evaluation is most likely to reduce the risk of "social loafing"?

- A. Counting peer evaluations as a significant part of the course grade.
 - B. Giving students the option of writing qualitative comments in the peer evaluation form.
 - C. Requiring quantitative ratings of peers in the evaluation form distributed to teammates.
 - D. Doing an ungraded, formative peer evaluation before the graded evaluation.
-

Question 3.

Which of the following approaches, when put in a team's collaboration guidelines at the beginning of the semester, is likely the most effective strategy in enabling all teammates to have productive team discussions?

- A. Having one student lead the discussion of each question and rotating the leader for each question.
 - B. Assigning one student to monitor whether any person on the team is dominating or social loafing, and, if so, call it to the team's attention.
 - C. Requiring teammates to use a time out signal when they feel excluded or marginalized, or when they think another student is social loafing.
 - D. Penalizing teammates who dominate or social loaf by deducting significant points from the end-of-semester summative peer feedback.
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Question 4.

What is the most important reason for students to give peer feedback to their teammates?

- A. Enables students to feel better about their team after honest sharing
 - B. Gives students practice in learning how to provide useful feedback
 - C. Prevents the development of conflicts within a team
 - D. Enables the team to become a more powerful learning unit
 - E. Rewards almost all students for their contributions to their team's success
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Excerpts from: Sophie Sparrow, *Team-Based Learning — An Overview*,
THE LAW TEACHER, SPRING 2010 | 1
<<http://lawteaching.org/lawteacher/2010spring/lawteacher2010spring.pdf>>

What is team-based learning (TBL)?

TBL is a learner-centered teaching strategy designed to promote active engagement and deep learning. Educators have used TBL for over 30 years, using it in 23 countries in a medicine, business, sciences, the humanities and others. They have used TBL effectively in classes of 9 to 199+. Teachers using TBL have found students' performance improves when compared to traditional teaching. Students also learn skills essential to succeeding in a job – working well with others. All this happens without sacrificing course coverage.

What are the core principles of TBL?

Larry Michaelsen, who first designed TBL in the 1970s, identifies 4 essential principles:

“1. Groups must be properly formed and managed; 2. students must be made accountable for their individual and group work; 3. group assignments must promote both learning and team development; 4. students must get frequent and timely performance feedback.”

What is the teacher's role in TBL?

The TBL teacher's role is to plan the course and the individual classes, then coach students through the learning process. To the outside observer, the TBL teacher may appear not to be really “teaching.” This is deliberate; the focus of the class is *on what the students are doing*, not what the teacher is saying. The teacher, however, has done significant work in advance to harness the power of student learning teams.

What is the role of the students?

In a TBL course, students spend the vast majority of class time engaging in team discussions and solving problems in their groups. Working in permanent diverse teams

of five to seven students, they can collectively draw on their perspectives and understanding to solve more complex problems than they would individually. Think of this as “five brains” are better than one, or as a group of lawyers working together to solve clients' problems. Having students work together is only effective when all students are prepared; one of the biggest complaints about group work concerns “social loafers.” Social loafers are those students who poach on teammates' work without contributing any work of their own. In TBL, students assess their teammates' contributions to the team (usually 5-15% of the grade). When students are not prepared or contributing, their grades suffer. They are thus accountable for being prepared and participating in their teams for every class.

How do you plan a TBL course?

1) **Identify** core learning objectives — what students should be able to DO as a result of taking the course? 2) **Break the course** into four to seven units or modules; 3) **Determine** how to create diverse student groups; and 4) **Design** a series of formative and summative assessments to engage students at increasingly higher levels of thinking.

The TBL principles are straightforward; the challenge is applying them effectively, and this transformative teaching strategy, has a steep learning curve and requires a lot work at the beginning. The hardest and most time-consuming aspect of using TBL is designing the series of quizzes — one per learning unit —and problems that are appropriately challenging for a group of students to solve. Though a challenge, the value of TBL is well worth it. Start small and learn from your mistakes.

TBL sounds great ... how can I start? FAQs for Law Teachers

Q: I don't have time to revamp my whole class - can I use pieces of TBL?

A: Yes! There are ways to integrate pieces of TBL into your class, depending on your goals.

Q: I already do a fair amount of group discussion and think-pair-share already in my class. How is TBL different?

A. By putting students into stable teams and by providing those teams responsibility to make decisions and solve problems with consequence, TBL requires students to learn to work together in ways that can't be as easily achieved with simple group discussion. By requiring students to evaluate one another's contributions, students become aware of their own learning of collaborative skills.

Q. I've been teaching Civil Procedure for 8 years. What I really want to do is try TBL to see if I can manage it and my students like it. What should I do?

A: Consider teaching one TBL module in the class. For example, perhaps you do a "unit" (module) on dispositive motions. Here are the steps to take to turn it into a TBL module:

Step 1 Decide what you want students to be able to do with dispositive motion knowledge at the end of the unit and how many classes you have to spend on the materials.

Step 2 Create one or two problems (applications) that teams will work on together. Make sure that the problems are significant, the same, require a specific response/choice, and simultaneous report of answers. A good source of application problems might be earlier exam questions on dispositive motions.

Step 3 Review past reading assignments and assess whether these assignments give students the foundational knowledge to solve the problems. If they do, assign them again and if possible, provide study guide questions.

Step 4 Using your study guide questions, design a short assessment you can give to students before they move into the application problems. This is assessment that students will take individually and then again as a team. Good foundational assessments typically test 30% at Bloom's knowledge and recall and 70% at application (though we have found quiz question can test at higher levels with success).

Step 5 Vet your problems and assessments with colleagues and TAs. Have the problems and assessments be sophisticated enough that students will benefit from working together.

Step 6 Prepare short materials for students on the TBL module, so that they understand the method and why you have adopted it.**Step 7** The class before the module, spend 15-minutes putting teams in heterogeneous groups, explaining the TBL method and why you've adopted it, and having teams complete collaboration guidelines. Have fun!

Q: I just want students to engage with each other and problem solve together without thinking about having to divide the course into learning "modules." What can I do?

A: You could incorporate shorter group exercises (brainstorming, short discussion problems, etc.). You could incorporate quizzes at key points in the semester. (Step 4 above). If you decide to do this, we

recommend that you use the approach of individual quizzes followed by team quizzes and that you assign students to a team with whom they will work together during quiz classes.

Q: I do problem-based learning (PBL) and I already have many application exercises —how should I adopt TBL?

A: The key difference between PBL and TBL is the team formation and accountability. You could adopt TBL by introducing heterogeneous teams that remain together for the semester, having them adopt team collaboration guidelines, and having students provide formative and summative feedback. (Step 7 above).

Q: I've designed my course with power point presentations that include discussion questions. I typically assign problems for students to complete outside of class and then I post answers on my website later (which my TAs often review in their sessions). I don't want to reinvent the wheel— can I use these materials in TBL?

A: Consider narrating your slides and assigning them outside of class, as a supplement to reading. Then, take the problems you've been assigning and tailor them to a class. Allow students to work in teams, require them to come to consensus, and then simultaneously reveal their responses. Use class time to explore the differences in team approaches, reinforce the foundational materials in your slides and readings, and practice analysis and synthesis of the material.

Q: I am one year away from teaching a new course. How can I adopt TBL?

A: With this much time, we would recommend reading Michaelsen, and examining the TBL website, which includes videos and lots of advice. Once you have a good understanding of TBL course design, decide on your course modules, go from there, and contact any one of us!

TBL Resources

Websites, videos, books, forms, and listservs can be accessed at

<http://teambasedlearning.apsc.ubc.ca/>
www.TBLCollaborative.org.

Video clips of students simulating the "dominator" and "social loafer" are at

<http://www.piercelaw.edu/video/index.php>

BOOKS:

TEAM-BASED LEARNING: A TRANSFORMATIVE USE OF SMALL GROUPS IN COLLEGE TEACHING, edited by Larry K. Michaelsen, Arletta B. Knight, and L. Dee Fink, eds. (Stylus Publishing, 2004)

TEAM-BASED LEARNING: SMALL-GROUP LEARNING'S NEXT BIG STEP, 116 New Directions for Teaching & Learning, Larry K. Michaelsen, Michael Sweet, and Dean X. Parmelee, eds. (Jossey-Bass 2008).

Team Names and Contribution Guidelines

- Write down the names of all your teammates.**
- Identify three or more attributes** that help you and your colleagues learn from each other and work effectively as a team (samples from previous years are below).
- Be specific about these criteria;** name ones that the members of your team would feel comfortable using for your peer evaluations for this course.
- These are subject to change if the team so decides.** After the team has worked together for a while, you will be asked to review and revise the guidelines. For example, you may have included “Show respect for team members” but will have noticed after a few weeks, that different people define respect differently.

Team names _____

Team guidelines _____

use other side if you need more space

What are the consequences if members of the team don't meet the guidelines?

Previous teams' criteria included:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Listen to team members-be polite | <input type="checkbox"/> Communicate with team about absences and other team-related tasks |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Be receptive to and respectful of others' thoughts/input | <input type="checkbox"/> Have a sense of humor |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Be patient with others' process and learning | <input type="checkbox"/> Be on time |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Be prepared – put in a good faith effort | <input type="checkbox"/> Work for the team |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Be proactive in addressing problems | <input type="checkbox"/> Be willing to apologize |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Contribute to discussions | <input type="checkbox"/> Don't monopolize or dominate |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Don't hide behind the laptop | <input type="checkbox"/> Take turns leading the team |

Excerpts of material included in a TBL course syllabus

VI. TEAM-BASED LEARNING (TBL). This course uses team-based learning (TBL) because research shows it improves student learning.

TBL also prepares you for law practice where you will be working with others – lawyers, clients, consultants, and assistants — to serve your clients. Research has shown that, across all disciplines, the ability to work well with others is more important to success than intellectual expertise.

You will assigned to diverse team of 5-7 students; these teams will work together the entire semester. Teams will develop and refine team contribution guidelines, and assess how well each member of the team contributes to the team's performance. Each team member is responsible for the team working effectively.

TBL has two major components: individual out-of-class preparation and in-class teamwork applying the materials to solve complex problems. Below are answers to common student questions about TBL.

What do we do in class? You will work with your team in every class. During six classes, you will take readiness assessment quizzes (RAQ). In other classes, all teams will work towards finding a specific solution to a specific problem based on assigned material. Quizzes and in-class activities allow you to actively engage in the material rather than listening to a lecture about it.

What is a RAQ? A RAQ (readiness assessment quiz) evaluates whether you have command of the key concepts necessary to apply the concepts covered in out-of-class assignments. Each quiz is first completed individually, and then retaken as a team. The individual and team score will contribute toward your overall grade. Interestingly, the team usually outperforms the highest scoring individual team member.

Why does the team often outperform the individual? Diverse teams engage in a rich, and often robust, discussion of the “best answer” before arriving at a conclusion - five heads are better than one.

Is it true the professor doesn't provide answers or guidance? No. TBL provides feedback in three essential ways. First, when you take a RAQ you will learn the correct answers **in that class**. Teams immediately learn the answers as they complete the team quiz. Teams will also apply their knowledge to a problem and report a specific answer at the same time as all teams (by holding up an answer card, for example). The whole class will receive guidance about the best answer.

What if I have a problem with my team? Try to work it out. The biggest reason that teams don't function effectively is because team members avoid conflict. To promote conflict resolution, design thoughtful contribution guidelines and then discuss the guidelines with your team periodically.

You may have addressed conflicts between teammates effectively in your previous work, service, academic, and extracurricular experiences. Address the issue with your team as you would in a professional office. Consider how you would want to hear the message if your behavior was a challenge for your teammates. What would be effective? If the problem is not resolved using the team contribution guidelines, talk to me, and I can suggest ways for you and your teammates to work through the problem. In the rare case of alleged student misconduct, I will likely intervene.