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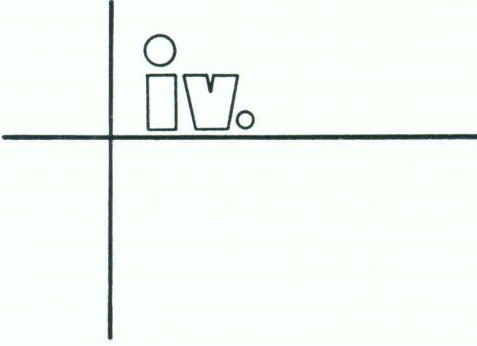
***Team Teaching at the College Level*** by Horatio M. LaFauci &  
**Peyton E. Richter**David Hargreave  
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# Team Teaching at the College Level

By HORATIO M. LAFAUCI & PEYTON E. RICHTER

New York: Pergamon Press, 1970. x + 157 pp. \$10.00.

At the outset of this monograph it is noted that, despite the growing interest in interdisciplinary approaches to higher education, there has been only limited discussion of the philosophy and methodology of team teaching at this level in educational literature. With this in mind, the authors, Horatio M. LaFauci and Peyton E. Richter, have set out to describe "the nature and scope of selected [college level] team teaching programs, the manner in which such programs can be administered, the potential impact of team teaching on a developing curriculum, the role of faculty and students who constitute the teaching-learning teams, the particular housing requirements of team teaching programs, and finally the limitations and future prospects of this emerging concept" (p. ix).

In measuring the success of the authors' endeavor the term "selected" in the above statement of purpose is crucial. The monograph is an excellent in-depth study of one college level team teaching program. The reader will find some intriguing suggestions for interdisciplinary projects in chapter three, and teaching facilities to dream about in chapter five. What is more important, by reading the entire book, the reader will get some feeling for the depth of commitment needed to make team teaching at the college level effective. For this reason alone the work should be required reading for anyone contemplating participation in, or the development of, a team-taught program at the college level. However, the book does not contain the

comprehensive discussion of the philosophy and methodology of team teaching in higher education that the title and opening paragraphs might suggest. LaFauci is presently Dean, and Richter, Professor of Humanities, at Boston University's College of Basic Studies, "where a team system was first developed in 1949 and where an entire collegiate two-year program of studies now functions on a team teaching plan," (p. ix). Therein lies the strength as well as some of the weaknesses of their work. The authors certainly cannot be accused of empty theorizing; the conclusions arrived at by LaFauci and Richter are drawn from a sizeable reservoir of experience with the Boston University program. However, this very reliance upon the experience gained from a program tailored to the needs of a particular university has, in the final analysis, resulted in a rather parochial view of team-teaching at the college level.

The opening chapter of the work is broad enough in scope, containing a brief survey of a number of diverse team-teaching programs presently in operation in colleges and universities throughout the country. At the conclusion of the chapter the reader involved in program development and interested in the possibilities of team-teaching at the college level will probably be led to speculate as to the relative strengths and weaknesses of these various approaches. Unfortunately that question remains unanswered throughout the book. The reader is presented with evidence of diversity in team teaching approaches, but, for the most part, he is left to make of it what he will.

In chapter two, LaFauci and Richter take what might have served as a first step toward an analysis of team-teaching diversity by introducing a theoretical scheme representing "three fixed reference points on a continuum of possible team patterns" (p. 21). These three theoretical team patterns are differentiated from one another by a consideration of the degree to which faculty participation and program content are controlled by administrative agencies outside the team itself. While this emphasis on the administrative characteristics of the teaching team is certainly not out of place in a chapter entitled "Administering a Team Teaching Program," it is indicative of a point of view that pervades the book as a whole and, one suspects, reflects the biases of the authors. Throughout the work there is a constant awareness of, and, some might argue, a preoccupation with, administrative and logistical details. Some will find this helpful, others will find it disconcerting. For one primarily interested in innovative teaching techniques, the usefulness of the above schema is questionable. It says very little about the role and commitment of faculty and students in a given type of team pattern. If integration of subject matter is the central concern of team teaching, then it would seem to be more meaningful to differentiate teams according to the ways in which, and the

extent to which, integration is realized.<sup>1</sup> Elsewhere in the book (p. 73), the authors briefly mention a classification scheme that comes closer to serving the purpose of differentiating team patterns according to the level of integration present. Unfortunately these distinctions do not appear to have been as fruitful for the authors as the administrative distinctions made in the second chapter. They are not referred to again.

The real shortcoming of chapter two and the work as a whole, however, is not the nature of the authors' schema so much as it is their failure to make use of the schema they have developed. Having gone to the trouble of distinguishing three different team patterns, the authors conclude that, "since the coordinated-innovative team is currently the most highly developed and most common mode of organization, it is primarily from this vantage point that the administrative functioning of the teaching team will be viewed throughout the remainder of this chapter," (p. 24). Not only is the remainder of chapter two devoted to a discussion of the coordinated-innovative team, which, not surprisingly, corresponds to the type of program in operation at Boston University, but the remainder of the book as well. In view of the significant reduction in scope of the work from chapter two onward, a more appropriate title for the work might have been, "A Model For Team Teaching at the College Level."

Since the bulk of the work is devoted to an analysis of Boston University's College of Basic Studies program, it may be useful to potential readers to briefly delineate the major characteristics of that program. The college has a single two-year integrated core curriculum for all students. To teach this integrated core curriculum, a number of teams have been established, each consisting of one faculty member from each of the college's five departments: humanities, social science, science, psychology and guidance, and rhetoric. Individual team innovation, while encouraged, is limited by college-wide curricular demands. The teams are appointed by the college's administration after faculty consultation, and each team works with the same students for an entire academic year. The offices for each team are clustered about a team office, while instructional facilities as well as team offices are housed in a building redesigned to accommodate team teaching. In short, the Boston University program is a big-time operation designed to handle freshmen and sophomores at a large institution. What LaFauci and Richter are discussing is not so much team

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1. Several questions can be raised in this regard concerning a given team configuration. To what extent is integration of subject matter left up to the students? How, and to what extent, do faculty members within the team attempt to integrate subject matter? Does the structure of the program itself encourage or demand integration?

teaching at the college level as team teaching at the college-wide level.

The authors' heavy reliance upon their experiences in this program forces the reader to question constantly the extent to which their conclusions can be validly generalized. For example, in chapter four, where the reader is offered examples of specific student reactions to the Boston University team teaching program, he must ask if the general conclusions drawn by the authors concerning student acceptance of team teaching are warranted. Close scrutiny of those student evaluations suggests that, at least to some extent, the success of the Boston University program is due to particular conditions present within that university's College of Basic Studies and not easily reproduced elsewhere, viz., the existence of a physical environment designed to facilitate team teaching, and a two-year basic studies program that serves as the focal point of a student's academic career during his freshman and sophomore years and allows him frequent and sustained contacts with the same faculty members. Reading these evaluations is certainly an enlightening experience, but they are not readily generalizable to team teaching in all or even in most forms. The same can be said about the authors' reflections concerning the role of the team in curriculum development (chapter three) and the limitations of the team approach (chapter six). What we have is an excellent detailed study of one particular team teaching program from which some general conclusions can be drawn if the reader is careful to identify those elements of the program discussed by LaFauci and Richter that are not likely to be repeated at other institutions.

In spite of the above criticisms, *Team Teaching at the College Level* is a book that deserves to be read carefully by anyone now engaged in team teaching at the college level, or anyone contemplating the formation of an academic program involving team teaching in the future. As the authors point out on several occasions, a successful team-taught program requires a great amount of pre-planning. LaFauci and Richter have presented much to think about during those planning sessions. For the faculty member contemplating the development of a team-taught program or becoming involved in an already existing program, chapters four and six in particular should offer some insight into what is probably the most crucial aspect of team teaching: the depth and scope of required faculty commitment to the philosophy of team teaching. Team teaching requires that each participating faculty member find a balance between independence and cooperation that allows for both personal growth and team growth. That is something that cannot be successfully legislated or imposed upon the team by outside forces regardless of the team pattern.

Many in-depth studies such as this present one will be required before we have anything approaching a comprehensive understanding of the philosophy and methodology of team teaching in higher educa-

tion. The work of LaFauci and Richter must be seen as a vital first step in this direction, not as the definitive work on this subject. Viewed from this perspective, it is a valuable addition to our understanding of teaching methodology.

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