Key features of an Effective Team Instructional Approach
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What is this all about?
✓ This poster reports the impact of the Team Instructional Approach (TIA) as having enhanced students’ learning and opportunities for engagement in a large class environment.
✓ TIA refers to the coordinated efforts of multiple instructors and graduate teaching assistants (GTAs) in course planning and delivery with the aim of providing an effective and equitable learning environment for undergraduate education students enrolled in 9 sections (mean size 150) of the EDPY 303 course.
✓ Students’ classroom engagement and course experiences were triangulated across multiple data sources: in-class observations (n=90), weekly team meeting summaries (n=16), and post course surveys (n=344). Analyses were performed in two ways: (a) within each data source, and (b) across data sources to generate mixed methods interpretations.

What have we learned?
This study provides evidence of a cost effective and pedagogically sound approach that begins to address the challenges identified within the large class learning environments.
✓ Key Feature 1: Consistency in the course instructional delivery and assessment yet responsive to individual student needs.
✓ Key Feature 2: Engagement in the course instructional activities is promoted by use of innovative and authentic methods.
✓ Key Feature 3: Learning is supported by diverse opportunities for accessing timely and relevant feedback from instructors and graduate teaching assistants.

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What was observed in class lectures?
A 14 dichotomous item (yes/no) checklist was completed by GTAs to track student participation, instructional activities, and in-class interactions.

- GTAs consistently agreed that “There was alignment between goals, lectures and assessments.”
- Across sections, it was a common practice for instructors to communicate the goals orally as well as to review the written intended learner outcomes at the beginning of each lecture.
- Lecture activities were unified across sections including review of previous concepts, and discussions.
- Assessments were common across sections.

The following activities aimed at clarifying course material in and out of the classroom were found to enhance students’ understanding:
- Students were encouraged to ask questions in class and online.
- Instructors used i>clicker to monitor students’ progress.
- Instructors shared personal experiences and used examples to clarify topics.

What was reported by the team?
Weekly meetings were facilitated on a rotating basis and summaries were generated to serve as means of communicating information among team members and documenting challenges for informing ongoing course development.

- Ongoing team meetings served the purpose of communicating information among team members to prepare them for providing equitable experiences for all students.
- Team members were flexible in adapting to changing student needs throughout the term.
- Lectures were collaboratively planned to be engaged and instructive, to encourage discussion among students, and to prepare student for the assessment of their learning of higher cognitive thinking.

In-person support was provided before, during and after class. Instructor and TAs have scheduled and ad hoc office hours: “I liked the fact that I was able to talk to instructors before or after class if I had any concerns.”

Online support was provided in an ongoing basis via i>clicker and email: “I found in a class this size it is easier to post over e-class to receive responses from peers and from the TAs than mailing anyone.”

“Help me learn in a big class!”

Discussion from team regarding students’ inquiries & course experiences

Written comments from students at course end

Observations of students in class

Students’ perceptions of the Teaching-Learning Environment were measured with the ‘Experiences of Teaching and Learning Questionnaire’ 5-point Likert scale (Entwistle et al, 2002) in addition to researcher developed open ended questions.

The course provides students with real world situations for discussion during class. “Class discussions raised meaningful and authentic questions.”

In i>clickers were an anonymous means to monitor students learning progress; “I enjoyed actively participating especially since your answers are anonymous.”

Practice quizzes were helpful for exam preparation; “I used them before I ever started studying, just to see how much I already knew and what I really needed to focus on.”

The peer assessment was useful for improving achievement; “I found I was really stuck and could not improve my assignment any more. After the peer review it made my assignment much better.”

What was written in the post survey?

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