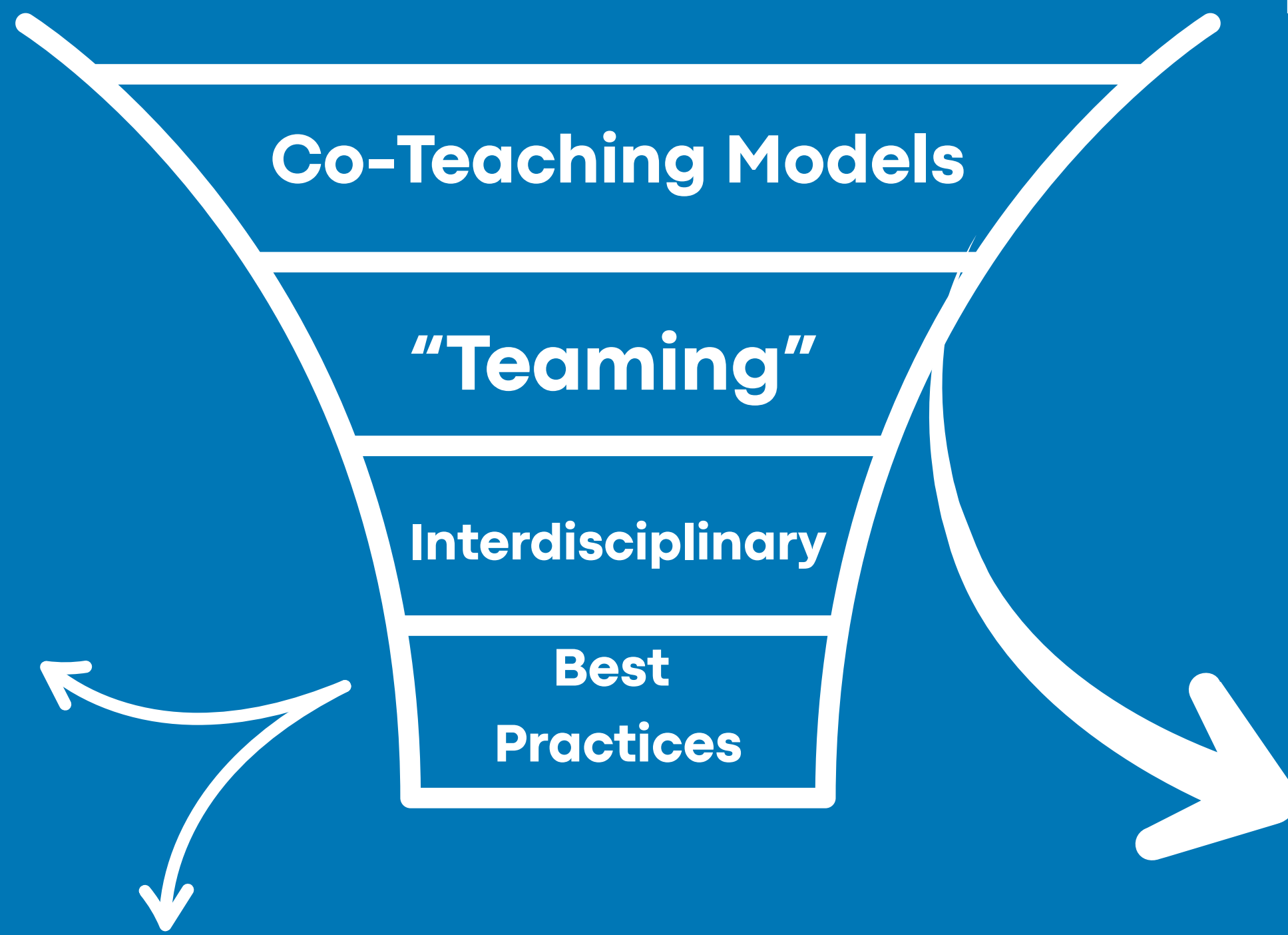


Effective Interdisciplinary Team Teaching: Best Practices in Higher Education

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Team Teaching, Cooperative Teaching, and Co-Teaching refer to a wide range of teaching models where two or more instructors share responsibility for teaching students in a single classroom (Villa et al., 2013).

Modes of Co-Teaching

- **One Teach, One Observe** – One instructor delivers the lesson, the other observes,
- **One Teach, One Assist** - One instructor delivers the lesson, the other provides assistance.
- **Station Teaching** – Students rotate through lessons led by each instructor.
- **Parallel Teaching** – Instructors simultaneously instruct groups of students.
- **Alternative Teaching** – Instructors supplement each other’s teaching.
- **“True” Team Teaching** – **Instructors equally share planning, teaching, and assessment. *Student preference (Dugan & Letterman, 2008)**

Pedagogy

Team Teaching Models extend the goals of liberal arts curricula, decentering the assumption of a single knowledge source in the classroom, providing engagement with multiple learning and teaching styles (Blanchard, 2012), and work effectively with the intentions of interdisciplinary course design (Gaytan, 2010) by facilitating connection between perspectives and disciplinary knowledge bases. Intentional application in professional studies programs, honors or inquiry seminars, and elective interdisciplinary courses broadens potential for student understanding and inquiry while fostering faculty collaboration and shared knowledge construction.

Student Experience with ITT

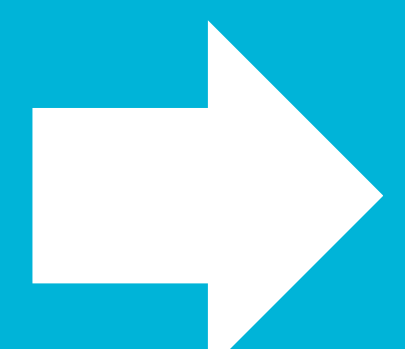


More Resources:
Increased teacher-student interaction, exposure to more learning modes, more “objective” grading (Floyd, 1975) ✓

Interdisciplinary Understanding:
exposure to multiple perspectives, new connections, student participation in learning (Rooks et al., 2022) ✓

Disruption:
Resistance to new learning model, inconsistency, unclear purpose or communication (Harter & Jacobi, 2018) ✗

Synthesized Best Practices for ITT



Improved Practice & Planning:
Experience of other teaching styles, professional communication (Lock et al., 2018) ✓

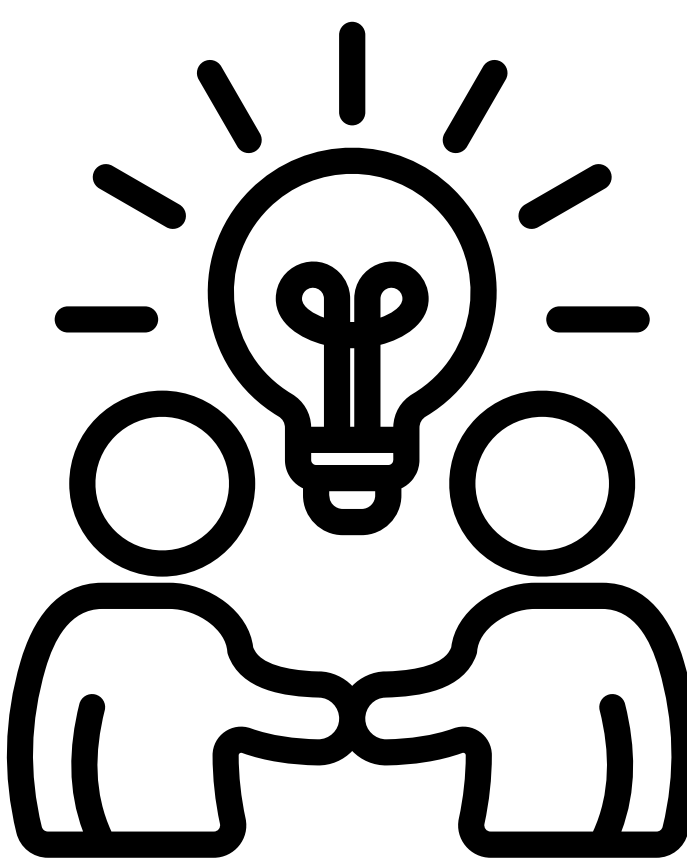
Sharing Power:
Understanding team members’ strengths and highlighting in course development (Harris & Harvey, 2000) ✓

Disorganization:
Students can see if there is a lack of communication, content repetition, personality clash (Rooks et al., 2022) ✗

Instructor Experience with ITT

Planning & Implementation

- Alignment of course goals, concepts, & methods
- Sustained, reflective communication during the course
- Intentional use - course is designed for interdisciplinary learning



Student Scaffolds

- Clear communication of the model’s purpose and use for interdisciplinary learning
- Encourage ambiguity - open inquiry, engagement with perspectives, shared knowledge building

Institutional Support

- Sufficient course planning time
- Professional development for ITT
- Parity in recognition and expectation for team members

Instructor Parity

Team Collaboration

- Co-construction of authority
- Equal engagement in all course elements
- Awareness and evaluation of roles and balance

Literature Review & Ongoing Work

Case studies and theory on ITT in Higher Education from the 1970s to the present reveal consistent signs of success and challenge in student and instructor feedback, suggesting a struggle to define and implement best practices, despite a consensus on the efficacy of “teaming” and its pedagogical value. In the literature, there is a relative lack of large-scale comparative studies between or across universities. A presentation on data collected on student perspectives of ITT in professional studies and honors Method of Inquiry (MOI) courses at Marquette University suggests overlap with the literature body - expanded class resources, increased engagement due to the model (Hollins, 2025). Ongoing data collection conducted by the College of Education & Health Sciences acknowledges challenges to analyzing data: gauging student enthusiasm for ITT, measuring/defining ‘success’ of ITT in a course, which recur in the literature.

ITT at Marquette University

Honors Method of Inquiry (MOI) and professional studies courses currently use multiple instructor models to engage interdisciplinary knowledge and content. However, there are no existing policies or guidelines for using co-taught model. In the 2017 development of the Marquette Core Curriculum, there is reference to “team teaching” but a lack of explication or expectations for how the model should function (Marquette, 2017, pgs. 3, 14).

Preliminary ITT Overview and Best Practices Guide Recommendations for Honors MOI courses and the Center for Teaching and Learning.



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