The Influence Of Interdisciplinary Team Teaching On The Work Lives Of High School Teachers At An Independent School

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THE INFLUENCE OF INTERDISCIPLINARY TEAM TEACHING ON THE WORK LIVES OF HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS AT AN INDEPENDENT SCHOOL

BY

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ABSTRACT

The Influence of Interdisciplinary Team Teaching on the Work Lives of High School Teachers at An Independent School

This case study examined the influences of interdisciplinary team teaching on the work lives of high school teachers at an independent school. Employing qualitative research methods, data from six participants, representing the English, History, Art and Religion departments, were collected from a semi-structured interview. All of the teachers were involved in teaching the same interdisciplinary course. Through inductive analysis and process study, the individual responses were coded and organized around six subsidiary questions and then categorized into six areas of investigation to discover emerging pattern and assist in the interpretation of the data: teachers' sense of the team's work, use of time, professional growth, classroom autonomy, conflicts, and collaboration. Patterns that emerged from a cross-comparison of responses were correlated with the literature. Triangulation of data sources was utilized to enhance the internal validity of the study. The findings from this study confirmed what the research says about the outcomes of interdisciplinary team teaching in the areas of use of time, professional growth and conflicts. Teachers experienced teaching the course as time consuming. They also benefited from the interaction they had with each other. Conflicts between staff members were mostly avoided and thwarted the teachers' ability to develop a deep level of trust.
Compounding their trust was the school's strong culture of autonomy. Teachers did not experience themselves as appreciably gaining more autonomy as a result of teaming. The strength of autonomy at the school also undermined the collaborative efforts of the team, since the teachers did not feel bound to the agreements they made during staff meetings.
Dedication

To my wife Kay – her love, continuous support, and unwavering encouragement enabled me to attain my goal.
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CHAPTER 1

Research Focus

Overview

Following World War II, American education was in a state of upheaval. Many teachers had left their jobs during the War to take higher paying jobs, and less qualified teachers had replaced them. After the War, low teacher salaries made the education profession less desired by college graduates. Schools were being organized into larger units, curriculum was undergoing revision, and students were being grouped according to new practices. Moreover, advances in the technology of education – film and television – were coinciding with curriculum revision (Shaplin, 1964).

Thus the 1950’s were a period potent for innovation in American education, and a number of changes did take place, especially in middle level education. The middle school reform movement that materialized during this period witnessed the emergence of new patterns of school organization and the development of departmental staffing. This movement led, though, to the loss of connections between people and the curriculum. Additionally, teaching was acknowledged to be a profession that emphasized privacy, isolation, and territoriality about one’s classroom and that discouraged sharing professional work or asking for assistance (Adler & Flilhan, 1997; Daresh, 1984; Husband & Short, 1994; Lake, 1989; Rosenholtz, 1985; Van Til, Vars & Lounsbury, 1967).

To bridge this widening gap between people and the curriculum, team teaching became a major educational movement (Shaplin, 1964). Creating smaller learning communities within the larger school setting, team teaching enabled small groups of
students to build stronger relationships with each other and allowed for teachers to have more time to interact with each other and their students.

In the decades that followed, much discussion appeared in the literature about learning communities, primarily in the area of middle level instruction. In 1989 the Carnegie Foundation issued the first national statement on the status of early adolescents and schooling. In its report, *Turning Points: Preparing American Youth for the 21st Century*, The Task Force on Education of Early Adolescents examined the condition of America's young adolescents and made eight recommendations it believed would help maintain a strong and vital America. At the top of the Carnegie Report's list of recommendations was the creation of small communities of learning.

In a 1992 study conducted by the National Middle School Association, teaming in middle schools had risen to 57% of middle schools, up from 33% in 1989 and 42% in 1990 (Arhar, 1997). Teaming was also reaping positive benefits for middle level teachers. Teachers who joined teams “developed a sense of belonging and camaraderie they hoped to instill in their students” (Husband & Short, 1994, p. 58). Teachers in teams were drawing on each other's strengths and expertise. They were engaging in ongoing peer review. They experienced both professional and personal benefits: increased professional discussion and greater influence over decisions affecting teaching, and warmth, friendship, and socialization with adults. They also gained more enthusiasm for teaching and learned material outside their discipline. In short, middle level teachers experienced the organizational structure of teaming as enhancing the appeal of teaching as a profession.
Only slowly, though, have high schools begun to take a cue from the middle level reform movement. Middle level school educators and administrators who have moved into positions at the high school level are challenging the departmentalized approach to education (Spies, 1995). Moreover, some of the same benefits associated with interdisciplinary team teaching at middle level schools can result from interdisciplinary team teaching at the high school level; for example, “a more coherent and relevant curriculum; use of higher order thinking skills; increased opportunities for extended learning experiences beyond the typical class period...; greater teacher motivation and satisfaction; and improved instruction” (Spies, 1995, p. 6). Thus an organizational structure for the high school that addresses both the needs of adolescents and the needs of the adults who work with them may have real benefits to all.

Statement of the Problem

In the public school environment, teachers have the daily responsibility for teaching their classes and providing supervision for students. In some schools, when the school day is done and students go home, so do the teachers. In others, teachers remain to give their time to their students for extra help. Beyond these commitments, though, they often have little time to get to know their students outside the classroom and may have little incentive to do so.

In an independent school, teachers carry the same responsibilities and more, and they neither belong to a union nor receive tenure. In essence, teachers at an independent school are hired on a yearly basis; the closest they come to tenure is to receive a new
contract annually. As part of their job responsibility, they may be administrators, and they are expected to be available and accessible to their students. They often coach one or more sports and advise clubs. They also participate actively in the community and life of the school by providing support and guidance to their students, and by attending school concerts, plays, special events, and athletic contests. They know their students well, often developing close personal relationships with them because of their interactions in the classrooms and on the playing fields, or through their involvement as advisors to extracurricular activities.

Because of the importance placed on teacher involvement in an independent school community, teachers have little time during the school day when they are not interacting with students. Free time is frequently spent giving extra help to students who, because of their commitments, can meet teachers only in a common free period or outside the time of the normal school day. Coaching responsibilities often cause teachers to miss department or faculty meetings and find them coaching weekend practices or games. Schedule constraints, such as no common free periods, also create difficulties. Teachers who share common teaching responsibilities rarely have common free periods to discuss different instructional techniques or share issues concerning what they are teaching.

As a result, independent school teachers have demands on their time that make for full and long days even before they begin to plan for the next one. And though independent schools often have a lower ratio of students to teachers than public schools, the breadth of course offerings can look like a college course catalogue. Add interdisciplinary team taught courses, and independent school teachers frequently have to
carve out time before the school day begins or well after it is over in an effort to do necessary planning and preparation.

No studies have focused on the presence of interdisciplinary team taught courses at independent schools. However, workshops at the annual National Association of Independent School conferences and conversations with other independent school colleagues suggest that many independent schools have only recently begun to add interdisciplinary team taught courses to their curricula. Moreover, discussions with independent school colleagues indicate that independent schools are also trying to bridge disciplines through merging English and history classes into “humanities” courses or by creating joint departmental projects for an entire grade. Independent schools are also focusing their attention at both the middle and high school level.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the influences of interdisciplinary team teaching on teachers at the high school level. Most literature pertaining to interdisciplinary teaming deals with middle level education and the affective outcomes for students and teachers (Arhar, 1997; Irvin, 1997; Lounsbury, 1992; Shaplin & Olds, 1964; Valentine et al, 1993; Van Til, Vars & Lounsbury, 1967). Only recently have researchers begun to examine the outcomes of interdisciplinary teaming at the high school level (Edwards, 1995; Spies, 1995). Presently, there appears to be a direct correlation between benefits to middle level and high school level teachers, but the body of literature available remains inconclusive (Edwards, 1995; Spies, 1995).
This study will not only concentrate on team teaching at the high school level, but it will also focus on an independent school and the effects of teaming on teachers' work lives. By interviewing teachers who are involved in the teaching of an interdisciplinary course and eliciting their perceptions, the researcher intends to gain insight into whether teaching this course demanded that teachers sacrifice their "free" time, whether they experienced greater confidence as teachers, whether they developed conflict management skills, whether their ability to collaborate was enhanced, and whether their attitudes toward teaching and their actual teaching practices changed.

Significance of the Study

This study has relevance for all high school teachers involved in interdisciplinary team teaching but more specifically for high school teachers at an independent school. Information gathered from interviews of high school teachers involved in interdisciplinary teaming adds valuable data to a small but increasing reservoir of material. This information will be useful to high school teachers in helping them realize that interdisciplinary team teaching need not be limited to the middle school. It will serve to corroborate the belief of high school level teachers and administrators who were once middle level school educators: interdisciplinary team teaching at the high school level can result in many of the same benefits found at the middle school level.

The outcome of this research will enable educators to better understand the importance of encouraging interdisciplinary team teaching at the high school level. The research will also provide additional information about the impact interdisciplinary team
teaching has on teachers' work lives and aid high schools in working to create and implement other interdisciplinary courses that avoid incompatible concerns.

The Research Question

How do independent school teachers in a selected high school environment, who are part of an interdisciplinary team, perceive the influence of that teaming on their work lives?

Subsidiary Questions

1. What are team members' perceptions of the nature of the interdisciplinary team's work in the independent school, and why do they believe it is set up as it is?

2. What are team members' perceptions of the effects the teaching schedule has on their use of time?

3. What are team members' perceptions about their professional growth, as a result of being a member of an interdisciplinary team?

4. What effect does being a member of an interdisciplinary team have on a teacher's perception of his or her autonomy in the classroom, and what accounts for it?

5. What are team members' perceptions about how conflicts between them arise and are resolved?
6. What are team members’ perceptions about collaboration among themselves, and to what do they attribute these perceptions?

Hypotheses

1. Team teaching at an independent school will place greater demands on teachers’ free time.

2. Involvement on an interdisciplinary team at an independent school will have little if any effect on teachers’ classroom autonomy.

3. Team teaching will enhance teachers’ instructional skills and professional growth.

4. Collaboration between teachers from different disciplines will change the way teachers view their role and interact with each other.

5. Team teaching will affect teachers’ attitudes toward teaching.

Definition of Terms

This study will use several terms repeatedly. In an effort to clarify how they are to be understood, the following terms are defined: autonomy, collaboration, community of learning, conflict management, independent school, interdisciplinary team teaching, middle level education, high school, professional growth, and time management.

**Autonomy.** Because teaching usually involves the presence of a single person working with a roomful of students, the teacher is in charge of what goes on in the classroom. The teacher decides how the material to be covered will be taught. In this
study, autonomy is defined as “the ability to control daily schedules, to teach as one chooses, to have freedom to make decisions on instruction, and to generate discussion about curriculum” (Husband & Short, 1994).

**Collaboration.** Collaboration can be defined as “a cooperative endeavor that involves common goals, coordinated effort, and outcomes or practices for which collaborators share responsibility and credit” (Austin & Baldwin, 1991). Gray defines collaboration as “a process through which parties who see different aspects of a problem can constructively explore their differences and search for solutions that go beyond their own limited vision of what is possible” (1989, p. 5). Pounder (1999) views collaboration as the development of interpersonal and group decision making skills that occur between group members or teacher teams in their endeavor to improve their performance and outcomes, work interdependence and self-management opportunities. As used in this study, collaboration is defined as teachers engaged in an interactive process to act or decide on issues related to a shared task.

**Community of learning.** Though much discussion has appeared in the literature about communities of learning, most of it has dealt with middle level schooling in public education. Moreover, the discussion has appeared in the context of curriculum organizational patterns such as core curriculum, block time scheduling, unified studies, team teaching, and interdisciplinary teaming (Lounsbury & Vars, 1978). Community of learning, as used in this study, is defined as the environment in which stable, close, mutually respectful relationships with adults and peers occur.

**Conflict management.** Conflicts arise from a diversity of thoughts, attitudes, beliefs, perceptions and social systems and structures between people (Lord, 1999;
Weeks, 1992). Though often viewed negatively, conflict also has the positive potential for mutual growth, "generating opportunities to learn from and adapt to the diversities and differences that are natural and healthy characteristics of our society" (Weeks, p. 7). In this study, conflict management is defined as the process employed in resolving conflicts between teachers to maintain the common commitment to shared goals.

**Independent School.** An independent school is defined as a school that is supported by tuitions, charitable contributions, and endowment income, rather than by tax or church funds. It receives no federal or state aid and is governed by a Board of Trustees which is responsible for overseeing the school's fiscal health and monitoring the fulfillment of its stated mission.

**Interdisciplinary Team Teaching.** (Alternative terminology: team teaching; teaming; interdisciplinary teaming) Shaplin defines team teaching as "a type of instructional organization, involving teaching personnel and the students assigned to them, in which two or more teachers are given responsibility, working together, for all or a significant part of the instruction of the same group of students" (Shaplin & Olds, 1964, p. 15). Alexander and George modify Shaplin's definition and add the word "organization," which puts the focus on the structural requirements of the team (1981). Thus for them, interdisciplinary team organization is "a way of organizing the faculty so that a group of teachers share: (1) the responsibility for planning, teaching, and evaluating curriculum and instruction in more than one academic area; (2) the same group of students; (3) the same schedule; and (4) the same area of the building" (p. 115). A simpler and more recent definition of interdisciplinary team organization, and the one
used here, is "two or more teachers working together to coordinate instruction in three, four, or five subject areas" (Merenbloom, 1991, p. 22).

**Middle level education.** Middle level education consists of a variety of grade configurations: 5-6-7-8, 6-7-8, 7-8, 7-8-9. As used in this study, it encompasses all these different arrangements and is synonymous with middle school and junior high.

**High school.** As used in this study, high school refers to the grade configuration of 9-10-11-12.

**Professional growth.** Professional growth of teachers entails a number of different criteria that include such things as: teachers being central to student learning; the development of further expertise in subject content and teaching strategies; and the promotion of continuous inquiry and personal improvement by the institution (Http://www.ed.gov/Units/TeachersWeb). Professional growth, as used in this study, is defined as the ability of teachers to function in a professional environment, to have an opportunity for continuous learning, and to share decisions and collaborate with colleagues.

**Time management.** Teachers have mandated times that they must be at school. Like their students, they have a responsibility to be in class at specified times during the day to conduct their classes. At many independent schools, teachers also serve as advisors to students and extracurricular activities, coach athletics, provide students with extra help, and may even have administrative duties. In this study time management is defined as the way in which teachers use their time to meet the demands of their responsibilities to their students and the school.
Limitations of the Study

This study was limited in terms of its scope and research design. The study employed a case study of teachers involved in a single interdisciplinary course at an independent school that offers a number of interdisciplinary courses. Therefore, the findings were limited in application only to other interdisciplinary courses taught at the school. However, it is assumed that the findings will have relevance to other high schools with interdisciplinary team taught courses. In addition, the interdisciplinary team consisted of 10 people, but only those who had at least one year of teaching the course were eligible to be interviewed. Therefore, only six independent high school teachers participated in the study.

Another limitation to the study was the lack of any written documentation about the development of the course. All data related to the background of the course came from the memory of the team leader who had been actively involved in the design and implementation of the course.

Further, the responses interviewees made during the interview might have been affected by their attitudes toward the study, their willingness to respond to questions openly, and the point during the term at which they were interviewed. Other limitations may arise due to the analysis and interpretation of the data. Finally, restricting the investigation to the influences of team teaching on the work lives of high school teachers at an independent school in the areas of their use of time, professional growth, autonomy, conflict mediation, and collaboration has limited the study.
Methodology

This single-site case study allowed for the interview of members of an interdisciplinary team and the observation of them both in staff meetings and in the classroom. The primary source of data came from site-based interviews. Six teachers from the staff of ten were interviewed for approximately an hour. The interviews focused on the following six areas: 1) team members' perceptions of the team's work; 2) their perceptions about how team teaching affects their use of time; 3) their perceptions of what they have gained professionally from team teaching; 4) their perceptions about whether they have experienced greater or lesser classroom autonomy; 5) their perceptions of how conflicts are mediated; and 6) their perceptions about how they collaborate with each other. After the interviews were transcribed, the data were coded and analyzed to facilitate interpretations (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998; Krathwohl, 1998) regarding the influences of interdisciplinary team teaching on members' work lives.

A second method of data collection involved observations of several members' teaching and of several team staff meetings. Three members' classes were observed once during the fall term. Three staff meetings were observed during the first two terms of the school year. A third method of data collection entailed an informal interview of the team leader to gather information about the origins, development, and implementation of the course. This information helped to validate information collected from interviews and observations.

The multiple forms of data collection, widely referred to as triangulation in qualitative research, contributed to a broader understanding of the research question
under review. Triangulation contributes also to greater validity because it relies on
different data collection methods to corroborate findings (Krathwohl, 1998).

Summary

The focus of this study was to examine the influence of interdisciplinary team
teaching on the work lives of independent school teachers. The research explored the
collaborative relationship between members of an interdisciplinary team. It looked at
whether team members feel hampered by added demands on their time, experience
greater autonomy in the classroom, encounter increased professional growth, and feel
conflicts are resolved more readily. An understanding of how interdisciplinary team
teaching affects the work lives and perceptions of independent school teachers becomes
an important component of how an independent school may derive a stronger
commitment of teachers to teaching and to developing their instructional practices.
CHAPTER 2

Review of Relevant Research and Theory

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present a review of literature and provide a further rationale for the current study. The literature and research that was reviewed related to the areas of interdisciplinary teaming, time management, professional growth, autonomy, conflict resolution, and collaboration.

The first section of the chapter focuses on the history and development of interdisciplinary team teaching and its advantages and limitations. The second section of the literature review pertains to time, professional growth, autonomy, conflict resolution, and collaboration. The third and final section sets forth the theory of negotiated order, which will be used as the theoretical framework for this study.

Interdisciplinary Teaming

Interdisciplinary teaming is the natural outgrowth of two coexisting approaches to education: interdisciplinary education and team teaching. Interdisciplinary education has roots as far back as the 1930's, when the Eight Year Study was begun (Shaplin & Olds, 1964), to its more recent recognition by the Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development (Jacobs, 1988) as an issue of primary importance. Jacobs argues, "The renewed trend in the schools toward interdisciplinarity will help students better integrate
strategies from their studies into the larger world." (p. 6). She concludes her argument, contending that there needs to be support for interdisciplinary curriculum at all levels, even as schools comply with state requirements for graduation and though time constraints create difficulties. Within the 1990's two major teaching journals, Educational Leadership and English Journal also devoted entire issues to the topic.

The concept of team teaching emerged as part of the reform movement for middle schools following World War II. During the 1960's, teacher professionalism became every bit as important as student achievement, and, according to Shaplin and Olds (1964), research began to focus on the relationship between these two concerns. However, the models of team teaching that emerged in this period were similar in design to the Cooperative Group Plan espoused by James F. Hosic in the early 1930's (Shaplin & Olds, 1964). This plan, briefly embraced in New York City schools, had little effect on the education scene at the time. Nonetheless, its principles are almost indistinguishable from team teaching as it is articulated today.

The Cooperative Group Plan had, as a primary purpose, the goal of providing for the individual differences of teachers, administrators and students in the school community. The plan revolved around teachers being responsible for working with a group of shared students, with one teacher designated as a group leader. Members of the group were then expected to relate their work and that of their students to the activities of the other teachers (Shaplin & Olds, 1964). Why it did not become popular is unclear, but it was evidently a plan before its time.

Not until 1961 did team teaching become a popular topic at the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development Conference. The Committee on Staff
Utilization, appointed by the National Association of Secondary School Principals and led by J. Lloyd Trump, was responsible for encouraging experimentation with new staff organizational patterns. Following his lead, many schools began to implement team teaching.

Team teaching, however, was only one approach amid a breadth of innovations and changes during an explosive era of American education aimed at improving the quality of instruction. Other common goals included:

...a search for ways to create for teachers alternative new positions with greater status, rewards and responsibility; a search for ways to improve the utilization of present teaching staff and facilities; a search for ways to revise the school curriculum in almost all areas; a search for ways to create smaller human organizations within the large size structures which have become characteristics of our schools...(Shaplin & Olds, 1964, p. 49).

Designed as a strategy to meet procedural rather than curricular goals, though, team teaching focused on the relationship between grouped teachers and their students.

In the 1980’s when teacher professionalism once again became a key issue in school reform, the organization of schools and teachers' roles within them shifted to more collaborative teaching assignments and working relationships. Nowhere had this situation been more evident than in the middle school reform effort, which has taken the lead on realizing more collaborative working relationships. Arhar (1997), in examining several large scale surveys conducted since 1989 and related to the incidence of teaming
in the middle level schools, noted that teaming had increased from 33% in 1989 to 57% in 1992.

Furthermore, as the organizational structure of teaming has evolved, “the interdisciplinary team has been touted in the middle school literature as the preferred way to organize basic subject teachers” (Erb, 1992, p. 7). Underscoring this trend is Lounsbury’s belief (1992) that probably no single word has been more frequently cited in relationship to the middle school than has the word interdisciplinary. As the movement has grown the resolve to counter the fragmentation of the typical subject-centered day has become even firmer. And teaming continues as the major means advanced to connect the curriculum (p. 1).

Interdisciplinary teaming is defined simply as “two or more teachers working together to coordinate instruction in three, four, or five subject areas” (Merenbloom, 1991, p. 22). Essentially it is seen as a unique educational experience designed to make the transition from elementary school to high school as smooth and continuous as possible: “a middle way between the elementary school self-contained classroom and the high school department” (Alexander & George, 1981, p. 114). The Carnegie Council’s Task Force on Education of Young Adolescents (1989) not only supported this approach to middle level education but also recommended the creation of “small communities for learning where stable, close, mutually respectful relationships with adults and peers are considered fundamental for intellectual development and personal growth” (p. 9). Moreover, these communities would behave like schools-within-schools, where students and teachers were grouped together as teams.
Although interdisciplinary teams can be organized in a variety of ways, team organization today is more of a fundamental structural change than the team teaching model of the 1960's and early 1970's. Four organizational aspects define team organization, two of which are absolutely essential: "(1) common planning time or team meeting time and (2) shared students" (Erb, 1992, p. 8). The other two factors, common teaching time and common space, though less essential, enable the full functioning of interdisciplinary teams.

The most common organizational form ranges "from teams of two teachers and 50-75 students to teams of six teachers with 150-190 students" (Alexander & George, 1981, p. 116). Though most teams have the responsibility of teaching different core areas, such as math, social studies, science and language arts, "it is the number of teachers on a team that usually sets limits on the number of different subjects each teacher teaches" (pp. 117-118).

Most interdisciplinary teams also have team leaders who are appointed by the principal or selected from within the team by team members (Merenbloom, 1991). They usually serve as the liaison between the team and administration (Alexander & George, 1981) but, in this position, they may cause other team members to feel that decision making causes distance between other team teachers and the principal (Whitford & Kyle, 1984). Whitford and Kyle (1984) also observed that when teams met, some were joined by the curriculum coordinator, sometimes by a counselor assigned to the team, and even, on occasion, by the principal. Often, though, teachers met only with other members of the team.
Essential to the interdisciplinary team organization is a common team meeting time. This time is a planning period where all teachers on the team have the same period available to plan together. Without it many interdisciplinary teams find it difficult to meet. Researchers concur that the amount of team planning time affects the likely success of the interdisciplinary team (Alexander & George, 1981; Erb & Doda, 1989; MacIver, 1990, Whitford & Kyle, 1984). Indeed, when interdisciplinary teams have more common planning time, teachers derive greater benefits.

In theory, interdisciplinary teams enable teachers to be more quickly, personally and consistently responsive to their students' individual needs. Team members are aware, in theory, what the students are doing in their classes, thereby enabling increased integration of content areas (Alexander & George, 1981; Valentine, Clark, Irvin, Keefe & Melton, 1993; Whitford & Kyle, 1984). Ideally, teaming also allows teachers to benefit from each other's strengths (Cohen, 1976) and "experience real collaboration within the workplace and become more satisfied professionally" (Valentine, Clark, Irvin, Keefe & Melton, 1993, p. 49).

Merenbloom (1991) suggests the following benefits to the interdisciplinary team approach:

1. Students have subject matter specialists for each subject, but there is coordination of the total instructional program.
2. Beyond the standard curriculum guides, thematic interdisciplinary units as well as specific interdisciplinary activities can be planned to meet the needs of pupils.
3. Teachers can work as a team to focus on the needs of pupils.
4. Content, skills, and personal development activities can be correlated.

5. Planning periods can be used for pupil and parent conferences.

6. A discipline code for the entire team can be consistently implemented.

7. The use of contiguous classrooms permits students to change classes at
times decided by a team of teachers without disturbing other classes.

8. Block-of-time and flexible scheduling can facilitate fundamental
aspects of the program.

9. Teaching sections can be organized on a homogenous, heterogeneous,
or contiguous basis; regrouping is possible (p. 22).

Beyond these benefits, the interdisciplinary team concept has instructional and
affective advantages to individual teachers. Alexander and George (1981) suggest that
teachers gain the following instructional advantages:

1. Team members’ overriding knowledge of student needs allows for educational
planning of all kinds.

2. Team teachers experience added intellectual stimulation through interaction
with people having different academic perspectives and professional points of
view.

3. Trust among team members encourages a more open exchange of ideas and
teaching methods. This especially benefits faculty new to the school in their
orientation.

4. Interaction between teachers often broadens awareness of each other’s
teaching styles.
5. Team organization allows colleagues to support one another during times of personal crisis, thereby reducing the impact on the instructional program.

6. Group problem solving leads to better educational decisions.

7. Interdisciplinary units enable integration of the curriculum.

8. Territoriality, often associated with a single subject structure, decreases through team organization (pp. 132-133).

Among the affective benefits of interdisciplinary team organizational structure, Alexander and George (1981) suggest that teachers gain the following:

1. Team members develop a "sense of community."

2. Interdisciplinary team organization creates an "esprit de corps" among the members of the team.

3. Team teachers exercise a measure of autonomy, sharing increased power among themselves (pp. 134-137).

Much of the research dealing with the effectiveness of interdisciplinary teams has focused on middle level education (Spies, 1995). A review of available research on the effects of the teaming concept on affective outcomes suggests that while the interdisciplinary team organizational structure has merit, it is not without its limitations. There has also been some discussion about interdisciplinary teaming at the high school level (Burns, 1995; Edwards, 1995; George & McEwin, 1999; Hart, 1998; Impson, Lynman & Reiter, 1995; Murphy, 1998; Spies, 1995; Spies, 1997), but few studies have been conducted to corroborate the results associated with middle level education research. Consequently, the following discussion pertains mostly to middle level education.
McKinley (1996) undertook to study the impact of interdisciplinary teams on faculty involved in teaching interdisciplinary courses. He gathered evidence in the form of surveys and in the form of interviews of both students and faculty involved. His findings revealed that both groups found the course stimulating and enjoyable because of the differences of opinion and the interaction with each other. Students developed a deeper understanding of material, and faculty commented that students were more interested in the material. Faculty enjoyed the learning environment because it forced students to think and write more deeply.

Arhar, Johnston and Markle (1992) reviewed a number of studies dealing with middle level teacher outcomes involving interdisciplinary teaming. Indicating that research in this area is relatively new and sparse, they contended that the studies demonstrated decreased isolation of teachers, improved morale among teachers, greater individualized attention to students, more decision making power, and better communication among teachers. Some issues they highlighted were the demands of collaborative work on teachers and the conflicts that arose between colleagues and between team members and the school organization. Even so, they concluded that the results of interdisciplinary teaming were more promising than discouraging.

Foss and Pinckback (1998) discussed a course designed to implement an integrated curriculum in math, science, and reading. They noted that teachers developed a familiarity with constructivist theory and real-life connections to the three subject areas. Additionally, they concluded that teachers needed an environment where they could learn as children learn. A benefit of the project was that it allowed teachers to interact, rather than work in isolation.
McPartland, Semple and Byram (1998) described a curriculum project that involved student teachers from Durham, England, visiting the town of Olomouc in the Czech Republic. The teachers' objectives were to plan and prepare teaching materials and teach a school-based curriculum project. Though the project was fraught with difficulties, the final evaluation pointed out the value of the project to all of the Durham students. They learned "the value of team teaching with a colleague from another discipline, the necessity of developing coping strategies and they acquired a heightened awareness not only of a different cultural context but also of their own environment forcing them into a re-evaluation of it" (p. 113). This "experiment" had real value in demonstrating the possibilities of interdisciplinary team teaching to students who hitherto had no outside experience of being subjected to an integrative approach to learning.

Hart (1998) looked to the literature to affirm the positive outcome of interdisciplinary teaching. His research indicated that interdisciplinary team teachers became more supportive of each other and created a more stimulating work environment, due to the wealth of ideas that were exchanged. Within this context he then examined the results of his own school's emergence into the interdisciplinary mainstream and became a strong advocate for interdisciplinary team teaching.

J. M. Arhar (1997) discussed a number of recent studies dealing with interdisciplinary teaming and their effects on teachers and students. Noting that interdisciplinary teaming was not a new idea but one that received little attention during the 1970's and 1980's, she indicated that commitment to teaming in the past decade had increased. She also noted that teachers who were members of interdisciplinary teams repeatedly pointed to teacher satisfaction, enthusiasm, increased commitment to teaching,
and enhanced professionalism.

Clark and Clark (1997) argued that when properly implemented,
"interdisciplinary teaming makes better use of faculty members’ skills" and "provides a
support system that encourages innovation and professional autonomy" (p. 267). They
also indicated that teachers derived a variety of benefits through increased opportunities
for collaboration: improved communication, enhanced job satisfaction, and greater
opportunities for professional development. Finally, they noted, teachers felt empowered
to make decisions and modify programs.

Husband and Short (1994) investigated the relationship between teachers'
perceived levels of empowerment in middle level educational interdisciplinary teams and
departmentally organized programs. Their study included 309 teachers from 16 middle
level schools. One hundred fifty-five teachers participated in interdisciplinary teams, and
154 participated in departmentally organized programs. The results showed the
interdisciplinary team teachers perceived themselves as more empowered than the
departmentally organized teachers. Husband and Short (1994) concluded that, among
other things, teachers felt more motivated by their work and experienced greater
satisfaction; they experienced greater control over instructional decisions; and they
recognized their colleagues’ strengths, which led to greater respect for one another.

Meichtry (1990) investigated the effects of interdisciplinary teaming on teachers’
interactions with one another and their classroom practices. Focusing on two teams of
teachers at a Midwest middle school, she found that the collaborative nature of teaming
resulted in teachers’ altering their teaching practices. They integrated curriculum across
the disciplines and employed new approaches to instruction. Their interaction with one
another made them more reflective in their own work and engendered a more collegial social setting, such that the traditional isolation associated with many schools disappeared.

Paul Spies (1999), an advocate of interdisciplinary teaming at the high school level, conducted a study of two Midwestern high schools that had established interdisciplinary team taught programs. His research probed the challenges encountered when schools attempt to implement and sustain interdisciplinary teams in traditionally departmentalized high schools. However, he found that the schools' more than five years of teaming did not make implementing and sustaining teams any easier; the schools were still grappling with the process.

He discovered that the teams at the two schools received varying forms and degrees of support in such areas as time, team building, and administrative recognition. The schools' teams also received little if any team staff development. And though team theory (Erb & Doda, 1989; Merenbloom, 1991) promotes the creation of roles and responsibilities for team teachers, the teachers had unclearly defined roles and responsibilities. Nevertheless, despite these problems, he concluded that interdisciplinary teams could be sustained.

Other research (Beane, 1990; Lounsbury, 1992; Merenbloom, 1991; Whitford & Kyle, 1984) that highlights affective outcomes for teachers also mentions limitations of the interdisciplinary team structure. Daresh (1984) heralded the values of teaming, articulating three instructional factors. 1) Teaming allows teachers to rely on the strengths and expertise of one another. 2) Teaming enables ongoing constructive feedback on a regular basis. 3) Teaming helps develop continuity in a school program,
such that if a staff member departs, the program will not be undermined. However, he cautioned that the implementation of teaming requires collaborative interpersonal skills for effective group membership, and group decision making takes more time but may be unnecessary.

Merenbloom (1991) also highlights six factors that may affect the implementation of the interdisciplinary approach. 1) Teachers must have a common team planning period in their workday. 2) Staffing guidelines may be inadequate for the establishment of reasonable class size. 3) Block scheduling is a high scheduling priority. 4) Teachers who are not part of the team structure may not be involved in the planning process. 5) Classroom responsibility for teachers is expanded. 6) Teacher personalities must be compatible.

Garner (1976) enumerates five reasons why schools experience difficulty with successful implementation of interdisciplinary teaming. 1) Team members have not internalized the interdisciplinary teaming philosophy. 2) They have not received training to develop interdisciplinary units. 3) Space and resources are inadequate. 4) Scheduling does not allow for students to accomplish the learning objectives. 5) Team members' incompatibility may strain relationships.

John Lounsbury (1992) indicated that it was important for middle level educators to be well grounded in interdisciplinary instruction: “Significant benefits to youth would result as teachers collaborate on various routines and occasionally correlate their presentations, even fusing subjects once in a while” (p. 2). He too added, though, that teaming had shortcomings. These shortcomings consisted of lost interaction between members of the same department and the displacement of non-academic teachers when
interdisciplinary teams were formed. Moreover, he indicated that teachers did not always experience a lighter teaching load, and teamed teachers tended to teach what they knew best, thus neglecting more important areas. Not all teachers, however, agreed that this issue was a problem because the workload was shared among teachers (MacIver, 1990; Whitford & Kyle, 1984). Finally, changing the curriculum did not by itself improve the outcome; there also had to be organizational changes.

Other limitations associated with the interdisciplinary teaming were lack of change in instructional methods and little change in subject-area contributions (Beane, 1990; Lounsbury, 1992). There was also no guarantee that the opportunity or organizational structure alone would engender collaboration. Indeed, teachers reported that long-term cooperation between team members was difficult to sustain, and personality conflicts did arise among team members. Some researchers also found that interdisciplinary teaming was not always successful because of the nature of a team’s composition.

Cohen’s research (1976) revealed that teachers who teamed felt “an increased sense of control, efficacy, or power as a consequence of team interaction and influence” (p. 11), but she also observed that “the increased interaction of team teachers was not unconditionally associated with teacher satisfaction” (p. 12). She concluded that the problems of time, communication, coordination, and lack of administrative support resulted in unstable and fragile teams. Because an interdisciplinary team consists of a small group of teachers from different disciplines working together, issues of time for planning, conflicts among team members, intrusion into one another’s classroom, and compensating for another member’s indolence existed.

Whitford and Kyle (1984) conducted a yearlong study of Hilltop Junior High
School's initial experience with interdisciplinary teaming. Though their conclusions supported the findings of beneficial, affective outcomes for teachers, they too underscored the importance of team planning time. They reported that part of the school's in-service time was devoted to issues other than teaming. Hilltop's interdisciplinary team teachers therefore mostly learned through their first-hand experiences. Inadequate preparation frequently left the teachers confused and dislocated and resulted, at times, in the instructional units being less than successful.

Interdisciplinary teaming is a generally accepted and established instructional approach in middle level education that creates an environment where improved programs are possible. Teachers gain greater professional satisfaction, an increased sense of power, and a greater feeling of belonging. Effective teaming depends upon team members' working relationships, commitment and willingness to meet for planning and discussion. However, interdisciplinary teaming organization may encounter difficulties. Problems that may disrupt the teaming process include scheduling, a heavier work load, lack of common planning periods, long term cooperation between team members, and inadequate training of teachers for the teaming process.

Time, professional growth, autonomy, conflict resolution, and collaboration

The factors of time, professional growth, autonomy, conflict management and collaboration are all aspects of teaming that affect or are affected by interdisciplinary team teaching organization. This section of the review of literature will focus on what
research and articles say about their effects on interdisciplinary team teaching and/or interdisciplinary teaming's influences on teachers.

Time

A U. S. Government report, *Prisoners of Time* (April, 1994), cites a recent RAND Education study dealing with the reallocation of time and finds the following findings troubling:

1. new teaching strategies can take up to 50 hours of instruction, practice and coaching before teachers are comfortable with them;

2. up to 50 days of external technical assistance were needed by successful urban schools for coaching and strengthening of staff skills through professional development; and

3. resolving the time issue is a critical problem for educators today.

A 1992 NASSP study (as cited in Valentine, J. W., Clark, D. C., Irvin, J. L., Keefe, J. W., & Melton, G., 1993) noted that teaming requires more time because of the necessity of common planning, or team meeting, time. Valentine et al. (1993) compared the results of the NASSP study (1992), which investigated middle level programs, to two earlier studies conducted by Epstein and Mac Iver (as cited in Valentine et al., 1993) and Alexander and McEwin (as cited in Valentine et al., 1993). The NASSP study found that of the 57% of schools using teaming, "more than one-third have one planning period at the same time for all members of the team. Fifty-four percent said that teams of teachers had one common plus one individual planning period. Fifteen percent reported a
planning period, but not necessarily at the same time for all members of the team”
(Valentine et al. 1993, p. 52). By comparison, Valentine et al. (1993) noted, Epstein and
Mac Iver (as cited in Valentine et al., 1993) “found that almost 30 percent of the schools
using interdisciplinary teaming offered no common planning time” (p. 52).

McQuaide (1992) conducted a case study concerning how teachers spent their
time in mandated team planning. Her study focused on one newly formed, three-member
team of sixth grade teachers and measured the amount of time spent during team
meetings discussing such things as students, subject matter and teaching strategies. She
concluded that teachers had sufficient time allotted for meetings but would have profited
from guidance on meeting structure and alternative uses of time.

Adler and Flihan (1997) undertook a literature review to articulate the current
theoretical understanding of interdisciplinary education and to examine how it influences
practices in middle and high schools. In their assessment they noted the agreement
among multiple sources for the need for time. They found that while the literature agrees
about the necessity of time for planning and training, time is not always used as
effectively as it could be; it is only effective “if it is used and valued for its intended
purpose” (p. 20).

Kruse and Louis (1997) analyzed the experiences of four middle schools with
interdisciplinary teams. They observed that tension existed between time devoted for
team planning and time for whole-school discussions. Time for the work of the entire
faculty became more fragmentary and less available, and teamed teachers could not share
concerns and successes when the entire faculty met. “Without the opportunity to share
and talk with faculty not on the team, teachers lose interest in relating to the other
members of the faculty. They do not feel the strong connections with the full faculty that they do with their teaming pairs” (p. 269). They spent their time where they felt most supported – within their teams.

Russell, Jarmin and Reiser (1997) undertook a five year study, surveying educators in 10 junior high/middle schools in a large, urban, Midwestern district that was in the process of changing from the junior high to the middle school model. Their findings found that attitudes about common planning periods were very positive in the first year, “with 91 percent of teachers indicating that they agreed or strongly agreed with the concept” (p. 35) of common planning periods. Though agreement with the concept in these two areas dipped slightly to 89% in the second and fourth years of the study, by the study’s end, it was up to 92% of teachers agreeing or strongly agreeing with the concept. However, teachers’ agreement with the concept of controlling the block-of-time scheduling for regrouping students on a team dropped from 92% agreeing or strongly agreeing the first year to 79% by the study’s end.

Shillington (1994), looking to the study conducted by Epstein and Mac Iver (as cited in Shillington, 1994), noted that teams with less than the recommended 2.5 hours of common planning time per week were unlikely to achieve the organization’s full potential. Moreover, she pointed out that though most respondents found teaming satisfying, lack of time “was the biggest problem in team participation” (p. 51). She also added that insufficient planning time and inadequate preparation for decision making among team members reduced affective outcomes for teachers, students, or school programs.
The foregoing discussion underscores the importance of time as a valuable component of interdisciplinary team teaching. Though it may not be possible to provide teachers with common teaching periods or space, having common planning time is vital to a team's work.

Professional Growth

The report of the Carnegie Council's Task Force on Education of Young Adolescents, *Turning Points* (1989), called for schools that more fully meet the needs of young adolescents. Attaining that goal requires, in part, that teachers receive more sophisticated training and spend time continuously learning. As it is, today's teachers' responsibilities run the gamut of instructing students and developing lesson plans to integrating technology into their teaching and finding multicultural elements in their subject matter. Indeed, teachers of the 21st century will require different knowledge skills than teachers today, and their learning will require them to keep pace with the changing times and varying needs of students. Advocates of teaming (Alexander & George, 1981; Erb, 1992; Irvin, 1997; Lipsitz, 1984; Lounsbury, 1992; Meichtry, 1990; Merenbloom, 1991; Russell, Jarmin, & Reiser, 1997; Spies, 1997; Whitford & Kyle, 1984) suggest that teaming has positive benefits on teachers' professional growth.

In their study of Hilltop Junior High School, Whitford and Kyle (1984) discussed the influence of teaming on staff development. Though they observed that in-service training was inadequate due to the limited amount of available time, they discovered that the team itself was the most significant mechanism of staff development. Team members
had the opportunity to share information and insights among themselves about teaching. They also shared difficulties they experienced as teachers and found others of them had similar problems, thereby allowing private struggles to become public concerns, a substantive basis for staff development.

Husband and Short (1994) undertook a study to investigate the relationship between teaming and feelings of empowerment. They compared the perceived empowerment of teachers working in departmentalized organizations to the perceptions of those who worked on interdisciplinary teams. Of the 309 responses (155 were interdisciplinary team members, 154 departmentally organized teachers), they reported that interdisciplinary team members were more empowered in the area of professional development than departmentally organized teachers. They advanced three reasons for this finding. First, teachers participated in planning and staff development activities preceding the establishment of an interdisciplinary team approach. Second, they were trained in such areas as team building and maintenance, group problem solving, and inter- and intrapersonal skills. Finally, they had common planning times and block schedules, allowing them to reflect on teaching practices.

On a cautionary note, Kruse and Louis (1997) observed that “one of the main consequences of teams is that teachers take on many functions that were previously performed individually or by administrators” (p. 276). As a result, because team members met during common planning periods, they were unable to conduct peer observations because of the demands of their additional duties at other times during the day. Consequently, reflecting on the practice of instruction occurred at times other than in-class observations, and professional development received less attention because
teachers attended to tasks that were more urgent and more easily resolved in the
constraints of a planning period.

The literature dealing with professional growth details the inadequacies of current
professional development practices, citing such obstacles as increased demands on
teachers, lack of time, educational reform, and teacher attitudes towards in-service
training (French, 1997; Higgs, Ashton & Martinez, 1995; Hoerr, 1996; Little, 1994;
Wineburg & Grossman, 1998). Interdisciplinary teaming appears to be a means to
address these concerns. As changes in what is expected of teachers require them to
change how they learn, “teachers must learn how to meet higher standards for their own
teaching” (French, 1997).

Autonomy

One advantage of using the interdisciplinary teaming approach is the increased
autonomy it gives to teachers. Erb (1992), Merenbloom (1991) and Clark and Clark
(1997) suggest that teachers feel empowered to make critical decisions about use of class
time, size of instructional groups, curriculum integration and teaching strategies. They
feel freed from the constraints and isolation of the typical single subject schedule and
have the flexibility to determine what is in the best interest of their students’ particular
developmental needs. “Teachers are empowered to make decisions, work together, try
out new ideas, support each other and cooperatively assess the results of their work”
(Clark & Clark, 1997, p. 268).
In Husband and Short’s study (1994), interdisciplinary teamed teachers were found to be more autonomous than departmentally organized teachers. They articulated four reasons for this finding. 1) Team teachers controlled the daily scheduling of students through block scheduling. 2) They employed their own unique teaching style to complement the strengths of other team members. 3) They decided, within the adopted curriculum framework, what subject matter to teach and when to offer it. 4) Working with fellow team members, the teamed teachers designed their own integrated thematic units of instruction.

In the area of decision making, Whitford and Kyle (1984) discovered that it existed at two levels, both within a team and school-wide. At the team level, teachers controlled placement of students, team-based discipline procedures, and use of team time. Within the school, teachers participated in budgetary priorities, assembly programs and special events, and a pilot program of the use of computerized report cards. They concluded that team organization was critical to some of these decisions. Teamed teachers liked the ease with which they could reschedule students’ classes. School-wide decisions also emerged from teacher committees on which each team was represented.

In a discussion of the results of having interviewed nearly 200 teachers involved in interdisciplinary teaming, Erb (1992) noted that teamed teachers had greater input on school-wide issues. They determined such issues as team goals, developing discipline rules, and designing systems for rewarding students. However, one significant area of teacher decision making concerned placement and grouping of students. Teamed teachers could more easily “group and regroup students within a team for academic or
behavioral reasons in a way departmentalized teachers cannot do without upsetting the master schedule” (Erb, 1992, p. 9).

Kruse and Louis (1997) found that a tension existed between individual team autonomy and a standard, noncompetitive definition of quality practice. One of the teams being studied stood out as the “good team,” and its members received special considerations that contributed to their attending conferences and being placed on committees and other influential bodies. Because good teams did something well, expectations began to be imposed on other teams whose members resented the influence the good teams had on the school-wide program. The effect of this power was to undermine the development of a school-wide professional community.

Thus, the above-mentioned studies support the belief that interdisciplinary teaming increases teachers’ sense of autonomy, especially in the area of decision making. Allowing teams autonomy also enables group strengths to emerge, allows teachers to find a comfortable sense of team unity, and encourages an environment supportive of creativity and risk taking (Pollak & Mills, 1997). However, teaming also has the potential to create divisiveness among other members of the community. This outcome adds support to the belief that it takes more than simply placing teachers together on teams to attain positive outcomes of teaming.

Conflict Management

Teaming joins teachers together in a professional relationship where they “can find themselves in a difficult position when their own professional preferences conflict
with those of fellow team members” (Schamber, 1999, p. 18). Conflict is an outgrowth of diversity and differences but need not always be negative. “Conflicts can be used to clarify relationships, open up alternative possibilities, and provide opportunities for mutual growth” (Weeks, 1992, p. 61). However, even though team members profit from multiple perspectives in dealing with each other, students and other issues, retaining one’s individualism and being an effective team member are often precarious. For teaming to be effective, time and deliberate effort are essential.

Merenbloom (1991) claims that conflicts between team members are inevitable, since “the team approach to instruction calls for teachers to work with one another in situations that call for extensive communication, interaction and cooperation” (Merenbloom, 1991, p. 101). Noting that many teachers involved in teaming have had no training, he stresses the importance of resolving conflicts, adding that they “should be viewed as positive, developmental, and a productive means to an end” (p. 101). He further advocates team building as a means to developing and maintaining trust.

In discussing the internal obstacles to planning integrated curriculum in several different school districts in Ontario, Drake (1993) found that conflict among team members was inevitable and to be expected. Indeed, she contends, it was not unusual for team members to personalize disagreements, but “intimacy or experiencing a meaningful connection with others fosters mutual respect, which can allow team members to safely ‘agree or disagree’” (Drake, 1993, p. 26). Being patient and respectful allowed trust to be built.

Dorsch (1996) reexamined her data from research investigating a first year, voluntary, interdisciplinary program option, Connections, for ninth graders at a school in
Ohio. Part of her study, which compared teachers' experiences with existing literature, focused on how conflict could be used to stress important issues that might otherwise be overlooked. She discussed Goffman's concept of "facework" (as cited in Dorsch, 1996) — maintaining "face" to sustain positive interaction — explaining that when effectively used, it "fosters mutual respect and can be integral to managing the challenges and dilemmas of relationships" (p. 14). She commented that the Connections teachers initially avoided discussions that would endanger face because to do so early in the year would have challenged the "teachers' emergent and still fragile loyalty to both the program and to each other" (Dorsch, 1996, p. 14). By year's end, despite some upheavals along the way, loyalty, she concluded, was caused and maintained, in part, by the relationship, among the teachers, which had been created and formed by facework.

In a similar vein, Kruse and Louis (1997) noted that teachers tended to avoid conflict. They reasoned that teachers were more likely to compromise than deal with conflicts directly. They found that staff members were reluctant to risk disagreement, and, as a result, important issues were diluted. They concluded that team members settled more readily for comfort rather than critically analyzing their work and dealing with the larger issues that would disrupt the teachers' sense of group harmony.

Even when team members act with good intentions, there is no assurance that there will not be casualties along the way. As Schamber (1999) comments, "All too often, team members with the team's best interests in mind behave in ways undermining team effectiveness and eroding trust between team members, which is the basis for effective teaming" (p. 18). Thus, the formation of a team does not guarantee successful
cooperation of members. Providing training and allowing the time for trust between members to emerge is an arduous process that can result in effective teaming.

Collaboration

Teaming engenders collaboration among teachers because of the tasks the teachers must address in dealing with their shared group of students. Research on interdisciplinary teaming indicates that this organizational structure enhances increased interactions and interdependent work relationships among teachers (Alexander & George, 1981; Cohen, 1976; Merenbloom, 1991). In a discussion of the future of middle level education, Williamson and Johnston (1999) comment that implementation of interdisciplinary teaming does not by itself, though, make effective learning communities. Rather, these communities develop from the commitment of adults and students “to collaborative work that is focused on clear and meaningful tasks and is responsive to the varied needs of the students” (Williamson & Johnson, 1991, p. 2).

Muronaga and Harada (1999) contend that effective collaboration among team members stems from interactions between people with varied knowledge and experience with an ability to arrive at creative solutions to mutually defined problems. Further, “the heart of collaboration resides in developing a climate of trust and mutual respect” (p. 9). Team members must identify and honor the differences of all teachers. They must participate equally in the decision making process regarding the appropriateness and changes of material and the implementation of group work and schedules.
Scribner (1999) noted that the teachers he observed used collaboration to focus learning on the development of classroom management strategies and broadening pedagogical skills. However, collaboration was less focused on improving content knowledge, discussing social conditions of the school setting, or considering education reform or theory. Further, his data showed that "teachers' collaborative interactions tended to be dialogues in which practical solutions to teaching were sought" (p. 252).

Meichtry's research (1990) on teacher collaboration resulted in her finding that interdisciplinary teaming fostered norms of collaboration among the teachers in her study. The collaborative efforts of teachers "were devoted to making decisions regarding socialization, discipline, instruction, and evaluation of the team's students, discussing related beliefs and practices, and sharing sentiments about work-related issues" (p. 9). Her findings corroborated other literature (Arhar, Johnston, & Markle, 1992; Alexander & George, 1981; Erb, 1992; Lounsbury, 1992; Merenbloom, 1991) dealing with the value of interdisciplinary teaming for teachers. She added, though, that the teaming arrangement can foster collaboration precisely because of members' shared responsibilities for the same students, common planning periods and common teaching time.

Whinery and Faircloth (1994) assessed 165 teachers and 20 administrators involved in developing and implementing interdisciplinary curriculum units in middle school classrooms. Using the Concerns Based Adoption Model (CBAM) developed by Hall & Hord (as cited in Whinery & Faircloth, 1994), they administered The Stages of Concern (SoC) Questionnaire to participants at the beginning and end of the project. They also used The Levels of Use (LoU) Interview with a sample of participants at the
beginning and end of the project. Of the seven stages of concern – awareness, informational, personal, management, consequence, collaboration and refocusing – the third highest area of concern resulting from pre-administration of The SoC Questionnaire was collaboration. “Participants indicated their concerns about working with other faculty members in a teaming situation” (p. 32). When the SoC Questionnaire was administered at the conclusion of the project, collaboration still received high scores, indicating that the teachers continued to have concerns about resolving collaboration. The results of the study indicated that throughout the project, collaboration remained a concern and was an issue needing to be addressed ongoingly in a teamed environment.

The foregoing discussion dealing with collaboration as an aspect of interdisciplinary teaming suggests that collaboration is a worthwhile endeavor because it improves communication among team members and broadens their teaching practices. However, collaboration requires developing trust and respect for differences. Unfortunately, as teams develop their own norms of working together, there is an uneasiness about upsetting the working relationships such that problems can be dealt with more openly and effectively. Consequently, the deep trust necessary for effective collaboration to occur may not develop unless there is sufficient time and commitment on the part of team members to reconcile differences.

The preceding review of the literature dealing with interdisciplinary teaming contributes many insights about how teaming affects or is affected by time availability, what teaming does for professional growth and to autonomy, how teams mediate conflicts, and how effectively team members collaborate. Although interdisciplinary teaming is not without limitations, there are more benefits that contribute to or result
from teaming. These benefits include more time for decision making and planning, greater autonomy and professional growth potential, improved opportunities to resolve conflicts, and developing skills for collaboration through shared responsibilities and tasks.

Collaboration as Negotiated Order

Interdisciplinary team teaching involves the interaction of teachers to plan instruction, control their schedule and that of their group of students, make decisions, and reconcile differences. As such, the teachers work together, or collaborate, in an interactive process to act or decide on issues related to a shared task. Because the work of interdisciplinary teaming requires teachers to continually assess and modify their decisions, their relationships are constantly changing; the interactions between the members are in a continual state of evolution (Gray, 1989). As collaboration among the participants causes their patterns of interactions to change, the process of change establishes a new negotiated order among the stakeholders.

The theory of negotiated order has its roots in symbolic interactionism (Day & Day, 1977; Strauss, 1978). Symbolic interactionism, which arose in the Chicago School approach to research in the early 20th century, is concerned with “understanding how individuals take and make meaning in interaction with others” (Marshall & Rossman, 1989, p. 10). Thus, negotiated order theory calls into question the more static structural-functional and rational-bureaucratic explanations of complex organizations. In their place it
presents an interactional model involving a processual and emergent analysis of the manner in which the division of labor and work are accomplished in large organizations. In this framework the informal aspects of organizations are emphasized as much as the formal (Weberian) and, furthermore, there are implied dialectical relationships in which the informal ultimately shapes the formal and vice versa (Day & Day, 1977, p. 126).

London (1995) states that “Collaboration is a process in which the group as a whole must be self-governing and in which all participants are equally represented in the making of joint decisions” (p. 7). Gray (1989) argues that there are five critical aspects to the collaborative process associated with negotiated order. First, the stakeholders — “the parties with an interest in the problem” (p. 5) — are interdependent. That is, there must be give and take between stakeholders in order “to produce solutions that none of them working independently could achieve” (p. 11). Second, “solutions emerge by dealing constructively with differences” (p. 11). Though differences can be disruptive, they also have the potential to advance possible outcomes that, without being discussed by the different members, would never arise. Testing “assumptions and allowing a constructive confrontation of differences may unlock heretofore disguised creative potential” (p. 13). The third feature involves “joint ownership of decisions” (p. 11). Participants involved in collaboration take responsibility for arriving at a solution; they “impose decisions on themselves” (p. 14). As the stakeholders air and debate different perspectives, a greater awareness of the problem’s complexity emerges, leading to new outcomes and plans for action. Fourth, “stakeholders assume collective responsibility for the future direction of
the domain” (p. 11) – the way participants understand the issue. During collaboration the norms for dealing with problems undergo restructuring, sometimes affecting the ways in which members interact and deal with them in the future. Finally, “collaboration is an emergent process” (p. 11). Seen as a process, collaboration can be conceived of “as a temporary and evolving forum for addressing a problem” (p. 15).

According to Nathan and Mitroff (1991), “a negotiated order exists when organizations have jointly determined the terms of their future interactions with one another” (p. 164). In addition, a negotiated order “emphasizes the fluid, continuously emerging qualities of the organization, the changing web of interactions woven among its members” (Day & Day, 1977, p. 132), and the constant negotiation and renegotiation of terms (Gray, 1989). Gray adds, though, that the negotiation that occurs is to be understood in a broad sociological sense:

Through their talk, stakeholders try to arrive at collective interpretations of how they see the world. These interpretations form the basis for actions. Negotiation, therefore, refers to conversational interactions among collaborating parties as they try to define a problem, agree on recommendations, or design action steps. In this way they create a negotiated order (Gray, 1989, p. 25).

Furthermore, as participants collectively establish an agreement, they develop an appreciation of the necessity for joint activity, coming to a realization of what is and is not possible. As agreements emerge, participants may develop guidelines governing future interactions or change the roles and responsibilities among participants. As such they create “a normative framework through which members correlate their activities
with respect to the problem. In so doing, they establish a temporary order for the domain” (Gray, 1989, p. 230).

Agreements that emerge through the process of negotiated order are not binding and committed to for all time, because there are always unforeseen consequences of acting on decisions that lead to confrontation. It is the result of these unplanned for outcomes that necessitates agreements to be reworked continuously. And in the workings of an interdisciplinary team, members’ actions grow out of the processes of decision making, problem solving, conflict management, interpersonal communication, and cultural and systemic influences.

Summary

The preceding discussion of interdisciplinary teaming indicates that this organizational structure affects the demands on members’ time, their professional growth, their sense of autonomy, the way they handle conflicts, and their ability to collaborate. Most of the studies of interdisciplinary teaming have occurred at the elementary and middle levels of education, but the few studies dealing with teaming at the high school level suggest that these areas are similarly influenced by this organizational structure.

The discussion further suggests that interdisciplinary teaming requires more time and that teachers profit from increased interaction with colleagues from various disciplines. Teachers also enjoy the autonomy to plan their units, control the scheduling of their students, and determine when units are to be taught. Though teaming has the potential to help teachers mediate conflicts, it can also inhibit the resolution of
differences because of team members’ desire to keep their working relationship with other team members harmonious.

Collaboration has also been shown to develop as a result of interdisciplinary teaming, but the organizational structure does not guarantee it will happen. When it does occur, though, teachers develop greater trust and openness in dealing with each other. It also improves the team’s efforts to mediate differences and address issues that might otherwise be ignored.

This study endeavors to contribute descriptive information to the literature through interviews of teachers involved in an interdisciplinary team taught course. It will examine teachers’ perceptions of how interdisciplinary teaming affects their use of time, professional growth, autonomy, mediation of conflicts, and collaboration, in accord with what the literature indicates. Extrapolating from an analysis of the findings, it will then consider whether the five critical dynamics of collaboration associated with the theory of negotiated order prevailed to create a negotiated order.
CHAPTER 3

Methodology and Procedure

Introduction

This chapter describes the methodology used to collect and analyze the influences interdisciplinary team teaching has on the work lives of independent high school teachers in a single high school setting. The chapter is divided into several sections with an in-depth description of each methodological step.

Research Context

This study was prompted by my personal experience with interdisciplinary education in an independent school. During the 1988-1989 academic year, several colleagues and I developed a high school level interdisciplinary course, which I then taught with a teacher from another department for the next five years. Throughout my involvement in the course, I became aware that team teaching a course required a considerable amount of planning time. This demand had to be balanced with my other teaching and extracurricular responsibilities. Differences of opinion and approaches to presenting material also had to be worked out.

Though we were both initially nervous about sharing a classroom with each other, my colleague and I experienced certain benefits. We had great freedom in the development of the curriculum and selection of our own course materials. Class discussions were stimulating, and collaborating and teaching in the classroom with a colleague from a different department allowed me to observe and reflect upon a
colleague’s methods and approach to teaching. The effect of this teaching arrangement was to effect a change in my own teaching style. Because of the impact of this course on my work life, I wondered how interdisciplinary team teaching at a different independent school influenced high school teachers’ work lives.

To examine these influences, I had to locate an independent school that offered interdisciplinary courses. The school used in this research study, Independent Preparatory School (IPS) [a pseudonym], is located outside the New York City metropolitan area in a rural New Jersey community, not far from a well-known institution of higher learning. The 190-year-old school has long enjoyed a reputation of academic excellence and has graduated students who have attended prestigious colleges across the nation.

Interdisciplinary courses have been in existence at IPS for nearly 15 years. The school currently offers 21 different interdisciplinary courses. The first interdisciplinary course was taught to sophomores. It brought together two disciplines and teachers from the different departments involved. Each teacher was responsible for teaching his discipline’s half of the course. And aside from weekly lectures that brought all the students together, the teachers did not share the classroom. Furthermore, students could take the course in any one of the three terms during the school year.

Over time, as additional interdisciplinary courses were created, they spread to other grades. Some courses became required and could be taken during any one of the school’s three terms; others were elective and sequential. However, regardless of how many sections, these courses were structured so that each half was subject specific, teachers did not share the classroom other than when weekly lectures were delivered, and the classes only met for five 50-minute periods per week.
In a departure from this structure of interdisciplinary courses at IPS, the department chairs began an initiative during the 1997-1998 academic year to develop an interdisciplinary course in which teachers would be paired and each pair would teach the same group of students in consecutive class periods. Moreover, the course was slated to become a required yearlong course for all freshmen that would be phased in over a three-year period. Consequently, it started as a pilot course and was offered to freshmen as an elective.

Entitled Interdisciplinary (ID) [a pseudonym], the course was offered for the first time in 1998. Its design fulfilled the freshmen requirements in English, history, art, geography and religion and enabled students to learn how these disciplines interact and have a critical impact on the human condition. The course examines a wide variety of cultures and epochs, ranging from China in the Tang and Sung dynasties to the America of *Huckleberry Finn*. The course also focuses on developing students’ skills in writing, grammar, reading, visual interpretation, computer literacy, and library research.

When ID began in the fall of 1998, there were four sections. Teachers were paired – an English teacher with a partner from a different discipline – and shared a section of 12-14 students for two consecutive periods. Another feature of ID was that the teaching staff had in their schedule a common period during which they would meet to review the weekly syllabus and discuss other matters related to the course.

Following its first year, the course underwent some changes. Two new sections were added, requiring more teachers. The course materials and syllabus were reviewed and modified. Each member of the staff, all of whom had given up a free period to share
the classroom with their partners, decided to discontinue this practice, since the school was unwilling to compensate them for their extra classroom time.

Given the uniqueness and newness of this course and the changes that occurred in its less than two years of existence, I wanted to understand how this course was affecting the work lives of the teachers who were involved in it. Because no other interdisciplinary course at IPS is taught this way, it is difficult to capture and generalize the findings to other interdisciplinary courses taught at IPS. However, the analysis of the data collected has relevance to other efforts to bring interdisciplinary team teaching to the high school level.

Research Design

This study used a qualitative research design to examine teachers' perceptions of the influence interdisciplinary team teaching has had on their work lives. Qualitative research design has merit when the study is exploratory or descriptive; delves into the complexities and processes; stresses the importance of context; recognizes the significance of local variation; explores where and why policy does or does not work; examines innovative systems; or shows interest in participant perspectives (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998; Marshall & Rossman, 1989). Krathwohl (1998) offers another explanation for using a qualitative research design: "Qualitative research methods are particularly useful in understanding how individuals understand their world, in showing how individuals' perceptions and intentions in situations determine their behavior, in
exploring phenomena to find explanations, and in providing concrete and detailed illustrations of the phenomena” (p. 225).

Much qualitative research is written as a case study (Krathwohl, 1998). “A case study is a detailed examination of one setting, or a single subject, a single depository of documents, or one particular event” (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998, p. 54). Yin (1994) notes that case studies are preferred when researchers pose “how” or “why” questions, have little control over events, and focus on a current phenomenon within some real-life context. Because this research involved an investigation of how teachers experienced the influences of team teaching on their work lives, I chose a case study approach.

Krathwohl describes the characteristics of a case study:

Case studies are bounded by a particular individual, situation, program, institution, time period, or set of events. Within those boundaries, whatever is the focus of attention is described within the perspective of the context surrounding it. Case studies are ideal for illustrating the complexity of causation. The case study is sometimes a step in the larger study where cases are combined in support of an overall explanation or theory that arises out of cross-site analysis (p. 332).

Because of my experience in developing and teaching an interdisciplinary course, I approached my data collection with theoretical sensitivity (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). “Theoretical sensitivity refers to the attribute of having insight, the ability to give meaning to data, the capacity to understand, and capability to separate the pertinent from that which isn’t” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 42). According to Strauss and Corbin (1990), this sensitivity comes from literature, from professional and personal experiences,
and through the analytical process of interaction with the collected data. My experience, along with seventeen years as an educator and my literature review, enabled me to develop questions that correlated with my subsidiary questions (Appendix A). I then ordered the questions for my interview protocol (Appendix B) and used them in this study to understand the context within which the teachers work.

In this case study, my primary research tool was the interview because it afforded me access to teachers’ perceptions that I could not have gained otherwise. "The purpose of interviewing is to find out what is in and on someone else’s mind….to allow us to enter into the other person’s perspective. Qualitative interviewing begins with the assumption that the perspectives of others are meaningful, knowable, and able to be made explicit" (Patton, 1990, p. 278).

The questions were designed to garner perceptions without restricting the inquiry. Interviews were relaxed, conversational and open-ended. Each participant, all of whom were male, and his responses to my questions were handled as a case record. The teachers' perceptions about teaching an interdisciplinary course and the effects on their use of time, professional growth, classroom autonomy, dealing with conflicts, and collaboration appear in their own words to express their feelings, beliefs, and concerns about their involvement in the course (Appendix C).

Theoretical Orientation

In an effort to understand how interdisciplinary teaming influences the work lives of independent schoolteachers, it is important to examine how team members collaborate
and the factors that affect their collaboration. As a descriptive model of the process of collaboration, the theory of negotiated order confronts "the problem of how order is maintained in an organization in spite of numerous external and internal changes" (Day & Day, 1977, p. 128). Fundamental to this theory is the view that agreements are kinetic; divergent orientations and interests and differences of opinion, coupled with formal and informal behaviors, cause participants to renegotiate agreements. As a result, this theory of collaboration is viewed as an emergent process (Gray, 1989). "The organization...is viewed as a locale where certain agreements are being terminated or forgotten while others are being reviewed, renewed, revised, revoked, or whatever. The order which has been attained in the past is therefore always subject to change" (Day & Day, 1977, p. 131). Thus, collaboration requires the parties involved to be in a continual process of negotiation and renegotiation.

Drawing from Gray's (1989) discussion of collaboration, I will examine the interdisciplinary team teachers' ability to collaborate from the perspective of negotiated order theory. Negotiated order theory stresses five dynamics for successful processes (Gray, 1989). Applied to collaboration among faculty members, Austin and Baldwin (1991) distill them into the following:

First, collaboration involves interdependence among the participants. Individuals are motivated to collaborate to work toward goals that are not possible or feasible for one person alone to achieve. Second, through collaboration, partners encounter new views and approaches, and, by grappling with the differences between their views, participants find new understanding, ideas, or solutions.
Third, joint ownership of decisions is necessary for successful collaboration; that is, collaborators must all agree on the direction of the joint work. The fourth key dynamic is closely related to the third. If collaborative relationships are to be productive, participants (or “stakeholders”) must share responsibility for decisions about the team members’ relationships and roles. Finally, negotiated order theory emphasizes that “collaboration is an emergent process” (Gray, p. 11) through which the roles of participants, their decision-making processes, and their goals and agreements evolve over time (pp. 48-49).

Inherent in the process of collaboration are issues related to autonomy, use of time and communication. Because teachers are typically accustomed to teaching alone, they are autonomous in their classrooms. In collaborating with other teachers, team members may initially feel “uncomfortable with the loss of autonomy” (Austin & Baldwin, p. 44), because they are accustomed to thinking about different approaches to their teaching on their own. However, interdisciplinary teaming can enhance teachers’ autonomy to make choices about such things as use of class time, curriculum and teaching techniques (Clark & Clark, 1997; Husband & Short, 1994). “Team members are no longer restricted by the isolation and rigidity that characterize the typical single subject schedule;...teachers are empowered to make decisions, work together, try out new ideas, support each other and cooperatively assess the results of their work” (Clark & Clark, p. 268). Additionally, team teachers can influence and be influenced by each other and experience an increased sense of their own autonomy as a result of teaming (Cohen, 1976).
The use of time also plays an important role in collaboration. In the confines of their classrooms, teachers exercise control over how time is used. They also control how they will use their time for planning and meeting the additional responsibilities they carry. Frequent team planning time appears to enhance team effectiveness (Mac Iver, 1990). However, how a team works is often affected by meeting deadlines or the demands of work obligations (Pounder, 1998). Having a common planning period facilitates team teachers’ ability to address the needs of their students, plan lessons, maintain policies, and exchange information (McQuaide, 1992).

Closely allied with use of time is the importance of team members’ ability to communicate. Communication between members allows team members to address common goals, mediate differences, and develop close personal bonds (Kruse & Louis, 1997). According to Austin and Baldwin (1991), team members need to express differing views to enhance the quality of their work. They “understand that civilized and respectful disagreement is normal and useful as a group of people work together. Thus effective teams learn how to handle conflict productively” (Austin & Baldwin, 1991, p. 59).

A byproduct of teaming is that teachers are continually teaching each other and learning from one another. Team members perceive themselves in new ways “and their interaction with other professionals can also lead to changes in their attitudes toward teaching and in the ways they teach” (Adler & Flihan, 1997, p. 31). They develop the opportunities to share information and insights among themselves (Whitford & Kyle, 1984). Additionally, “they help one another to improve their practice of teaching through
such means as encouraging experimentation with new ideas, mutually solving instructional problems, [and] planning instruction together” (Scott & Smith, 1987, p. 55).

Data Collection

Data collection involved an hour-long interview with each of the six ID team participants. Each interview was semi-structured, what Krathwohl (1998) describes as having a predetermined order and open-ended questions. To facilitate the interview, I used an interview protocol (Appendix B) that addressed the areas related to my subsidiary questions.

In designing the protocol, I formulated a series of questions from my own experience and my literature review that I believed were germane to my research question and addressed the areas of time, professional growth, autonomy, conflict resolution, and collaboration. I brought certain assumptions about interdisciplinary team teaching to the design of the interview protocol. I assumed that the process of being a member of an interdisciplinary team would cause members to develop personal meanings about the course, about teaching, and about other team members. I also assumed their actions would be in response to their perceived meanings and would cause them to work toward common goals.

To test the relevance of my questions, I conducted a pilot study. Yin (1994) and Krathwohl (1998) both advocate conducting a pilot study for interviews as a means to refine data collection procedures. “The pilot case is used more formatively, assisting an investigator to develop relevant lines of questions – possibly even providing some
conceptual clarification for the research design as well" (Yin, 1994, p. 74). I also selected a school other than where I was going to be conducting my research as a pilot site. Yin (1994) suggests that a pilot site “represents the most complicated of real cases, so that nearly all relevant data collection issues will be encountered at this site” (p. 74).

Four teachers from three different disciplines at the pilot site participated in the pilot study. One teacher, a member of the foreign language department, had created and had been team teaching a course for ten years. Another teacher, from the English department, had helped create and teach an interdisciplinary course at a boarding school. The other two teachers, both from the history department, were involved in creating and teaching an interdisciplinary unit with English teachers and had only one year of experience. None of these teachers’ responses appear in this study. After interviewing each of the teachers, I requested their feedback to insure that my questions were clear, varied and focused. Where wording was unclear or questions were redundant, I revised the questions. Each teacher was then re-interviewed to insure that the questions were clear, non-repetitive, and balanced in their orientation.

Recruitment of interview participants began by contacting the chair of the Interdisciplinary Department at IPS. After I explained the premise and rationale for my research, he encouraged me to contact the Coordinator of ID, Respondent 4. I sent the coordinator a letter (Appendix D), which I followed with a phone call, and received an invitation to attend a staff meeting and address the ID staff. Following my presentation, at which I circulated a letter of solicitation (Appendix E), explained my intentions, and what would be required of any volunteers, eight members expressed interest. Because I required teachers to have at least one year’s experience teaching the course, two of them
did not qualify to participate in the interviews and class observations. The remaining six provided me with their e-mail addresses and phone numbers.

During the fall term, I contacted all six participants by e-mail and/or telephone and scheduled interviews and observations. All interviews but one were conducted in the teachers' classrooms over a two-week period in October 1999. One interview was conducted over lunch in a private room off the cafeteria, but this different setting appeared to have little impact on the participant's responses. All formal interviews were audiotaped. I then transcribed and coded them to preserve anonymity and confidentiality.

In accordance with the established practice in qualitative research, participants received assurance of the confidentiality of their interviews. Each participant signed a consent form (Appendix F) prior to the interview, indicating that their identities would be kept confidential and that their participation was totally voluntary. Each teacher was also informed that he could withdraw from the study at any time without prejudice. Finally, I explained that participants could stop the tape recorder at any time and the tapes would be destroyed at the completion of the study.

Although the formal interviews questioned participants about their teaching experience, background in interdisciplinary teaching, and education, the primary focus revolved around their perceptions of the influence of interdisciplinary team teaching on their work lives. The areas addressed related to members' sense of interdisciplinary teamwork at IPS, how their use of time was affected, whether team teaching had enhanced their professional growth, how they experienced classroom autonomy, how conflicts were mediated, and how collaboration had affected their teamwork.
Supporting data came from attending and observing three team staff meetings and three of the participants’ ID classes. The purpose of the staff observations was to note the informal and formal interactions between team members. These observations provided further information about team members’ ability to discuss pedagogy, manage time, deal with conflict, and collaborate. Classroom observations served to corroborate staff discussions and teachers’ perceptions with the realities of what was happening in the classroom. These data were logged as field notes.

Three staff meeting observations occurred between September, 1999 and January 2000. Three classroom observations occurred during the same two-week period as the interviews and occurred either just before or right after the interview. One participant allowed me to observe him and his partner, who was not one of the participants, conduct a two-hour class. Despite the lack of compensation, the teachers opted to share the classroom once a week for the two consecutive periods. Spontaneous conversations also occurred before and after staff meeting or class observations. Though they were not taped, notes from them were recorded afterwards.

Research Participants

The interdisciplinary team staffing of ID consisted of six pairings of ten teachers. Each pair had an English teacher and one teacher from the history, religion, art, or foreign language departments. One English teacher taught two sections of the course but with a different partner for each section. The religion teacher also taught two sections, each with a different English teacher. Finally, only the foreign language teacher was female.
Thus, the current staff configuration of ID consisted of teachers associated with the humanities, though this had not been the case the previous year.

A key determinant of who was eligible to participate in this study was that the teachers had to have had at least one year of experience and be currently teaching the course. During the first year of course, the chair of the science department had taught one section of ID with an English teacher. However, in its second year he was no longer teaching the course. I also felt that the teachers new to the course would have a contrary perspective because of their lack of experience in teaching ID.

Because the course was in its second year of existence, only six teachers fit this criterion. Of those six, five had been involved in the planning, design and implementation of the course. Their years at IPS spanned from three to 25 years. The other four teachers, though new to the course, were not new teachers at IPS. Furthermore, two of the six teachers had been involved in creating and teaching other interdisciplinary courses at IPS; one teacher had taught an interdisciplinary course as part of an International Baccalaureate (IB) program at an American International School.

These six teacher participants represented the four different subject areas that had been fused into ID: English (3), history (1), art (1), and religion (1) (See Table 1 for a summary of teaching experience and responsibilities.). Respondent 1, one of the three English teachers, joined the faculty of IPS in 1997. From the outset of his arrival at IPS, though, he was involved in the planning of ID, having come from an American International School where he chaired a combined English/History Department and taught interdisciplinary courses as part of the school's IB program. At IPS he taught English and was an advisor. He held a Master's Degree in Education. He was recently
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Years teaching at IPS</th>
<th>Years teaching at other schools</th>
<th>Total years teaching experience</th>
<th>Other Responsibilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Respondent 1 - English</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Dean of Studies</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Housemaster</td>
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<td>Respondent 2 - English</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Soccer coach</td>
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<tr>
<td>Respondent 3 - Art History</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Intramural tackle football coach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent 4 - History</td>
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<td>23</td>
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<td>Coordinator, Interdisciplinary</td>
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<td>Reach Out to the Arts</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>NJ Scholars Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>Respondent 5 - English</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Fall Crew coach</td>
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<td>Housemaster</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Head of 3rd Form English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent 6 - Religion</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Varsity Soccer coach</td>
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<td>Varsity coach</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Assistant Housemaster</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
appointed Dean of Studies and was responsible for the overall curriculum at IPS. He also served as housemaster of one of the school’s 20 residence halls.

Respondent 2, another English teacher, taught two sections, each section with a different partner, of ID. He spent his entire 25-year career at IPS, and though he began work on a Master’s Degree, he did not complete his thesis. For nearly a dozen years, he was responsible for overseeing the ninth grade English curriculum. In addition to his responsibilities as an advisor and teacher, he also coached soccer. Prior to his teaching ID, he had never taught an interdisciplinary course. The first year of the course he was paired with Respondent 3, who was again one of his two partners the second year.

Respondent 3 was the former chairman of the Art Department, and he too spent his entire 21-year career at IPS. He was involved in the creation of another interdisciplinary course, which he taught for two years, before assuming the art department chairmanship. Once he began teaching ID, he stepped down as chairman of the department. He received a Master of Fine Arts in painting, performed dorm duty, was an advisor, and coached intramural tackle football.

Respondent 4 served as the coordinator of ID and had been the chair of the History Department for five years. He spent his entire 23-year career at IPS and previously created and taught another interdisciplinary course at IPS. He received a Master of Arts in history, oversaw the erection of a new building that currently houses the history department, served as an advisor, and coordinated a program that organizes trips to the theatre, ballet and symphony.

Respondent 5, the third English teacher, began his career at a school in Canada, where he taught both history and English. However, because he wanted students to write
better, he focused more on English. He had no experience with interdisciplinary courses before being asked to teach ID, and he only became involved in the planning of ID at the request of his department chair. He received a Master’s Degree in Education and began work on a Ph.D. but stopped short of getting too deeply involved in it. He also served as an advisor.

The final participant, Respondent 6, was the youngest member of the team and had been teaching for only four years, one of which was at another school. He was a member of the Religion Department and held a B. A. Beyond his teaching and advising responsibilities, he coached two varsity sports and was an assistant housemaster. Though he was actively involved in the planning of ID, he had never taught an interdisciplinary course before becoming involved in teaching the course. He taught one section of the course with Respondent 5 and a second section of the course with an English teacher who was new to the course.

Data Analysis

The research methodology relied on multiple sources of information: semi-structured interviews, spontaneous conversations, and teacher and staff meeting observations. The teacher and staff meeting observations were conducted with the express purpose of clarifying and affirming the information obtained from the interviews. Written records regarding the history of the course were nonexistent and required an interview of the ID coordinator and emerged from comments made by the participants during the formal interview process to reconstruct the course’s development and implementation. Nonetheless, the complementary forms of data collection reinforced
confidence in the results of data collection (Krathwohl, 1998; Marshall & Rossman, 1989; Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

As the data were collected, I simultaneously organized and categorized them, examining them for themes and patterns, and testing emerging hypotheses against data, and searching for alternative explanations for the data (Marshall & Rossman, 1989). Strauss and Corbin (1990) refer to this approach as the constant comparative method, which suggests that data analysis begins from the moment data are gathered. Consequently, I continually reviewed field notes of observations and interview transcripts, searching for sub-categories, themes or key concepts that related to the primary categories of investigation: teachers’ sense of the team’s work, use of time, professional growth, classroom autonomy, conflicts, and collaboration. As I added to the data and coded it, I compared the existing sub-categories, themes and concepts with the new data, continuing to locate existing themes in the new data to validate those themes over time. When I had completed all of my data collection, I created a cross-record grid of phrases and quotes from each teacher’s responses, categorizing them within one of the six areas of investigation (Appendix G). This grid was used to identify commonalities in the content and reinforce the credibility of the study.

Throughout the analysis, I coded participants’ responses and grouped them into sub-categories. Miles and Huberman (1994) state that “coding is analysis….Coded are tags or labels for assigning units of meaning to the descriptive or inferential information compiled during a study” (p. 56). Thus, in the process of reviewing interview transcripts and field notes, I sorted the data into the six general categories that coincided with the areas of investigation. Within those categories, I created sub-categories. As new ones
emerged, I modified the existing sub-categories. I also used analytic induction, which Krathwohl (1998) describes as useful in “finding commonalities in the data which lead first to description and then to an explanation of that regularity” (p. 260). Finally, to facilitate analysis of interview data and field notes, I used a qualitative analysis software package, Ethnograph, to manage data throughout the study.

Soundness of the Study

A qualitative research study requires a discussion of the “criteria of soundness” (Marshall & Rossman, 1989, p. 144). These criteria entail the constructs of transferability, credibility, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Because the findings of this study are a thick description and provide an interpretation of the given context, this study does not have general applicability. The study was conducted as social/behavioral, qualitative research so that its transferability was limited to the context. Any transfer of the results can be done only to similar participants in an equivalent setting.

The credibility of this study lies in the use of triangulation. Data triangulation “involves the use of two or more sources to establish factual accuracy” (Krathwohl, 1998, p. 275). Triangulation relies on the use of data from multiple sources – people, situations, and methods – to insure against an overriding influence from one point of view. In this study data were collected through semi-structured interviews, spontaneous conversations, an oral history of the development of the course, and observations of teacher participants’ teaching and team staff meetings.
The closely allied constructs of dependability and confirmability deal with the issue of whether another researcher would uncover similar findings. However, qualitative research is dependent on the context, and researchers operate under the assumption that the world is in a constant state of change. Consequently, over time the changes that occur in their findings reflect the changes in context. Replication is therefore problematic; some researchers dismiss it as an inappropriate criterion for a qualitative study (Marshall & Rossman, 1989).

Confirmability is assured through triangulation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). It is enhanced through verification of the accuracy of emerging perceptions and depends on participants' behaviors and words, when writing the report (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). To assist me in this process, I used different methods to cross-check the consistency of information gathered at varying times and by varying means within qualitative methods (Patton, 1990). Furthermore, my theoretical sensitivity contributed to the interpretation of data, allowing me to present the findings in the participants' voices.

Limitations

Because of the demands of a full time job, I had limited time to spend in the field. Data collection was therefore dependent upon finding mutually acceptable times to conduct interviews, observe classes, and attend staff meetings. There was also the possibility that teachers who were involved in the course for the first time might have provided information that would have affected some of the findings. Their sense of how conflicts were mediated or how well the staff collaborated might have added a different
perspective. Additionally, the responses from participants during the interview might have been affected by their attitudes about the study, their willingness to respond to questions openly, and when, during the term, they were interviewed. Finally, previous experience with other interdisciplinary course may have biased those “experienced” teachers’ responses to the interview questions.

The scheduled interviews occurred during a participant’s free class, a period of 50 minutes. Five-minute follow-up questions took place right after class observations. Because efforts to get participants to respond to e-mailed questions or return phone calls were sometimes unsuccessful, follow-up conversations of five to ten minutes occurred just before or after observations of staff meetings.

IPS is a highly regarded independent school. The median SAT for graduating seniors is 650 verbal and 670 math. The school attracts students from 37 states and 17 different countries. Students who apply must compete with hundreds of students for the nearly 200 openings in the freshman class. The majority of those who are accepted live on campus and attend classes six days a week. They also have intimate contact with the faculty who supervise the residence halls, coach sports, and advise extra-curricular activities, and with whom they share meals. This population may have affected teachers’ perceptions because the teachers know they are teaching motivated students who expect to be challenged intellectually.

Focusing on the influences of interdisciplinary team teaching on the work lives of high school teachers at an independent school limited the scope of the data collection. However, the goal of this research is valuable because most research focuses on the
benefits to students and teachers at the middle level public school, and none thus far addresses independent schools.

Summary

This case study was designed to learn how teachers at an independent school perceived the influences of interdisciplinary team teaching on their work lives. The study occurred at a specific institution and involved qualitative research methods. A semi-structured interview protocol was used to interview six teachers who were involved in teaching the same interdisciplinary course and had all taught the course for one year.

As interview data were collected, I coded teacher responses and examined the data using the constant comparative method to discern patterns and themes from the teachers' responses. The soundness of the study was enhanced through triangulation of data sources. Thick description also contributed to the dependability and credibility of this study.
CHAPTER 4

Presentation of the Findings

Introduction

This chapter is divided into four sections. The first section provides a brief description of the school community. The second section gives a brief history of the school. The third section provides an analysis of participants' responses to the interview questions as they pertained to the six areas of investigation mentioned in Chapter 3: teachers' sense of the team's work, use of time, professional growth, classroom autonomy, conflicts, and collaboration. (Appendix C details participants' responses, without interpretive comments, to the interview. Their responses are grouped according to these six areas of investigation.) The final section discusses the findings in the context of negotiated order theory.

The School Community

Independent Preparatory School (IPS) is a combination day and boarding school that offers a comprehensive, coeducational program for 775 students from grades nine through post-graduate and who come from 38 states and 18 countries. It is located on 700 acres, containing 17 dormitories, 10 classroom buildings, and 7 other support buildings. Forty-four percent of the students are girls, the faculty numbers 150, and there is a 5:1 ratio of students to faculty. Sixty-eight percent of the students and 98% of the faculty reside on campus.
Students reside in one of the school's 20 houses, which are guided by a team led by a resident housemaster. Parents contact the housemaster when they have concerns about their children. An assistant master, who also lives in the house, and several other faculty members assist each housemaster. These adults participate in all aspects of house life, serving as academic advisors, supervising study halls, and coaching intramural sports. Carefully selected and trained seniors serve as house prefects and also add support to students.

Because each house is shaped by its leaders' personalities, it has a distinct character. Students receive much attention and guidance, are held accountable, and are given a high level of responsibility. Students are grouped into one of three distinct student communities. Freshmen reside in one area, sophomores and juniors in another, and seniors in still another, enabling students to develop close relationships with students their own age.

A defining feature of the school's educational life is the Conference Plan. A classroom contains an oval table which seats 12 students. Science labs and lecture halls provide additional classroom space. Although classes meet Monday through Saturday, courses meet for five class periods per week. Classes begin at 8:00 a.m. The day is split into six academic periods of 50 or 45 minutes each, plus two 25-minute consultation periods during which students may receive help from their teachers individually. Students may also make arrangements to meet with their teachers at other times during the day or evening.

Every other Wednesday the student body has an all-school meeting to hear outside lectures, listen to musical presentations, or discuss student issues. Classes end at
3:15 p.m. at which time students participate in athletics or perform community service. On Wednesdays and Saturdays classes end around 11:30 a.m., and students have the opportunities to participate in numerous extra-curricular activities.

All freshmen, sophomores and juniors eat together, cafeteria style, except for a weekly, required sit-down dinner. Seniors eat in their own dining area. After dinner, students participate in other clubs, do homework, or socialize. All students are required to check in at their houses at 8:00 p.m., after which they may receive permission to leave the house to go to the library, attend rehearsals, or meet with a teacher for consultation. They must return to their houses by 10:00 p.m.

The school is operated on a trimester system. Most courses last one term, and most students take fifteen courses per year. Beyond the minimum required core courses, students can also choose from numerous elective offerings. Several other academic options are available for students who have met certain requirements. Parents receive both mid-trimester and final academic reports, indicating the student’s accomplishment, effort and attitude. Beyond the formal reporting system, teachers may also send information about a student’s academic progress to the advisor, housemaster and Dean of Studies throughout the term.

A Brief History of Independent Preparatory School

Although Independent Preparatory School (IPS) was founded in 1810, it ran under several names until its “refounding” more than 70 years later, when it assumed its current name and found its identity. It initially attracted students from England and Cuba, as
well as from Native American tribes. Upon becoming IPS, the House System, rooted in the centuries-old tradition of British boarding schools, was devised.

Over the years, IPS has had 11 Headmasters, the most recent one having been appointed in 1996. In 1985 the Board of Trustees voted to co-educate the school. Women first arrived on campus in 1987. The 1997-98 academic year also saw the school’s first female student body president.

Within the past five years, several new facilities have been added to the campus. A science center maintains the school’s commitment to research-based science instruction and to critical links between science and mathematics. A visual arts center houses the school’s art collection, studios, classrooms and an auditorium. A new library was built, providing group study rooms, an electronic classroom and access to numerous volumes and periodicals. A new history building has just been completed with Internet access and computer and video projection systems for teaching and interactive learning. All administrative and academic buildings, as well as the houses, are connected to the school’s campus computer network, with access to the Internet. The school requires all students to be proficient in the use of the computer and computer technology upon the completion of their freshman year.

Analysis of the Interview Questions

The purpose of this section is to analyze the six teachers’ responses to the interview questions as they relate to six primary categories of investigation: 1) teachers’
sense of the team's work, 2) use of time, 3) professional growth, 4) classroom autonomy, 5) conflicts, and 6) collaboration. Each area is introduced by the subsidiary question.

Question # 1 - What are team members' perceptions of the interdisciplinary team's work in the independent school, and why do they believe it is set up as it is?

Interdisciplinary team organization is defined as "two or more teachers working together to coordinate instruction in three, four, or five subject areas" (Merenbloom, 1991, p. 22). The four requisites that define team organization are shared students, common teaching time, common space, and common team planning time (Erb, 1992).

Although interdisciplinary courses have existed at IPS for nearly 15 years, they do not meet any of these requisites. They are essentially taught as a single subject course, where one teacher has sole responsibility for his or her students, except for an occasional full course lecture or field trip. With the administration's commitment to ID, though, the teachers perceived that they were creating a unique course. In the words of Respondent 6, "The people that are involved in this course are people who wanted to change things. They really wanted to go out and teach some new things, and they wanted to do it in a new way."

The concept for the course under study here originated in the history department. Respondent 4, Chair of the History Department and Coordinator of ID, recognized that there were few solid history courses taught at IPS until junior year. In an effort to address that situation, he proposed ID: "Rather than displacing requirements that were
already there for history [and other subject] requirements, instead, we combined disciplines...creating an interdisciplinary and coherent course” that was going to focus on content and be about making connections.

The non-English teachers also perceived that the English department was a driving force behind what was to be taught in ID, since the course was fulfilling an English requirement. The English department demanded that the material currently being taught to freshmen be incorporated into the course. However, the departments connected to the other freshmen courses that were involved in subsuming their requirements into ID had materials they also wanted to have incorporated into the course.

During the planning of the syllabus, “a lot of the stuff which [was] produced was really great,” said Respondent 4, but “it was just too much.” The teachers involved in the planning realized that it was not possible to include everything. As a result, some units never made it into the syllabus. Respondent 4 explained:

One whole unit we simply threw out altogether, because it just wasn’t going to work. We were trying to figure out how to do Islam and medieval literature, because there’s all this baggage that the English department has been loathe to get rid of. They really wanted to do Sir Gawain, and we thought, well, the only place where you can do medieval literature and Islam is Spain, Medieval Spain. So we had this whole unit on Medieval Spain, but it was so difficult (laughter). We just looked at it after being in the course for a few months, even before we got there, and said, “That’s not going to work. Throw that away.” And we did something entirely different.
The same thing with the China unit; I mean, it was fabulous, but the English Department had us reading hundreds of pages of *The Dream of the Red Chamber*, which is a difficult novel. (Laughter) We read about four pages of it, and the kids came back in the next day sort of bumping into the walls and their eyes glazed, saying, "What did we read? What was that all about?" So we said, "Well, we're going to throw that away."

Whereas the administration allowed the teachers to develop the curriculum, it controlled the organizational structure of the course. From the outset of the course, the administration planned to phase it in over three years and make it a required, yearlong course for all freshmen. In the first year of the course, there were four sections, involving seven teachers. Paired teachers taught the same 12-14 students for two consecutive periods for the entire year, rather than for just a term. The administration also provided a weekly meeting for staff members to discuss issues related to the course and to allow them to continue to plan it. The teachers sensed that the administration saw value in the course given this commitment of time and organization. The teachers believed too that the course was designed to develop foundational skills necessary for students' four years, solidify students' computer literacy, and get teachers to collaborate.

Although the teachers understood the rationale for the course, they all had different understandings of how and why they became involved in the course. They indicated that they either had expressed interest to the Dean of Faculty, had a vested interest, were prevailed upon by their department chairs to become involved, or believed their background was responsible for their involvement. No one was unhappy being involved in ID. Indeed, the teachers not only expressed a solid commitment to the course
and its success, despite some skeptics among the school’s faculty, but they also developed an increased commitment to teaching, an outcome, according to Arhar (1997) that teachers involved in interdisciplinary teaming repeatedly experienced.

One significant change to the course occurred at the end of the first year, however. During the first year, partners had voluntarily given up a free class period to share the classroom for both periods with each other. At the end of the year, the administration made it clear, despite teacher demands, that it would not compensate the teachers for continuing this practice. Consequently, the teachers ceased sharing the classroom with their partners. Respondent 5 and Respondent 3 lamented the loss of sharing the classroom with their partners, believing that splitting the class in two affected just how interdisciplinary the course actually was.

The administration did agree to a compromise, though. They promised that, beyond the weekly staff meeting, paired teachers could teach nine of their ten weekly class periods and use the tenth as a time to meet, plan and share concerns. However, the teachers indicated that this arrangement was impractical because there was too much material to be covered. Not every pair took advantage of it, and giving up one of the ten meeting periods per week to meet put a pair’s class behind that of the others who did not schedule the meeting time.

At the start of the second year of ID, two more sections were added and the number of teachers involved grew to ten. The addition of new teachers caused Respondent 3 to comment that increasing the number of teachers diluted the effectiveness of the course. He felt that enlarging the staff made what was being taught “serendipitous, and the kids [would be] getting vastly different experiences for what you want them to
know.” Several teachers also expressed their awareness that the second year’s new
teachers felt lost and unsure of what they were doing.

This remark was underscored during observed staff meetings. On several
occasions the new teachers indicated that they were confused and distraught. They asked
their peers what they were supposed to teach the next day and requested guidance about
how to do it. They also expressed their difficulty with certain texts and wondered how
they were to teach them to students when they themselves did not even understand them.

Although ID underwent changes both in structure and personnel from the first to
second year, the objective of covering a large amount of content remained unchanged,
and the teachers felt their task was unmanageable. Respondent 1 commented, “...the first
year was a rush. We did not stop for a breath the entire year. And I think the students
and teachers at the end were all somewhat, ‘How are we going to pull back from the
content?’ I don’t think we’ve done a good enough job...in our reformulation of the
course.” Several other teachers made similar comments, raising the concern about the
future direction of the course.

Question #2 - What are team members’ perceptions of the
effects the teaching schedule has on their use of time?

Research has underscored the importance of time for interdisciplinary teaming
and indicates that insufficient time for planning undermines the effectiveness of a team to
reach the organization’s full potential (Adler & Flihan, 1997; Alexander & George, 1981;
Erb & Doda, 1989; Mac Iver, 1990; Shillington, 1994; Valentine et al., 1993; Whitford &
Kyle, 1984). Indeed, Erb (1992) and Merenbloom (1991) both contend that common planning time for team teaching is a high scheduling priority. A U. S. Government report, *Prisoners of Time* (April, 1994), cited a RAND Education study indicating that gaining mastery of new teaching strategies and material can require nearly 50 hours of training and 50 days of practice before a teacher feels comfortable. Shillington (1994) also concluded, after examining a study conducted by Epstein and Mac Iver (1989), that teams having less than 2.5 hours of common planning time per week were less likely to achieve an organization’s full potential.

During the first year of ID, the teachers realized that the course was an ambitious undertaking, requiring more time for planning, monitoring, and revision than the schedule provided. Given the intention of ID, partners agreed, during the first year, to give up a free period in order to be in the classroom together for both periods, even though it did not turn up in their schedules. They were all “willing to put in that extra time in order to see the course fly,” noted Respondent 1, “especially as there had been a certain amount of skepticism [from the larger faculty] about whether [the course] would be a very good experience for all the kids or not.”

Committing all this time to the course was quite a sacrifice, since part of the philosophy underlying most independent schools is that teachers carry responsibilities other than just teaching. Indeed, many teachers at independent schools not only serve as advisors to students and extracurricular activities but also coach sports. Nowhere is this situation more clearly evident than at a boarding school, and IPS teachers have the added tasks of living in the houses and doing “night duty” — being on call at a house during the
night in the event of illness, accident or emergency. With their various responsibilities and easy student access to them, time is a valuable commodity.

Because it is a boarding school, IPS has classes six days a week. Four days a week – Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday – there are six class periods. On Wednesday three of six periods meet, and on Saturday, the remaining three of the six periods meet. Most teachers are scheduled in the classroom for four of the six periods. Department chairs, curriculum coordinators, and housemasters each carry three classes, and Deans only one. Lunch lasts an hour in the midst of the scheduled classes. Throughout the week there are also school meetings, consultation periods, and special assemblies built into the weekly teaching schedule. Sports and extra-curricular activities occur after classes end and in the evening. Thus the teachers have little free time for themselves.

Although none of the teachers expressed any regret for all the extra time they committed to the course during its first year, “we all said we aren’t doing that [the next] year,” explained Respondent 3. “Pro bono work is good for a year, but it won’t last forever.” This reaction was especially underscored as it related to teachers’ being in the classroom with their partners. “We essentially did an extra class for free,” Respondent 4 commented.

When the administration of IPS refused to pay the teachers of ID for sharing the classroom with their partners, two outcomes resulted. First, the teachers stopped the arrangement but reached a compromise with the administration. The administration, Respondent 3 explained, agreed to allow partners to use one of their weekly class meeting periods for partner planning time: “We’ll divide you into individual sections.
And so you can plan with your other teacher, you'll take a class time out of your ten. So, instead of ten meetings a week, you'll have nine. You won't meet that class. If you meet together then, fine. But if you can't meet together then, fine. But the payback is that you can take time out somewhere else."

However, because the course was so full of material to be covered, the teachers believed that giving over the time to planning would interfere with meeting the demands of the curriculum. Respondent 3 continued, "But then our syllabus for the first five weeks has had ten meetings in it and no time taken out for planning....[So giving up a teaching period is] hard to do, because if we take a class out and all the other sections are moving forward, we're going to lag behind."

With the teaching schedule change, voluntary extra staff planning time also disappeared. In the first year, teachers felt their weekly staff meeting over lunch provided them with insufficient time for dealing with all the issues that arose. As a result, since teachers' teaching schedules allowed for no other time in the week when everyone was available, they frequently met for a second meeting at 7:00 a.m. over breakfast. Giving up shared classrooms the second year affected teachers' willingness to meet beyond their weekly meeting. "For whatever reason," Respondent 5 explained, "it seems like we aren't making extra meetings even though we have things we ought to be discussing. I think part of it is that maybe we aren't as connected."

Several teachers were also concerned about the loss of extra weekly planning, especially as it affected new teachers. Like the original group of teachers, new teachers received no in-service training; they learned through first-hand experience. Whitford and Kyle (1984), in their yearlong study of a school's initial experience with interdisciplinary
teaming, noted that insufficient training tended to leave teachers confused and dislocated. Such was the experience of the new teachers of ID. They would ask their peers what they were doing the next day and how it was to be carried out. Unlike the veteran teachers, the new teachers also did not even have the advantage of more staff planning time.

Consequently, lack of time and training contributed to their distress. Respondent 6 commented about the disadvantages to them:

I know that a couple of people who are teaching [the course] for the first time feel like we should meet every day because they’re still feeling like they’re not sure on a given day where they are, sometimes. And I know last year we had that sense, and we did meet a lot of the time twice a week just because we had to. And so I think it’s difficult for somebody who just doesn’t have the time to really dig into that well. So, it’s tough. There’s no question in my mind but that this kind of teaching takes more time.

This comment supports the finding in Prisoners of Time (April, 1994) that time is a problem for educators. The report noted that the greatest resistance to reallocating time is found in the conviction that the only valid use of teachers’ time is “in front of the class” (p. 3). When the design of ID was changed and eliminated the practice of paired teachers sharing the classroom, the new teachers of ID lost support that would have enabled them to gain comfort with their teaching and to develop the skills they needed to teach a new course.

The second outcome of no longer sharing classrooms was that teachers perceived the schedule as interfering with their use of time to meet with their partners. Both Erb
(1992) and Merenbloom (1991) noted that common planning time for interdisciplinary teaming is a high scheduling priority. During their interviews, all of the teachers commented about being less aware of what their partners were doing in the classroom. In the first year, “[my partner] and I were in the classroom all the time,” Respondent 1 observed. “We knew exactly what was going on all the time. With this year, it’s much more difficult with my partner,” because they taught separately. Respondent 6 believed he could have a sense of what his partners did in a class,

but I can’t really know. I can’t be there. I can’t actually see how the kids took it, what direction they really took it in, what they got fired up about, and also, where the other teacher’s strength with that information lies. I don’t want to try and do the same thing that another teacher just did. I think from time to time that I do do that. The kids are usually pretty good about telling me, but in that sense, it can be a waste of your time to walk in here afterwards and have a really good idea of what you want to do and find that the other guy just did it.

Respondent 3 echoed this comment:

I can walk into the classroom and really not know what has gone on. So I don’t know how to pick up the ball as smoothly. [Last year] even if we weren’t leading the discussion, we were there. So we had a clearer sense of what was going on. There were days when we would divide the class in half. And [my partner] would lead the first half, and I would lead the second, and vice-versa. Being there, I knew how to segue. Not being there, it’s pretty awkward.
With partners no longer sharing the classroom, Respondent 2 acknowledged that scheduling was a big problem, but he believed there should be a common period when partners could meet: "All of that is difficult but not impossible to get." Respondent 6 indicated that there was "not enough time to meet with the other teacher." With his new responsibilities as Dean of Studies, Respondent 1 felt that "neither [my partner] nor I have the time to find that much time to meet." Consequently, teachers characterized daily contact with their partners as brief and most often occurring on a catch-as-catch-can basis between classes, through e-mail or by phone.

In some instances teachers actively tried to set up weekly meetings with their partners, but only one was successful meeting with his partner over dinner. Several other teachers tried to use part of the consultation period to meet but found the time limiting because of their involvement with students. One teacher, Respondent 1, chose to spend one double class period a week sharing the classroom with his partner, who was new to the course, but indicated that he would not continue this practice for the entire year. Respondent 4 was also free when his partner was teaching and voluntarily chose to be with him as much as possible. Unfortunately, his partner taught another class during the first of the two periods and could not do likewise.

The teachers' experiences and perceptions agreed with what research has indicated about the significant impact the lack of planning time has on successfully meeting goals. Although no one expressed a desire to do any less than he was doing, some teachers admitted that if they had more time, they could do a better job. Respondent 5 stated that there was "no time allotted for rethinking the course. You basically – like any teacher does for the rest of their classes – read the material, rethink
the questions, think up new questions, evaluate the students’ work. That’s your time, and that’s all you’re going to give it. There’s no extra time.” As Respondent 6 put it, “there’s no way there’s enough time. I could always do a lot more, and I know that even now, if I just shut down some of the other things I do, I could probably do a better job than what I do.” Respondent 1 concurred: “...a lot of the time – today – I don’t feel prepared enough for probably what’s going to end up happening.”

Question # 3 – What are team members’ perceptions about their professional growth, as a result of being a member of an interdisciplinary team?

Spies (1995) advanced the idea that interdisciplinary team teaching at the high school level resulted in some of the same benefits as those found in middle level schools. Among them he cited “greater teacher motivation and satisfaction” and “improved instruction” (p. 6) as two areas related to teachers’ professional growth. Several studies indicated that the team itself was the most important element of staff development (Alexander & George, 1981; Husband & Short, 1994; Whitford & Kyle, 1984). Other studies likewise concluded that teaming fosters professional satisfaction (Alexander & George, 1981; Arhar, Johnston & Markle, 1992; Clark & Clark, 1997; Cohen, 1976; Meichtry, 1990; Valentine, Clark, Irvin, Keefe, & Melton, 1993).

At IPS, every teacher of ID believed that teaching the course had given him more confidence or broadened his teaching abilities. Respondent 2 experienced teaching the course as rejuvenating his love of teaching:
CHAPTER 3
Methodology and Procedure

Introduction

This chapter describes the methodology used to collect and analyze the influences interdisciplinary team teaching has on the work lives of independent high school teachers in a single high school setting. The chapter is divided into several sections with an in-depth description of each methodological step.

Research Context

This study was prompted by my personal experience with interdisciplinary education in an independent school. During the 1988-1989 academic year, several colleagues and I developed a high school level interdisciplinary course, which I then taught with a teacher from another department for the next five years. Throughout my involvement in the course, I became aware that team teaching a course required a considerable amount of planning time. This demand had to be balanced with my other teaching and extracurricular responsibilities. Differences of opinion and approaches to presenting material also had to be worked out.

Though we were both initially nervous about sharing a classroom with each other, my colleague and I experienced certain benefits. We had great freedom in the development of the curriculum and selection of our own course materials. Class discussions were stimulating, and collaborating and teaching in the classroom with a colleague from a different department allowed me to observe and reflect upon a
colleague’s methods and approach to teaching. The effect of this teaching arrangement was to effect a change in my own teaching style. Because of the impact of this course on my work life, I wondered how interdisciplinary team teaching at a different independent school influenced high school teachers’ work lives.

To examine these influences, I had to locate an independent school that offered interdisciplinary courses. The school used in this research study, Independent Preparatory School (IPS) [a pseudonym], is located outside the New York City metropolitan area in a rural New Jersey community, not far from a well-known institution of higher learning. The 190-year-old school has long enjoyed a reputation of academic excellence and has graduated students who have attended prestigious colleges across the nation.

Interdisciplinary courses have been in existence at IPS for nearly 15 years. The school currently offers 21 different interdisciplinary courses. The first interdisciplinary course was taught to sophomores. It brought together two disciplines and teachers from the different departments involved. Each teacher was responsible for teaching his discipline’s half of the course. And aside from weekly lectures that brought all the students together, the teachers did not share the classroom. Furthermore, students could take the course in any one of the three terms during the school year.

Over time, as additional interdisciplinary courses were created, they spread to other grades. Some courses became required and could be taken during any one of the school’s three terms; others were elective and sequential. However, regardless of how many sections, these courses were structured so that each half was subject specific, teachers did not share the classroom other than when weekly lectures were delivered, and the classes only met for five 50-minute periods per week.
In a departure from this structure of interdisciplinary courses at IPS, the department chairs began an initiative during the 1997-1998 academic year to develop an interdisciplinary course in which teachers would be paired and each pair would teach the same group of students in consecutive class periods. Moreover, the course was slated to become a required yearlong course for all freshmen that would be phased in over a three-year period. Consequently, it started as a pilot course and was offered to freshmen as an elective.

Entitled Interdisciplinary (ID) [a pseudonym], the course was offered for the first time in 1998. Its design fulfilled the freshmen requirements in English, history, art, geography and religion and enabled students to learn how these disciplines interact and have a critical impact on the human condition. The course examines a wide variety of cultures and epochs, ranging from China in the Tang and Sung dynasties to the America of Huckleberry Finn. The course also focuses on developing students’ skills in writing, grammar, reading, visual interpretation, computer literacy, and library research.

When ID began in the fall of 1998, there were four sections. Teachers were paired – an English teacher with a partner from a different discipline – and shared a section of 12-14 students for two consecutive periods. Another feature of ID was that the teaching staff had in their schedule a common period during which they would meet to review the weekly syllabus and discuss other matters related to the course.

Following its first year, the course underwent some changes. Two new sections were added, requiring more teachers. The course materials and syllabus were reviewed and modified. Each member of the staff, all of whom had given up a free period to share
the classroom with their partners, decided to discontinue this practice, since the school was unwilling to compensate them for their extra classroom time.

Given the uniqueness and newness of this course and the changes that occurred in its less than two years of existence, I wanted to understand how this course was affecting the work lives of the teachers who were involved in it. Because no other interdisciplinary course at IPS is taught this way, it is difficult to capture and generalize the findings to other interdisciplinary courses taught at IPS. However, the analysis of the data collected has relevance to other efforts to bring interdisciplinary team teaching to the high school level.

Research Design

This study used a qualitative research design to examine teachers' perceptions of the influence interdisciplinary team teaching has had on their work lives. Qualitative research design has merit when the study is exploratory or descriptive; delves into the complexities and processes; stresses the importance of context; recognizes the significance of local variation; explores where and why policy does or does not work; examines innovative systems; or shows interest in participant perspectives (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998; Marshall & Rossman, 1989). Krathwohl (1998) offers another explanation for using a qualitative research design: “Qualitative research methods are particularly useful in understanding how individuals understand their world, in showing how individuals’ perceptions and intentions in situations determine their behavior, in
exploring phenomena to find explanations, and in providing concrete and detailed
illustrations of the phenomena” (p. 225).

Much qualitative research is written as a case study (Krathwohl, 1998). “A case
study is a detailed examination of one setting, or a single subject, a single depository of
documents, or one particular event” (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998, p. 54). Yin (1994) notes
that case studies are preferred when researchers pose “how” or “why” questions, have
little control over events, and focus on a current phenomenon within some real-life
context. Because this research involved an investigation of how teachers experienced the
influences of team teaching on their work lives, I chose a case study approach.

Krathwohl describes the characteristics of a case study:

Case studies are bounded by a particular individual, situation, program,
institution, time period, or set of events. Within those boundaries,
whatever is the focus of attention is described within the perspective of the
context surrounding it. Case studies are ideal for illustrating the
complexity of causation. The case study is sometimes a step in the larger
study where cases are combined in support of an overall explanation or
theory that arises out of cross-site analysis (p. 332).

Because of my experience in developing and teaching an interdisciplinary course,
I approached my data collection with theoretical sensitivity (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).
“Theoretical sensitivity refers to the attribute of having insight, the ability to give
meaning to data, the capacity to understand, and capability to separate the pertinent from
that which isn’t” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 42). According to Strauss and Corbin
(1990), this sensitivity comes from literature, from professional and personal experiences,
and through the analytical process of interaction with the collected data. My experience, along with seventeen years as an educator and my literature review, enabled me to develop questions that correlated with my subsidiary questions (Appendix A). I then ordered the questions for my interview protocol (Appendix B) and used them in this study to understand the context within which the teachers work.

In this case study, my primary research tool was the interview because it afforded me access to teachers’ perceptions that I could not have gained otherwise. “The purpose of interviewing is to find out what is in and on someone else’s mind...to allow us to enter into the other person’s perspective. Qualitative interviewing begins with the assumption that the perspectives of others are meaningful, knowable, and able to be made explicit” (Patton, 1990, p. 278).

The questions were designed to garner perceptions without restricting the inquiry. Interviews were relaxed, conversational and open-ended. Each participant, all of whom were male, and his responses to my questions were handled as a case record. The teachers’ perceptions about teaching an interdisciplinary course and the effects on their use of time, professional growth, classroom autonomy, dealing with conflicts, and collaboration appear in their own words to express their feelings, beliefs, and concerns about their involvement in the course (Appendix C).

Theoretical Orientation

In an effort to understand how interdisciplinary teaming influences the work lives of independent schoolteachers, it is important to examine how team members collaborate
and the factors that affect their collaboration. As a descriptive model of the process of collaboration, the theory of negotiated order confronts "the problem of how order is maintained in an organization in spite of numerous external and internal changes" (Day & Day, 1977, p. 128). Fundamental to this theory is the view that agreements are kinetic; divergent orientations and interests and differences of opinion, coupled with formal and informal behaviors, cause participants to renegotiate agreements. As a result, this theory of collaboration is viewed as an emergent process (Gray, 1989). "The organization...is viewed as a locale where certain agreements are being terminated or forgotten while others are being reviewed, renewed, revised, revoked, or whatever. The order which has been attained in the past is therefore always subject to change" (Day & Day, 1977, p. 131). Thus, collaboration requires the parties involved to be in a continual process of negotiation and renegotiation.

Drawing from Gray's (1989) discussion of collaboration, I will examine the interdisciplinary team teachers' ability to collaborate from the perspective of negotiated order theory. Negotiated order theory stresses five dynamics for successful processes (Gray, 1989). Applied to collaboration among faculty members, Austin and Baldwin (1991) distill them into the following:

First, collaboration involves interdependence among the participants. Individuals are motivated to collaborate to work toward goals that are not possible or feasible for one person alone to achieve. Second, through collaboration, partners encounter new views and approaches, and, by grappling with the differences between their views, participants find new understanding, ideas, or solutions.
Third, joint ownership of decisions is necessary for successful collaboration; that is, collaborators must all agree on the direction of the joint work. The fourth key dynamic is closely related to the third. If collaborative relationships are to be productive, participants (or “stakeholders”) must share responsibility for decisions about the team members’ relationships and roles. Finally, negotiated order theory emphasizes that “collaboration is an emergent process” (Gray, p. 11) through which the roles of participants, their decision-making processes, and their goals and agreements evolve over time (pp. 48-49).

Inherent in the process of collaboration are issues related to autonomy, use of time and communication. Because teachers are typically accustomed to teaching alone, they are autonomous in their classrooms. In collaborating with other teachers, team members may initially feel “uncomfortable with the loss of autonomy” (Austin & Baldwin, p. 44), because they are accustomed to thinking about different approaches to their teaching on their own. However, interdisciplinary teaming can enhance teachers’ autonomy to make choices about such things as use of class time, curriculum and teaching techniques (Clark & Clark, 1997; Husband & Short, 1994). “Team members are no longer restricted by the isolation and rigidity that characterize the typical single subject schedule; . . . teachers are empowered to make decisions, work together, try out new ideas, support each other and cooperatively assess the results of their work” (Clark & Clark, p. 268). Additionally, team teachers can influence and be influenced by each other and experience an increased sense of their own autonomy as a result of teaming (Cohen, 1976).
The use of time also plays an important role in collaboration. In the confines of their classrooms, teachers exercise control over how time is used. They also control how they will use their time for planning and meeting the additional responsibilities they carry. Frequent team planning time appears to enhance team effectiveness (Mac Iver, 1990). However, how a team works is often affected by meeting deadlines or the demands of work obligations (Pounder, 1998). Having a common planning period facilitates team teachers’ ability to address the needs of their students, plan lessons, maintain policies, and exchange information (McQuaide, 1992).

Closely allied with use of time is the importance of team members’ ability to communicate. Communication between members allows team members to address common goals, mediate differences, and develop close personal bonds (Kruse & Louis, 1997). According to Austin and Baldwin (1991), team members need to express differing views to enhance the quality of their work. They “understand that civilized and respectful disagreement is normal and useful as a group of people work together. Thus effective teams learn how to handle conflict productively” (Austin & Baldwin, 1991, p. 59).

A byproduct of teaming is that teachers are continually teaching each other and learning from one another. Team members perceive themselves in new ways “and their interaction with other professionals can also lead to changes in their attitudes toward teaching and in the ways they teach” (Adler & Flihan, 1997, p. 31). They develop the opportunities to share information and insights among themselves (Whitford & Kyle, 1984). Additionally, “they help one another to improve their practice of teaching through
such means as encouraging experimentation with new ideas, mutually solving

Data Collection

Data collection involved an hour-long interview with each of the six ID team
participants. Each interview was semi-structured, what Krathwohl (1998) describes as
having a predetermined order and open-ended questions. To facilitate the interview, I
used an interview protocol (Appendix B) that addressed the areas related to my
subsidiary questions.

In designing the protocol, I formulated a series of questions from my own
experience and my literature review that I believed were germane to my research
question and addressed the areas of time, professional growth, autonomy, conflict
resolution, and collaboration. I brought certain assumptions about interdisciplinary team
teaching to the design of the interview protocol. I assumed that the process of being a
member of an interdisciplinary team would cause members to develop personal meanings
about the course, about teaching, and about other team members. I also assumed their
actions would be in response to their perceived meanings and would cause them to work
toward common goals.

To test the relevance of my questions, I conducted a pilot study. Yin (1994) and
Krathwohl (1998) both advocate conducting a pilot study for interviews as a means to
refine data collection procedures. "The pilot case is used more formatively, assisting an
investigator to develop relevant lines of questions – possibly even providing some
I think I see myself as a better teacher now than I was 14 months ago, when the course started. In that I’ve been teaching for 25 years, things get a little stale, more than a little stale. And I think this course really served to address a midlife teaching crisis in all kinds of ways. So, I think in one sense it’s made me a better teacher…but I think it’s just reawakened my joy of being in the classroom.

Respondent 4 felt that the course “broadened my sense of what I’m capable of doing.” Respondent 6 saw himself developing as a teacher: “I see my view of my understanding of how teaching works changing more rapidly than it would have if I weren’t involved in [ID]…. And I feel now, largely due to the fact that teaching with other teachers and that I have these tools at my command, I’m eminently [a] better [teacher].”

Another benefit of teaming is that it exposes teachers to subject matter outside their own discipline (Alexander & George, 1981; Foss & Pinchback, 1998; Hart, 1998; McKinley, 1996; Merenbloom, 1991). Teaching ID invigorated the teachers’ own learning because they had to read more widely; they had to delve into material unrelated to their disciplines in an effort to be able to teach the class. Respondent 4 discovered that teaching the course forced him “to learn things I didn’t know…[similar to] when I was doing the Greek and Roman course [another interdisciplinary course offered at IPS]. There was a lot of Greek and Roman poetry that I had never read before, plays I had never looked at. And so that really expanded my understanding of the subject because I had to do these things.” Respondent 3 experienced himself as becoming more “global”
and being forced to read more: "I've read and annotated and that whole thing has enriched my life."

Whereas teaching material outside their known areas of expertise was at times intimidating, they all realized they were capable of doing it. Respondent 2 had originally thought that it was ludicrous to believe that teachers could teach all areas of the course. But he discovered "that it can happen. I still defer, if I can, to an art teacher when we're working on art paintings, but I've found I have some competence in that area, given some little more experience that I used to have."

Further, several teachers perceived the benefits of modeling to their students that they - both students and teachers alike - were all working together to gain a mastery and understanding of a subject matter. Not doing so was a missed opportunity to demonstrate the learning process at work. Consequently, when the staff decided to drop The Dream of the Red Chamber, Respondent 3 voiced disappointment because he believed that the teachers "should be modeling learning methods. What better way to do that than dealing with something you don't know."

Alexander and George (1981) suggest that an advantage of teaming is that territoriality, the sense of the classroom as one's own private domain, decreases. Nearly every teacher of ID expressed some initial concern about being in the classroom with another teacher. Respondent 2 commented that he never envisioned himself "able to teach with someone else. I always thought of myself as a solo act. I didn't like people. I got nervous when people observed my classes." Respondent 4 summed up what may have been other teachers' unspoken feelings about having another person in his classroom: "I wondered at the beginning of last year, when I thought, well, mm, my
partner's going to be in the same class as me all the time. Mm, interesting, wonder how that's going to work. I wonder how I'll like that, because virtually no one has ever visited my classes ever before, or, very, very rarely."

However, they all discovered that they preferred to share the classroom, believing that being together in the classroom was one of the most beneficial aspects of teaching the course. They liked the opportunity to see their colleagues teach. The interaction between teachers broadened the awareness of each other's teaching styles, another benefit of teaming noted by Alexander and George (1981). Respondent 6 found the most valuable part of team teaching was "to learn from somebody else...to be able to see somebody else in action...knowing where I might overlap or not, knowing where I could take an idea that they had presented and develop it in another way." Respondent 5 found the value in teaming was "watching different styles, lots of modeling of arguing for kids, modeling different approaches."

Still another advantage to teachers who team is that they are exposed to different academic perspectives and professional points of view (Alexander & George, 1981). Though the teachers of ID did not always agree with their partners' ways of instruction or of handling certain situations, they felt their students profited from having two teachers with different perspectives openly disagree at times. They also believed the outcomes of watching each other were beneficial. Respondent 4 commented that what he liked about having someone else in the classroom while he was teaching was that he would "pipe up with [his] ideas as well and...[we would disagree] with each other all the time. I thought it taught a wonderful lesson to the kids." Respondent 3 felt that "the benefit for being in the room at the same time was to model for the kids that interchange and discourse and
willingness to disagree and...that there was more than one way to look at a problem.” The teachers also perceived that the concentration of time spent with their students contributed to their getting to know each other well.

Respondent 6 noted that disagreeing with another teacher’s method “encourages you to sit and think about [it] and decide what you’re going to do.” He recounted a story about watching his partner lead a class and favor the boys over the girls. Angered, he noted that he favored a certain group of students in one of his classes. “You’ve got to know those things. It’s hard to focus on them if you’re not watching somebody else, if you’re not having any outside evaluation.” By contrast, both Respondent 2 and Respondent 5 admitted that teaming had not significantly changed the way they taught. However, they each acknowledged being affected by their partners’ ideas and presentation of material.

The teachers perceived other benefits of teaming as well. Respondent 5 noted that teaching the course “helped me with my understanding a little bit more about the value, actually, ironically, of the disciplines themselves.” He and Respondent 1 also both learned the value of proceeding more slowly and taking the time to insure that students had a deep, rather than superficial, understanding of the material. Additionally, Respondent 1 and Respondent 6 expressed real benefits from having to use the computer as an instructional tool. Observations of classes and staff meetings revealed teachers’ adeptness at employing them instructionally.
Question #4 - What effect does being a member of an interdisciplinary team have on a teacher's perception of his autonomy in the classroom, and what accounts for it?

A byproduct of team teaching in public schools is the increased autonomy it gives to teachers (Alexander & George, 1981; Clark & Clark, 1997; Erb, 1992; Husband & Short, 1994; Kruse & Louis, 1997; Merenbloom, 1991; Whitford & Kyle, 1984). Because teamed teachers control such factors as use of class time, size of instructional groups, curriculum integration and teaching strategies, they feel free to determine what is in the best interest of their students' particular needs. They have the benefit of collegial support, an arena in which to try out new ideas, and an opportunity to evaluate the results of their work (Kruse & Louis, 1984; Merenbloom, 1991).

In many independent schools, teachers have a great deal of autonomy in their classrooms, possibly more than their public school counterparts because they do not have to teach according to state mandated requirements. Beyond covering material in preparation for something like Advanced Placement tests, the teachers control what goes on in their classrooms. They have the freedom to do pretty much as they please, provided they get through the texts and material prescribed by the department chairs.

IPS is no exception to this convention. Indeed, IPS would seem to foster autonomy. Teacher observations and evaluations are a rarity, and teachers neither visit other teachers' classes nor invite others to their classes. Respondent 6 offered a reason why teachers behaved this way: "...teachers are used to having their own space and they're a little defensive about it, how they go about things. There's a huge confidence
issue with teaching, I think, and a lot of teachers, like it or not, aren't terribly confident about how well they teach.” Moreover, he believed that doing something by committee was difficult, particularly “when it comes down to things like your own classes. And most of us, especially at a school like this, have begun to feel or have been taught to feel a little territorial about our class and what gets taught in it.”

Alexander and George (1981) suggest that teachers gain autonomy from teaming, because the territoriality associated with single subject instruction tends to decrease. In the first year of ID, teachers did experience a decrease in territoriality, but contrary to the research, the loss in territoriality decreased their perceived autonomy. Respondent 1 indicated that “the autonomy issue is very, very strong” at IPS, a comment underscored by others as well. He further believed that there was an unplanned and unconscious effort by the administration to use ID “to move away from a completely autonomous classroom.”

Because sharing the classroom with a partner was an invasion of a teacher’s space, partners had to adjust to sharing control of the classroom. Respondent 1 liked that a teacher could leave his “individual mark on a class or a classroom environment and the classroom experience....I’ve had some of my strongest educational experiences with teachers who had that very strong effect on a class.” He believed that there was some loss of one’s space and control of the classroom that a teacher had to give up, being in the classroom with a partner, but he did not necessarily see that as negative. He admitted, though, that teaching with someone else “puts a brake on the view that the class is your little world.”
Respondent 6 was initially somewhat intimidated, teaching with someone who had more than 20 years of teaching experience: “It took a while to get comfortable enough with that to actually do the things that you do and to really bring out your own personality.” Respondent 5 recognized that he was not a person who tended to make adjustments. He and his partner had “firm ideas about what we think works and what doesn’t work...We came to some agreement on how to work with that stuff, and the rest took care of itself.”

Respondent 2, who taught with two different partners, contended that, with one partner, “it’s a matter of biting my tongue a lot of the time because he takes a classroom by storm,” implying that, if he were running the class by himself, he would have responded to discussions differently. Respondent 3 likewise became frustrated sitting on an idea for a while and also indicated that his approach to discipline was markedly different from his partner’s. Consequently, whereas teachers did give up some territoriality, they perceived that loss as lessening their autonomy. In the second year, with a return to single-teacher classrooms, teachers regained what little territoriality they had lost, and along with it, reclaimed their original sense of autonomy.

Another area in which interdisciplinary teaming empowers teachers with greater autonomy is decision making (Alexander & George, 1981; Husband & Short, 1994; Merenbloom, 1991; Whitford & Kyle, 1984). Indeed, autonomy in curriculum decision making for ID was enhanced. “We know we can actually institute whatever it is we come up with,” noted Respondent 6. “We’re not waiting for an administrative person to say, “Yes, that’s okay. We’ve been given a lot of leeway, which is really nice.” In the course of their staff meetings, the teachers were involved in a constant process of revising
and planning the course. They had to review the weekly syllabus, determine whether
units were going to be modified, decide how they wanted students to complete projects,
and reach agreements related to the direction of the course.

Despite teachers' greater autonomy in determining the direction of the course,
their personal autonomy often overrode decisions made in staff meetings. Coming out of
the deeply entrenched culture of autonomy at IPS, once the teachers returned to their
classrooms, they did not feel compelled to follow the agreed-upon plan. For example,
during an observation of a staff meeting, it became evident that classes were all covering
different material. The discussion focused around the number of writing assignments, a
book none of the students understood, and the Greek play Prometeus Bound. Though
the teachers had previously agreed that they were going to have their students do
everything, not everyone was sticking to the plan. Some teachers had already decided not
to have students write all the papers; some felt the students had too much to do and
dropped the reading of the play. This situation illustrated Respondent 3's observation:
"We would leave a meeting and say this is the way we're going to do it and then...people
did what they wanted....The excuse was always, 'Well, this is a pilot, so since it's a pilot,
we'll do it our way and you do it your way'."

Teachers' justification of their individual behaviors reflected this personal
autonomy. Respondent 6 believed that "a lot of things we've ended up doing have not
been because they were planned. It's been because somebody did it and it seemed to
work." Without experimentation, Respondent 1 said, "it would be very difficult to make
any progress and figure out what's working or what's not working....If, let's say, you
don't feel really that your class is ready to do this type of assignment, then I think you
have to be able to change that." Further, he advocated abandoning a plan when he perceived that his students were not grasping the material: "I've almost made it a mantra that I refuse to push forward....I'd rather make sure that they understand...things than go aimlessly forward." Respondent 6 believed the course was loose enough to allow teachers to add "bits and pieces, so you can see that you can make your classes your own." He included a Wordsworth poem that he was sure no one else used, since it was not in the syllabus.

Thus, despite the claim of research (Alexander & George, 1981; Arhar, Johnston & Markle, 1992; Erb, 1992; Erb & Doda, 1989; Husband & Short, 1994; Meichtry, 1990; Merenbloom, 1991; Whitford & Kyle, 1984) that interdisciplinary teaming increases teachers' autonomy, such was not the case at IPS. Teachers gave up some territoriality when they shared the classroom with their partners, which they perceived as reducing their personal classroom autonomy. However, the entrenched culture of autonomy at IPS superceded the territorial concessions, because when the teachers were on their own, they resorted to doing their own thing. Furthermore, though staff meetings fostered greater autonomy regarding curricular decisions, lack of follow through on agreed-upon decisions reflected the preeminence of personal autonomy in the classroom.

**Question # 5 - What are team members' perceptions about how conflicts between them arise and are resolved?**

Conflicts are a natural outgrowth of differences that exist between people in the area of thought, attitude, belief, perception and social systems and structures (Lord, 1999;
Weeks, 1992). When people work together as a team, conflicts among them are both inevitable and to be expected (Drake, 1993; Merenbloom, 1991). This outcome is especially true for teachers as most involved in teams have had no preparation for it (Merenbloom, 1991). Kruse and Louis (1997), in their study of four schools that employed teaming, noted that teachers tended to avoid dealing with conflicts directly and settled for comfort instead. Dorsch (1996) also found that teachers sought to maintain harmony in their working relationships rather than deal with differences.

All of the teachers of ID indicated that they had experienced or were aware of conflicts that resulted from or occurred during staff meetings or working with their partners. Teacher interviews revealed that most conflicts among staff members were either overt – occurred at staff meetings – or covert – kept to oneself or confided to one’s partner. Overt conflicts stemmed primarily from teachers’ pedagogical differences and deviating from the syllabus; covert conflicts surfaced in teachers’ personal reactions to various circumstances that took place at staff meetings.

One area that provoked overt conflicts was differences in pedagogy. Respondent 5 felt that “tensions would often arise when people’s whole, full pedagogical perspective was challenged, shaken up to the extent that they really didn’t know what it is that they could base their teaching upon.” One ongoing, pedagogical difference dealing with whether ID was skills- or content-driven involved teachers’ attitudes about the importance of tests and quizzes. Skills-oriented teachers perceived them as a means to insure that students learned content. Respondent 1 and Respondent 4 believed that students’ time was better spent mastering analytical, critical thinking and writing skills than demonstrating mastery of material and gave infrequent quizzes. Content-oriented
teachers felt quizzes and tests insured students knew the material and gave them the opportunity to demonstrate the application of the skills they were learning.

Most overt conflicts were discussed, though, Respondent 5 explained, until there "was a vote by consensus that some of us would give up after a while. But generally speaking, I think we would all have to agree before moving on." Consensus might not always make everyone happy, but reaching an agreement, Respondent 6 believed, was important because "we have a job to do, and you have to get back out there and do the thing that you're doing, and so usually you have to find some consensus."

A number of teachers indicated that there had been some overt controversies about the use of certain texts, which were resolved by consensus. In one instance the headmaster raised the issue about whether Equus was an appropriate text for ninth graders to be reading. Because of the source of this concern, the staff had no choice but to discuss the issue and decide whether to keep the book in the syllabus. During the discussion, Respondent 1 felt comfortable speaking up in defense of its inclusion. He believed it "achieved the result we wanted, which was to come back to myth at the end."

In another instance, when the teachers encountered students' negative reaction to The Dream of the Red Chamber as soon as they began to teach it, they had to decide whether to continue with it or drop it. Though they decided to drop it, Respondent 3 was surprised by some of his colleagues' reactions:

They just chucked it midstream. And I said at a meeting, 'Wait a minute. You've got two perspectives. You've got a Western perspective, and you've got an Eastern perspective. You need this other perspective, and you need these foreign texts. The kids shouldn't jump into this culture and
feel comfortable. It should be foreign, that’s the whole purpose of exploring it.’ And I was struck with the way people reacted to the strange and the foreign and that it is not comfortable. And the answer was, ‘How can I teach something I don’t know?’ And my answer is, ‘How can you expect students to learn something they don’t know? Why do you have to be above the students?’ And that happens way too often in this course. ‘Oh, I don’t know. I can’t teach this course. I don’t know the material.’ Well, who does know it? What’s the point? Kid’s don’t know it either.

Even though the teachers had to be in agreement before moving on, reaching a consensus was not always easy. Respondent 4 found it difficult, as coordinator of the course, especially the first year, to keep the teachers focused on issues that had to be decided: “I mean, in many cases they’re department chairmen too. They’ve been here a long time. They think what their agenda is is as important as anybody else’s agenda.” Respondent 6 was at times “appalled by the way some people just [wouldn’t] let go of what it [was] they were saying.”

Overt conflicts also occurred when teachers deviated from what they agreed to at a staff meeting. According to Respondent 3, “we would leave a meeting and say this is the way we’re going to [deal with the material] and then go off and do it completely differently.” Respondent 6 observed, “We don’t necessarily all do what we agree to do.” But, he added, “I don’t think it’s that big a deal.” By contrast, Respondent 3 felt that the serendipitous practice of teachers’ inventing their own syllabus gave students “vastly different experiences for what you want them to know” and departed from one of the goals of the course.
Respondent 1 acknowledged that “we had several times when major assignments were changed within classes, when somehow there seemed to be an agreement that we were all going to do the same assignment. And then suddenly people would find that the assignment got chucked out or something else had been done in its place. And that led to bitter disputes, I would say, on the part of certain individuals.” However, overt conflicts of this sort remained unresolved because of the teachers’ perceived autonomy to do what they wanted in their classrooms.

Beyond the overt conflicts, there were a number of covert conflicts that teachers mentioned during their interviews. Most of them occurred in reaction to something that occurred or was observed during staff meetings. Rather than saying something during staff meetings, though, teachers kept them to themselves. And because they chose to harbor them privately, the conflicts remained unresolved. Thus, deep trust did not exist. Trust, according to Schamber (1999), is a basis for effective teaming. When conflicts are avoided, she argues, there is an erosion of trust between members.

Nevertheless, the teachers downplayed the effect of these conflicts, maintaining that they did not affect people’s relationships. Respondent 6 believed that even though conflicts were not always resolved, people were “pretty big about” putting aside their disagreements. “There are a couple of huge personality conflicts in there, and I would say the people who are involved in those have done a pretty good job most of the time of rising over them and really seeing what’s best for the kids.” This behavior, referred to by Goffman (as cited in Dorsch, 1996) as facework, is designed to sustain positive interaction between team members. It allows members to foster mutual respect and to manage the challenges that arise within their relationships.
However, even when conflicts were believed to have been resolved, there was an implication that teachers were merely putting aside differences in an effort to maintain group harmony. Similarly, Kruse and Louis (1997) found in their study of four middle schools with interdisciplinary teams that staff members were more likely to avoid conflicts than risk disagreement and settled for comfort. In his interview, Respondent 2 voiced disappointment that Frankenstein was dropped at the end of the first year because he felt students responded well to it. Rather than contesting the decision, he dealt with his frustration by keeping “my mouth shut, [playing] the good soldier.” He rationalized that the course was too full and materials had to be removed. Even Respondent 5, after a vocal argument with another staff member, noted that the other teacher “was mature enough to say, ‘So, we got a little heated about it, but I don’t take it personally. We’re still friends.’ And even though I couldn’t tell at the time...actually, it was fine.”

Respondent 3 felt that meetings did not conclude with a clear resolution as often as they should: “Last year I felt like we had a pretty open interchange and shared some ideas. This year I feel as if we are rushing through. Some people are tired of the discourse and just want to rush through and get it over with.” Respondent 6 felt as if a group of first year teachers was being allowed to lead the course.

Several teachers felt that too much time was spent during staff meetings discussing the specific assignments instead of grappling with the more substantive aspects of instruction. Respondent 6 disliked that so much time could be spent arriving at a decision when he felt the staff could have decided it in a few minutes. But he rationalized that it was important to involve everyone, “to let other people know they’re still being included.”
Respondent 4 was frustrated that teachers did not stick to his agenda at staff meetings when he “needed the answers right away,” but he felt “it was very hard to say to your fellow colleague, ‘You’ve got to be quiet, ‘cause we’ve got to do this’.” Respondent 5 believed that the fundamental questioning was no longer occurring. Meetings served the purpose of “taking care of business, but the bigger questions, I think we are open to them. I’m not sure why we’re not really doing that kind of...work, when we’re talking about whether or not something is working as we’re assessing it.”

During his interview, Respondent 5 voiced resentment, too, that he had been put into the role of acting as coordinator for the first unit of the course in its second year. He had received a summer grant to incorporate changes, growing out of a summer workshop, into the course. At the start of the year, he found himself leading weekly question and answer periods related to the syllabus. “It hasn’t been an enjoyable role,” he observed. The change to the syllabus “was group work, which was assented to and decided on in the summer. And then all of a sudden, I feel myself put in the position of, not exactly defending, but explaining everything.”

His experience was corroborated by an observation of a staff meeting. When he was asked to review the upcoming week’s syllabus, he appeared unprepared for the task. He explained, during his interview, that no one understood the dynamic well at the time. At an observation of another staff meeting, the same situation occurred with Respondent 6. He too was put in the position of having to explain the syllabus. As he responded to his peers’ questions and took responsibility for amending the syllabus, he appeared uncomfortable and distressed. Toward the end of the meeting, he apologized for his poor organization of the unit.
Other minor conflicts existed but had more to do with the working relationships between partners. Partners employed facework in an effort to manage the challenges that arise between them. Respondent 3 discovered that he and his partner had different styles of dealing with discipline; he found the adjustment difficult. Exercising self-control when sharing the classroom with their partners also troubled teachers. Respondent 3 noted that he "had to sit on an idea for a while." Respondent 2 echoed the sentiment, indicating that if he had "an idea I want to get in...it's tough to just keep my mouth shut and let [my partner] go on and teach." Yet none of the teachers felt these situations affected their relationships with their partners. Indeed, they experienced their reactions as part of the process of learning to work together.

Despite the awareness and presence of conflicts, the teachers maintained that as a group they worked together well. Whereas some conflicts demanded resolution or consensus, the way in which the teachers dealt with many conflicts supported the findings of Kruse and Louis (1997) and Dorsch (1996); the teachers sought comfort and harmony. By not necessarily experiencing staff meetings as a safe environment in which to agree or disagree, the teachers remained unwilling to discuss certain concerns. Had they developed this context, they could have built the deeper trust necessary ultimately to resolve their differences (Drake, 1993; Merenbloom, 1991; Muronaga & Harada, 1999; Schamber, 1999).
Question # 6 - What are team members' perceptions about collaboration among themselves, and to what do they attribute these perceptions?

To review, collaboration, as defined in this study, is the interactive process of teachers to act or decide on issues related to a shared task. Implicit in this definition is the need for joint planning, implementation and evaluation, and a willingness on the part of the teachers to deal with conflicts and come to shared beliefs (Gray, 1989). When participants come together with a strong sense of commitment to these various responsibilities, a strong and effective sense of community also develops (Alexander & George, 1981; Williamson & Johnston, 1999).

During its first year, ID involved teachers from different disciplines working towards the same goal, and there was a strong commitment from the teachers to work together to make the course successful. In addition to partners sharing the classroom with each other, the staff spent much time monitoring, planning and redesigning the course. They realized that the course as planned was too ambitious and needed to have units and materials pared back or eliminated. They also recognized that their weekly planning session did not provide enough time for their necessary discussions, so they voluntarily agreed to extra weekly meetings to continue their deliberations. The amount of time involved helped scale “down the ambitions and [accomplish] manageable objectives at appropriate time intervals,” commented Respondent 5.

With all the time they spent together meeting, planning and being in each other’s classrooms, the staff members perceived that collaboration was strong. Because the staff
were “actually teaching the same thing,...teaching a curriculum we devised
together,...We feel much more free to talk about how we did things, what successes we
had,” observed Respondent 6. Respondent 4 attributed the strength to a belief “in what
we’re doing...[The group has] very strong personalities, but it’s a collaborative group,
and we enjoy each other.” Respondent 5 did not “see collaboration as a real problem.
We always try to argue things out in a way that is mutually respectful to one another.”
He also believed that “collaboration works when you have, not necessarily like-minded
people, but people who are at the same level of openness to whatever collective pedagogy
you’re going to be experiencing.” Thus, the teachers not only experienced a strong
commitment to collaboration but also a strong sense of community. They had a
camaraderie that allowed them to joke with one another, share elements of their personal
lives, and enjoy each other’s company. This sense of community is one advantage of the
interdisciplinary team concept (Alexander & George, 1981; Williamson & Johnston,
1999).

The second year of the course saw the continuation of the sense of community,
despite the addition of new staff and more sections. The teachers maintained that they
got along and worked together well. For example, during one staff meeting, the teachers
were discussing the amount of work students were being asked to complete. One of the
new teachers, from the art department and the partner of Respondent 1, felt that the
students had too much going on and needed some time off. Respondent 3 responded by
saying that Respondent 1 and his partner had been unable to read The Odyssey and were
probably only several pages into Ancient Greece. The art teacher ignored the comment
and said that he felt that he and Respondent 1 were the only people doing a certain assignment. He then said laughingly, "Art department people fight like this all the time."

Teachers made other comments about the course, sometimes negative, despite the presence of the Dean of Faculty, who attended their weekly staff meetings. Likewise, the new teachers freely offered their input as well as asked for and received guidance. This sense of community could only occur in an environment where teachers had mutual respect for one another and welcomed the ideas and opinions of others, another advantage associated with teaming (Alexander & George, 1981; Drake, 1993; Hart, 1998; Husband & Short, 1994; Merenbloom, 1991; Muronaga & Harada, 1999).

However, with a return to individual classes and no additional staff meetings, teachers doubted whether much collaboration existed. Partners no longer had the advantage of teaching together and had less time for planning. Staff meetings became forums for reviewing the week's syllabus and going over logistics. Respondent 3 stated:

We don't seem to leave the meetings with a clear statement of resolution as often as we should. Last year was easier as we had fewer teachers. And we had spent the whole year planning the course. So we were a little bit more on the same page. This year we have added new teachers, and we spent the summer supposedly revising the course; but we have deviated far afield from that syllabus already, and we haven't even planned the winter and spring clearly. So, we're flying by the seat of our pants too much.

Respondent 1 acknowledged that the value of meetings depended on the day. When meetings stayed focused, "sometimes we get, actually, something done. Other
times...we don’t get that much accomplished.” Respondent 5 noted that “it seems more like there is this tacit assumption that this [course] is moving forward and that it is working,” instead of using the staff meeting time to address the larger questions. “We’re not having fertile debates about those things.” Respondent 6 observed that the first year had been spent working out “a whole bunch of little things...A lot of it was still planning. We don’t do as much of that now.”

Discussions about the substantive aspects of instruction also disappeared. Indeed, Respondent 3 and Respondent 2 believed that there was some ambiguity about what actually went on during staff meetings. Respondent 2 was uncertain “whether what we go to [a] meeting thinking is what actually happens.” Respondent 3 and Respondent 6 intimated that several of their colleagues who had taught the course in its first year were setting the direction for the course. They felt these teachers wanted to rush through meetings rather than devote the necessary time to discussions and decision-making because they had already taught the course the previous year.

Lack of strong leadership also affected collaboration. Several members experienced Respondent 4’s leadership as weak. Respondent 3 believed ID lacked “a strong voice at the center. [Respondent 4] is the technical leader of the group, and he has to do the stuff in terms of setting schedules and things like that, but it’s kind of a volunteer business.” Respondent 6 believed that the coordinator of the course “is much more focused on [staff meetings] being an open forum for us....The best possible interdisciplinary program is going to be run by somebody who has a real vision for what they’re doing.”
Observed staff meetings revealed no written formal agenda, though Respondent 4 did start the meetings. But even he observed that other people's agenda disrupted meetings: "There are certain people...[for whom]...the concept of agenda does not compute. And there are times...when we were...going at it and...they would pull these other issues that needed to be decided down the road."

Merenbloom (1991) and Erb and Doda (1989) indicate that regardless of whether the leader is appointed by the administration or selected from within by the members of the group, expectations and responsibilities must be clearly articulated. On two different observed occasions, it was evident that members' expectations and responsibilities had not been clearly defined. In one instance, Respondent 4 asked Respondent 5 to review the syllabus for the upcoming week. He appeared unprepared for the request. When interviewed later, he indicated that he had "got stuck in the role...of being the leader of the question and answer period regarding the [weekly] syllabus." However, because he had been the one to insert changes for the unit into the syllabus over the summer, he felt consigned to the position of explaining everything: "...it is awkward and an ill-defined role, and I don't find it pleasant because it isn't collaborative. I didn't feel as if it were a shared role."

The situation repeated itself with Respondent 6 at a later observed staff meeting, but there was no opportunity for a follow-up interview with him. Nevertheless, he too had to explain the rationale for the assignments, at times sounding defensive about what teachers were to cover during the week. He too was put on the spot and was every bit as uncomfortable in the role as Respondent 5 had been several months earlier, and the meeting reflected a lack of clearly articulated responsibilities.
Collaboration between partners also changed from the first to the second year. Teachers who had taught together the first year were not necessarily teaching together the second year. Additionally, giving up the shared classroom lessened the same level of collaboration that had occurred the first year, since it was difficult for partners to find time to plan. Respondent 4 summed up the first year's experience this way:

I liked the idea that when we were discussing material that either he was unfamiliar with or I was, there was someone else there to add another voice. So you didn’t feel like you were entirely on your own….Or if both of you were, at least both of you relied on each other to keep things going. It was easy to coordinate ‘cause we would typically meet out in the corridor before class started and say, “Well, let’s plan to go this way for this double period’….Or we would turn to each other in the middle of class and say, ‘Don’t you think we should X or Y now?’

By contrast, Respondent 6 observed about the second year, “I just don’t know how [my partner] is teaching…I mean, I do, because we talk about it, but at the same time, not having been in the room for that experience, I really sometimes wonder if we’re not drawing the kids [in] two separate directions…” Respondent 5 lamented the loss of shared classrooms. He and his partner talked every day for about ten minutes, “which is fine for basic coordination or for assessing the kids. And we get together at report times and stuff, but, I don’t know, it’s not collaborative.”

During the first year of ID, the teachers experienced a strong sense of community and collaboration. To make the course work, the teachers made extra time available for planning and revising the course, and partners shared the classroom. When the structure
of the course changed, their sense that collaboration was occurring lessened. Staff meetings became less focused and more concerned with logistical matters. Paired teachers no longer had an awareness of what their partners were doing in the classroom. Lack of clarity about roles and responsibilities also contributed to the feeling that collaboration was hardly occurring. However, the teachers continued to experience a sense of community and to believe they worked well together. They developed and maintained a sense of acceptance and provided mutual support system for each other.

Negotiated Order Theory and the Findings

Having analyzed the findings within the context of what research reveals about interdisciplinary team teaching and how it affects or is affected by teachers’ use of time, professional growth, autonomy, mediation of conflicts, and collaboration, I turn now to some comments about the interplay between the findings and the theory of negotiated order. “Negotiated order is the consequence of give-and-take interaction within settings predefined by broader, and usually more formal, rules, norms, laws, or expectations, in order to secure preferred ends (or ‘stakes’)” (Thomas, 1984, p. 214). The interaction (collaboration or negotiation) entails five critical features essential to the process of collaboration: “(1) the stakeholders are interdependent, (2) solutions emerge by dealing constructively with differences, (3) joint ownership of decisions is involved’ (4) stakeholders assume collective responsibility for the future direction of the domain, and (5) collaboration is an emergent process” (Gray, 1989, p. 11).
A superficial look at this study’s findings suggests that staff members interacted in a manner consistent with the five dynamics associated with negotiated order. Coming from different disciplines to teach an interdisciplinary course, the teachers were interdependent. From the development of the syllabus through the actual teaching of the course, the teachers had to resolve differences of opinion in an effort to make the course successful. They had to make joint decisions that they all could accept, at the same time taking collective responsibility for the future direction of the course. Finally, because they could not predict how a decision, once implemented, would succeed, they were involved in an emergent process of collaboration since they continually needed to revisit earlier decisions and reconsider them.

However, a theory emerges from a system of assumptions that has been developed to predict or explain the nature of a particular set of phenomena. Whereas an initial look at the data suggested that the teachers’ interactions involved the dynamics of collaboration associated with the theory of negotiated order, close analysis of the data revealed that certain features of the school culture interfered with the realization of several of those dynamics. These features became evident during the analysis, which used the six subsidiary questions as categories to conduct a cross-record analysis of teacher responses (Appendix G). These categories helped identify patterns and assist in the interpretation of this study’s findings.

Two of the key dynamics were prevalent without dispute: the teachers were interdependent, and their collaborative process was emergent. All the teachers had to teach material outside their realm of knowledge and experience, and, with their partners, outside their combined disciplinary expertise. They had to rely on each other for
guidance and support as they strove to have their students make connections across disciplines. For example, Respondent 2 noted that he had gained some competence discussing art with his students, but he still deferred, if he could, "to an art teacher when working on art paintings."

The teachers were also involved in a continual process of planning and revising the course, which required them to negotiate and renegotiate decisions. During the planning of the course, they had developed a unit on Medieval Spain. Several months into the course, though, they realized that it was not going to work and decided to drop it, replacing it with something else. They also decided to abandon Dream of the Red Chamber after one day, because of student reaction to it.

However, three factors became barriers to the other key dynamics associated with negotiated order: administrative support of the course, time, and the school’s culture of autonomy. Administrative support of the course and time were less consequential factors the first year but became more important during the second year. The school's culture of autonomy was the most significant factor interfering with collaboration and had a direct effect on the way conflicts were handled.

From the outset of the course, the administration was supportive, providing a scheduled meeting time for staff members and encouraging a teaching model of paired teachers sharing the classroom for two consecutive periods. When the administration withdrew its support for this model, the proffered compromise was untenable because, if paired teachers gave up a period for planning and other pairs did not, their section would fall behind the others. The course had already proved to be very ambitious and one that
required more time for planning than was allotted. When the administration changed the original teaching model, though, the objectives of the course remained unchanged.

One consequence of the original teaching model's change was the effect on teachers' use of time for planning. During the first year, not only did the teachers benefit from the shared classroom, but they also willingly made extra time for planning. They wanted the course to succeed, and there were many aspects of the course that had not been adequately worked out during their planning of the course. With the loss of shared classrooms, the staff discontinued making extra time for staff meetings. As a result, staff meetings became less about continually assessing the course and its direction, and more about maintaining it in its present state. In the words of Respondent 5, "it seems more like there is this tacit assumption that this thing is moving forward and that it is working," rather than dealing with "the bigger questions."

With the change in administrative support and its impact on teachers' use of time, the teachers no longer made enough time available to deal constructively with differences to allow solutions to emerge. A "gang" of veteran teachers was allegedly controlling meetings, and as Respondent 3 commented, "Some people are tired of the discourse and just want to rush through and get it over with." Consequently, one of the key processes of collaboration associated with negotiated order was being thwarted.

The more significant impediment to the development of a negotiated order was the school's culture of autonomy. Everyone acknowledged that it was strong, yet no one fully relinquished his autonomy, even though there was a perceived lessening of it during the first year. Staff meetings provided teachers with the opportunity to explore differences and alternative options and come to agreement about assignments, paper
topics, and projects. "Ultimately," commented Respondent 5, "it was vote by consensus that some of us would give up after a while." Thus, in the context of the staff meetings, the teachers would agree upon a direction for further actions.

However, joint ownership of the decision ended once teachers returned to their classrooms, because they felt or had been taught to feel territorial about their class and what was taught in it. Additionally, some teachers were not always happy about an agreement but had no compunction about not following through with it. Respondent 6 admitted, "We don't even necessarily do what we agree to do." But he did not think it was "that big a deal... A lot of things we've ended up doing have not been because they were planned."

Moreover, with an admitted disregard for joint ownership of decisions, the teachers abdicated collective responsibility for their future understanding of the problem. Through their independence of action, they put their own individual, preferred ends ahead of those of the course. That the administration changed the model after the first year did not help either, since staff meetings became more a forum to review the week's syllabus and work out logistical matters. Furthermore, teachers' unwillingness to make more time available to address the future direction of the course, even though they acknowledged it was needed, negated the process.

Thus, whereas the theory of negotiated order confronts "the problem of how order is maintained in an organization in spite of numerous external and internal changes" (Day & Day, 1977, p. 128), that order is dependent on the dynamics associated with the processes of collaboration. At IPS, the strong culture of autonomy interfered with the development of a negotiated order because the teachers were unwilling to put aside their
claim to conducting their classes as they chose. Though as a group they had the responsibility and freedom to decide the future direction of the course, individually a teacher readily disregarded a joint decision if he wanted to do something else.

However, the conflicts that ensued as a result of disregarding an agreed-upon plan went unresolved because teachers put their personal interests ahead of the future of the course. They contended that the course was a pilot, “so since it’s a pilot, we’ll do it our way, and you do it your way, and then we’ll compare the results at the end,” explained Respondent 3. “But that comparison of results really didn’t happen.”

Consequently, the dynamics necessary for a successful process of collaboration failed to produce a negotiated order. The course had the ingredients for one to exist: 1) it was an interdisciplinary course designed to integrate five subject areas, and 2) teachers from different disciplines were involved in planning, monitoring, revising and teaching the course. But the school’s strong culture of autonomy undermined the dynamics of the processes of collaboration associated with negotiated order.

Summary

This chapter presented a description of the school community and a brief history of IPS. The chapter also provided an analysis of the six teachers’ responses to the interview questions. I gleaned from the transcripts teachers’ perceptions of how they worked as a team, how the teaching schedule affected their use of time, how being involved in ID affected their professional growth, how teaching the course affected their classroom autonomy, how they dealt with conflicts, and how they perceived their ability
to collaborate. Based on the results, I discussed the findings in the context of negotiated order theory.
CHAPTER 5

Overview, Data Analysis, Team Teaching’s Future, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

This chapter presents an overview of this study, conclusions, and recommendations for further investigation. Each area will be dealt with in a separate section.

Overview of the Research

The purpose of this case study was to learn about the influences of interdisciplinary team teaching on the work lives of high school teachers at an independent school. Interdisciplinary teaming has largely been the province of middle-level schooling, but since the mid-1990’s discussion of interdisciplinary teaming at the high school level has received greater attention (Burns, 1995; Edwards, 1995; George & McEwin, 1999; Hart, 1998; Impson, Lynman & Reiter, 1995; Murphy, 1998; Spies, 1995; Spies, 1997). The results of these studies suggest similar outcomes: teaming benefits teachers through the creation of small collaborative groups, thereby reducing teacher isolation, enhancing teacher professionalism, and strengthening the appeal to teachers of teaching as a profession. However, these studies have not dealt with the effect interdisciplinary teaming has had on the work lives of high school teachers.

Implicit in the definition of interdisciplinary team teaching is the idea that teachers collaborate. According to the literature (Clark & Clark, 1997; Husband & Short,
1994; Kruse & Louis, 1997; Lipsitz, 1984), ongoing and worthwhile discussion and
decision making on professional issues develop similar values and greater professional
interaction. In addition, because of the organizational structure of the interdisciplinary
team, teachers may "share a common understanding or 'negotiated order' about their
relationships to one another" (Gray & Wood, 1991), raising the level of their awareness
about interdependence and thereby improving their collaboration.

I wanted to learn whether high school teachers at an independent school benefited
from the interdisciplinary team organization. I was also interested to learn how team
teaching affected their use of time, professional growth, dealing with conflicts, and
ability to collaborate. This study investigated the influences of teaming on the work lives
of members of an interdisciplinary team and the relationship of those teachers to the
collaborative nature of their partners and the team at large. Six questions guided the
collection of data.

I chose interdisciplinary team teaching at the high school level as my focus
because of my personal experience with it at that level and because it is an organizational
structure that can be used to broaden connections between all academic disciplines. The
independent school selected as the site for this data collection introduced interdisciplinary
courses in the mid-1980's. Other interdisciplinary courses have been introduced over the
years, but Interdisciplinary (ID) is unique in its organizational structure. Moreover, in the
two years of its existence, the course has undergone an organizational restructuring that
has affected all those who are teaching it for the second year.

Naturalistic inquiry was the qualitative research methodology chosen to conduct
this investigation. Because the course was site specific and only in its second year, I
elected only to interview those teachers who had at least one year of experience teaching the course. Of the ten teachers involved in the course, eight volunteered, but only six met the above-mentioned criterion. Four teachers from another independent school agreed to pilot test the interview questions. One of those teachers had helped create a team taught course and had been teaching it for ten years. Another teacher had formerly been involved in the creation and teaching of an interdisciplinary course at a boarding school. The other two teachers, both from the same department, had been involved in planning and teaching an interdisciplinary unit with members of a different department for one year.

My primary data collection instrument was a semi-structured interview (Appendix B). The interview was guided by a number of preset questions that allowed for open-ended and less structured answers. Where appropriate during the interview, I asked follow-up questions to gain additional information about certain subjects and to provide greater richness of the data being collected. Each interview lasted nearly an hour and was audio tape-recorded with the permission of each participant.

Through inductive analysis and process study, I coded and organized the teachers' individual responses around six subsidiary questions:

1. What are team members' perceptions of the nature of the interdisciplinary team's work in the independent school, and why do they believe it is set up as it is?

2. What are team members' perceptions of the effects the teaching schedule has on their use of time?
3. What are team members’ perceptions about their professional growth, as a result of being a member of an interdisciplinary team?

4. What effect does being a member of an interdisciplinary team have on a teacher's perception of his or her autonomy in the classroom, and what accounts for it?

5. What are team members' perceptions about how conflicts between them arise and are resolved?

6. What are team members' perceptions about collaboration among themselves, and to what do they attribute these perceptions?

A correlation between the interview questions and the subsidiary questions enabled me to ensure that there was a balance of interview questions for each subsidiary question (Appendix A). To facilitate the analysis, the subsidiary questions were simplified into six primary categories and became the areas of investigation to discover emerging patterns and help with the interpretation of the data: teachers' sense of the team's work, use of time, professional growth, classroom autonomy, conflicts, and collaboration.

Patton (1990) endorses a researcher's skill in analyzing qualitative data. He acknowledges that it is difficult to reproduce the researcher's analytical thought processes. He goes on to say that "there are no absolute rules except to do the very best with your full intellect to fairly represent the data and communicate what the data reveal given the purpose of the study" (p. 372). I assessed the teachers' perceptions about their involvement in teaching an interdisciplinary course as it related to my subsidiary questions. I then evaluated their more general process of collaboration as it related to the
five critical aspects of the collaborative process associated with negotiated order. In following this approach, I relied on personal experience and knowledge, judgment, and the review of the literature.

Data Analysis

To evaluate the interview data, I employed the constant comparison method and inductive analysis. In the process of constantly comparing data, I focused on organizing and categorizing data from the moment I began collecting it. As more data were accumulated, I looked for themes and patterns, and tested emerging hypotheses against previous data, searching for alternative explanations. With inductive analysis, I looked for commonalities in the content to explain that regularity. To aid in this phase of the analysis, I developed a cross-record grid of phrases and quotes from each teacher’s responses, categorizing them within one of the six areas of investigation (Appendix G). This grid was used to identify the commonalities and reinforce the credibility of the study. The patterns that resulted from this process were correlated with the literature. To enhance the validity of this study, I used triangulation of data sources. Beyond the interviews, I observed classes and staff meetings, had spontaneous conversations, and obtained an oral history of the course’s development. Thick description also contributed to the reliability of the study.
The Future of Interdisciplinary Team Teaching at the High School Level of an Independent School

Teaming at the high school level of an independent school is fraught with issues of time, training, and cost. My investigation suggests that finding adequate time for team members and partners to meet and plan is an ongoing problem. If the administration builds planning time into the team teachers’ schedules and recognizes that team teaching requires more planning time, there is more likelihood that an interdisciplinary course with partnered teachers sharing the classroom for two consecutive periods will result in teachers having a more effective working relationship.

Additionally, some of the success of such a course will be facilitated by the administration’s commitment to providing conflict resolution skills training to the participants involved. As Merenbloom (1991) notes, many teachers involved in teaming have received no training, and since conflicts between team members are inevitable, avoiding dealing with conflicts undermines the effectiveness of team members’ work together (Drake, 1993; Kruse & Louis, 1997; Merenbloom, 1991; Schamber, 1999). Certainly, the avoidance of dealing with differences of opinion affected the level of trust that existed between members of the staff of ID.

Further compounding the success of an interdisciplinary course of the design of ID at an independent school is the cost factor. If teachers are giving up a free teaching period to share the classroom with their partners, they are in essence teaching an additional period. They are also putting forth more time for planning, both with their partners and as members of the course’s staff. They are investing time that they could be
spending interacting with their students or fulfilling their other teaching or administrative responsibilities.

Consequently, unless or until the administration of an independent school recognizes the time commitment team teachers make and either compensates them for it or reconfigures their teaching load, it is unlikely that teaming at the high school level will take hold as it has at the middle school level. Furthermore, the unspoken demands on an independent school teacher's "free" time make finding the time for partners and staff to meet beyond a scheduled common meeting time more complicated. Thus, teaming at the high school level, in the configuration of a paired-teachers-sharing-the-classroom-for-two consecutive-periods model, is unlikely to become widely endorsed at an independent school.

For interdisciplinary courses to become more commonplace at an independent school, the school must be committed to finding creative solutions for addressing the extra time involved in teaming, providing necessary training for teamed teachers, and keeping costs in check. At a minimum, teachers involved in teaching an interdisciplinary course need to have scheduled common planning time both as a staff and as partners, and to be teaching the same group of students.

That teachers involved in teaming profit professionally is consistently affirmed in the literature (Arhar, 1997; Erh, 1992; Husband & Short, 1994; Lounsbury, 1992; Meichtry, 1990; Merenbloom, 1991; Russell, Jarmin, & Reiser, 1997; Spies, 1997). My research likewise found that independent school teachers benefited from the experience. The teachers recognized that their teaching abilities broadened and they felt greater confidence in their teaching. The opportunity to share different perspectives exposed
them to other approaches to teaching. They also found rekindled joy in and a
strengthened commitment to teaching, as a result of working with colleagues from other
disciplines. These outcomes occurred in a more pronounced way during the first year of
the course, but even when the organizational structure changed, the teachers continued to
profit professionally. Thus, if teaming can be used to revitalize veteran teachers, it can be
used to train and develop teachers new to the profession. For this reason, teaming as an
organizational structure has real value for the professional development of both new and
experienced teachers.

Conclusions

In Chapter 1 I articulated five hypotheses that emerged from a review of the
literature and my own personal experience. Whereas the findings from my data validate
these hypotheses, they may only have relevance to similar research contexts and a similar
sample of participants. Still, the hypotheses are useful in examining the influences
interdisciplinary team teaching has on the work lives of high school teachers at an
independent school. However, the hypotheses provide a springboard for further
investigation.
Hypothesis 1: Team teaching at an independent school will place greater demands on teachers’ free time.

Because ID had an organizational structure at IPS that was unique, and because there were skeptics who did not believe the course was viable, there was a strong commitment on the part of the teachers involved to make it successful. Throughout ID’s first year, the teachers voluntarily put in extra time to modify the design of the course and continue discussions about the direction of the course. By year’s end, because the participants had all given up an otherwise free teaching period to share the classroom with their partners, they felt that they deserved to be compensated for doing so. As Respondent 3 commented, “Pro bono work is good for a year, but it won’t last forever.” The administration’s refusal to pay them resulted in the loss of needed time to keep the course moving forward.

In accordance with what research says about the importance of time for team teaching (Adler & Flihan, 1997; Alexander & George, 1981; Erb & Doda 1989; MacIver, 1990; Shillington, 1994; Whitford & Kyle, 1984), the findings revealed that time played a significant role in the teachers’ ability to plan. When the original teaching model was changed, staff meeting time was less effectively used and the teachers’ commitment to making time available for additional meetings and planning with their partners waned. They chose to use their “free” time in other ways, since teaching at a boarding school and living on campus placed great demands on their time and accessibility to students.
Hypothesis 2: Involvement on an interdisciplinary team at an independent school will have little if any effect on teachers' classroom autonomy.

Unlike public schools, independent schools are not subject to state mandated tests designed to measure a student's proficiency. Consequently, teachers have much independence to decide when they teach what text or concepts. For the most part, as long as an independent school teacher fulfills the discipline's grade level objectives, he or she exercises tremendous classroom autonomy.

According to the literature (Alexander & George, 1981; Erb, 1992; Kruse & Louis, 1997; Merenbloom, 1991), teaming reduces territoriality and increases teachers' decision making autonomy. The teachers of ID did experience a reduction of "their own space" during the first year when they shared the classroom with their partners. They also had the freedom, during staff meetings, to decide the direction of the course with little administrative interference. However, the partners did not feel bound by agreed upon staff decisions. If they did not like what had been agreed to or felt their class was not ready to move on, they disregarded the staff-made decisions. In the words of Respondent 1, "If...you don't feel really that your class is ready to do this type of assignment, then I think you have to be able to change that." Thus, their autonomy to control what occurred in the classroom remained unaffected.
Hypothesis 3: Team teaching will enhance teachers' instructional skills and professional growth.

The data in this study revealed that all the teachers profited from interacting with colleagues from different departments and being in the classroom with their partners. The teachers who were uncertain what it would be like to share a classroom with another teacher discovered that they enjoyed it. The teachers who felt constrained by the confines of their discipline experienced a broadening of their abilities to teach material outside their expertise and knowledge base. Whereas some teachers experienced the way they taught as evolving, others did not. But they all learned from being exposed to different approaches to teaching and having the opportunity to talk about different teaching strategies. They experienced an ability to teach beyond what they originally considered themselves capable of doing. Reading, learning, and teaching material outside the knowledge of their discipline bolstered their confidence as teachers. In short the data corroborated the research; team teaching enhances professional growth for teachers (Alexander & George, 1981; Cohen, 1976; Husband & Short, 1994; Whitford & Kyle, 1984).

Hypothesis 4: Collaboration between teachers from different disciplines will change the way teachers view their role and interact with each other.

Through the process of integrating four disciplines into a single course, the teachers of ID became their particular discipline's authority. In the staff meetings, each
discipline’s teachers were the experts on the various texts used. In the arena of the partnerships, the English teacher was the expert on the literary texts, and his partner was the expert on his particular subject. When partners had to teach something outside their combined knowledge base, they had to rely on their colleagues from those other areas to help guide them.

Thus, their role of private and isolated instructor shifted to that of an interdependent instructor; they needed each other to be able to teach the different areas of the course. And their sense of being only subject-specific teachers changed. Respondent 2 stated that he still deferred “to an art teacher when we’re working on art paintings, but I’ve found I have some competence in that area, given some little more experience than I used to have.”

Their collaboration also affected the way they interacted with each other. They had to be open to other colleagues’ points of views. They had to realize that they did not have all the answers; their colleagues offered different perspectives that affected what they believed. Respondent 6 commented that he had “learned a huge amount of things I didn’t know as much about before.” Through collaborating with the other teachers, Respondent 5 developed “a renewed respect for not necessarily keeping the disciplines absolutely separate.”

As a result, collaboration did affect the way the teachers viewed their teaching role and interaction with each other. In accord with the literature (Alexander & George, 1981; Cohen, 1976; Meichtry, 1990; Merenbloom, 1991), collaboration enhanced their interactions and developed interdependent work relationships among the teachers. Because they were faced with developing and teaching a course, they had to continually
redesign the course during its first year. They developed a working relationship through a common commitment to making the course successful. This commitment also contributed to their seeing themselves as working together well.

Nevertheless, their collaboration was not without problems. As conflicts arose, there was a reluctance to air them, so they did not develop a deep trust and respect for each other’s differences. They opted instead to maintain group harmony instead of confronting the issues openly. Had they received training in dealing with conflicts, they could have deepened their working relationship and made the future direction of the course more certain.

Hypothesis 5: Team teaching will affect teachers’ attitudes toward teaching.

All of the teachers of ID, despite some initial trepidation, found the experience of sharing the classroom to be a positive experience. They also indicated that teaching the course had broadened their expectations of what they were capable of teaching, exposed them to other teachers’ ideas, caused them to learn or relearn material outside their disciplines, and resulted in their reading more broadly. The satisfaction they derived from teaming with teachers from other disciplines affirmed their commitment to the teaching profession. The teachers’ experience corroborated what research has found, that teachers respond positively to the teaming organizational structure (Arhar, 1997; Daresh, 1984; Husband & Short, 1994; Vars & Lounsbury, 1967).
Recommendations

The influence of interdisciplinary team teaching on teachers' work lives at the high school level is an area that has received minimal attention in the literature. Further research in interdisciplinary education at the high school level can add to this literature and assist in the development of ways to maximize affective outcomes for teacher interaction.

Some areas for further inquiry at the high school level include:

1. Case studies of team leaders as members of interdisciplinary teams.
   Leadership is an important element in the effective process of collaboration in which team members are involved. The leader's style of leadership may contribute to the success or failure of effective teamwork.

2. Case studies of interdisciplinary courses that emphasize process and content and whether they effect changes in teacher pedagogy over time. Because teaming necessitates integrating curriculum across the curriculum, teaching practices undergo change. Are these changes a reflection of a teacher's change in pedagogy because of the exposure to different approaches to instruction?

3. Studies of the process involved in merging several disciplines' core course requirements into an interdisciplinary course. Designing a course that takes into account all the core requirements of the disciplines involved can require much discussion and negotiation. Are there certain universal aspects involved in the process of blending different disciplines into a single course?
4. Studies of how teachers work together to develop, plan and teach interdisciplinary courses. When teachers from different disciplines undertake to create and implement a new course, they are actively involved in collaboration. How do teachers, coming from different disciplines, deal with differences, come to a shared expectation for the course, and arrive at a course that brings their various perspectives together?

5. Replication of this study at the high school level of other independent schools, both boarding and day. The development of systematic methods could be beneficial to teachers at other schools that are considering creating interdisciplinary team taught courses. An analysis of similar case studies validates whether interdisciplinary team taught courses are viable at the high school level of an independent school.

6. Longitudinal studies of high school teachers who have been involved in teaching interdisciplinary courses at an independent school. Do these teachers develop deeper levels of trust, collaborate more effectively, or interact with each other differently over time? Following the same group of teachers over a period of years will reveal whether teachers continue to derive benefits from teaming or whether time decreases continued positive outcomes.

7. Studies that compare the process of teacher collaboration of interdisciplinary courses at the high school level of comparable independent schools. Studies of this sort will validate whether the processes of collaboration among team teachers at independent schools are unique to the institution or more universal.
8. Studies that examine schools' cultures of autonomy and their effect on the process of collaboration. A school's culture of autonomy is affected by the school's history, traditions and leadership. When the history is ignored or the traditions or leadership change, a school's culture can undergo changes that may have an impact on the way teachers approach their teaching. A study of this sort can be revealing about teamed teachers' perceptions of whether their classroom autonomy shifts as a school undergoes change.

These recommendations represent a step in the direction of establishing interdisciplinary team taught courses at the high school level. They also provide a means to effect a better collaborative relationship between teachers from different subject areas.
Bibliography


Dimensions of the time challenge. (April, 1994).


APPENDIX A

Correlation between Subsidiary Questions and the Interview Protocol

Subsidiary Question #1: What are team members' perceptions of the nature of the interdisciplinary team's work in the independent school, and why do they believe it is set up as it is?

Questions from Interview Protocol related to this question:
- What importance does your headmaster attach to interdisciplinary teaming?
- What is the disciplinary make-up of your interdisciplinary team?
- Please describe the process by which you were selected to be a member of the interdisciplinary team? Do you teach the interdisciplinary course with another team member in the classroom?
- Would you want another team member present? Why or why not?
- In your opinion, what qualities are important in teachers to make them effective members of an interdisciplinary team?
- Who presides over team meetings?

Subsidiary Question #2: What are team members' perceptions of the effects the teaching schedule has on their use of time?

Questions from Interview Protocol related to this question:
- What responsibilities other than teaching do you have at your school?
- Do you teach the interdisciplinary course with another team member in the classroom?
- Would you want another team member present? Why or why not?
- Who presides over team meetings?
- How often do you meet as a team?
- How long do meetings last?
- Do you have a scheduled common planning period?
- Do you spend time other than scheduled team meetings planning together with team members? If so, how much time per week?
- Given all of your school-related responsibilities, is there sufficient allotted time in the schedule for interdisciplinary team staff planning?

Subsidiary Question #3: What are team members' perceptions about their professional growth as a result of being a member of an interdisciplinary team?

Questions from Interview Protocol related to this question:
- How are decisions about what is taught and how to present it to students made?
- What are your perceptions regarding team members' ability to work together?
- Do team members share different teaching strategies?
- Have discussions about teaching strategies affected your approach to teaching? In what ways?
- Has being a member of an interdisciplinary team been rewarding to you?
- What makes it rewarding to you?
What do you value most about teaching an interdisciplinary course?
What do you find least valuable about teaching an interdisciplinary course?
How have you grown as a teacher as a result of being a member of an interdisciplinary team?
What is your experience of having been observed teaching the interdisciplinary course by another team member?
What impact has teaching an interdisciplinary course had on your choices of the course’s materials?
How has the image of yourself as a teacher changed as a result of being a member of an interdisciplinary team?

Subsidiary Question # 4: What effect does being a member of an interdisciplinary team have on a teacher’s perception of his or her autonomy in the classroom, and what accounts for it?
Questions from Interview Protocol related to this question:
Do you teach the interdisciplinary course with another team member in the classroom?
Would you want another team member present? Why or why not?
How are decisions about what is taught and how to present it to students made?
What are your perceptions regarding team members’ ability to work together?
Do team members share different teaching strategies?
Have discussions about teaching strategies affected your approach to teaching? In what ways?
What adjustments have you had to make working with other (or new) partners?
What do you find least valuable about teaching an interdisciplinary course?
What is your experience of having been observed teaching the interdisciplinary course by another team member?
What impact has teaching an interdisciplinary course had on your choices of the course’s materials?
How has the image of yourself as a teacher changed as a result of being a member of an interdisciplinary team?

Subsidiary Question # 5: What are team members’ perceptions about how conflicts between them arise and are resolved?
Questions from Interview Protocol related to this question:
How are decisions about what is taught and how to present it to students made?
What gets accomplished during a team staff meeting?
What are your perceptions regarding team members’ ability to work together?
What adjustments have you had to make working with other (or new) partners?
What kinds of conflicts arise?
How do conflicts get resolved?
How does the way in which conflicts are resolved affect your relationship with other team members?
What do you find least valuable about teaching an interdisciplinary course?
What is your experience of having been observed teaching the interdisciplinary course by another team member?
What impact has teaching an interdisciplinary course had on your choices of the course’s materials?

Subsidiary Question # 6: What are team members’ perceptions about collaboration among themselves, and to what do they attribute these perceptions?

Questions from Interview Protocol related to this question:
- How are decisions about what is taught and how to present it to students made?
- What gets accomplished during a team staff meeting?
- Do team members share different teaching strategies?
- Have discussions about teaching strategies affected your approach to teaching? In what ways?
- What adjustments have you had to make working with other (or new) partners?
- What kinds of conflicts arise?
- How do conflicts get resolved?
- How does the way in which conflicts are resolved affect your relationship with other team members?
- Has being a member of an interdisciplinary team been rewarding to you?
- What makes it rewarding to you?
- What do you value most about teaching an interdisciplinary course?
- What do you find least valuable about teaching an interdisciplinary course?
- How have you grown as a teacher as a result of being a member of an interdisciplinary team?
- What is your experience of having been observed teaching the interdisciplinary course by another team member?
- What impact has teaching an interdisciplinary course had on your choices of the course’s materials?
APPENDIX B

Interview Protocol

1. Interviewee is male_____ female_____ (Unasked question, but noted for purpose of data collection)
2. How many years have you been teaching?
3. How many years have you taught at this school?
4. How many years have you taught this interdisciplinary course?
5. How many total years have you taught interdisciplinary courses, here and/or elsewhere?
6. What is your highest earned degree?
7. What responsibilities other than teaching do you have at your school?
8. What importance does your headmaster attach to interdisciplinary teaming?
9. What is the disciplinary make-up of your interdisciplinary team?
10. Please describe the process by which you were selected to be a member of the interdisciplinary team?
11. Do you teach the interdisciplinary course with another team member in the classroom?
12. Would you want another team member present? Why or why not?
13. In your opinion, what qualities are important in teachers to make them effective members of an interdisciplinary team?
14. Who presides over team meetings?
15. How are decisions about what is taught and how to present it to students made?
16. How often do you meet as a team?
17. How long do meetings last?
18. What gets accomplished during a team staff meeting?
19. Do you have a scheduled common planning period?
20. Do you spend time other than scheduled team meetings planning together with team members? If so, how much time per week?
21. Given all of your school-related responsibilities, is there sufficient allotted time in the schedule for interdisciplinary team staff planning?
22. What are your perceptions regarding team members’ ability to work together?
23. Do team members share different teaching strategies?
24. Have discussions about teaching strategies affected your approach to teaching? In what ways?
25. What adjustments have you had to make working with other (or new) partners?
26. What kinds of conflicts arise?
27. How do conflicts get resolved?
28. How does the way in which conflicts are resolved affect your relationship with other team members?
29. Has being a member of an interdisciplinary team been rewarding to you?
30. What makes it rewarding to you?
31. What do you value most about teaching an interdisciplinary course?
32. What do you find least valuable about teaching an interdisciplinary course?
33. How have you grown as a teacher as a result of being a member of an interdisciplinary team?
34. What is your experience of having been observed teaching the interdisciplinary course by another team member?
35. What impact has teaching an interdisciplinary course had on your choices of the course’s materials?
36. How has the image of yourself as a teacher changed as a result of being a member of an interdisciplinary team?
APPENDIX C

Participant Responses

I interviewed six teachers who had been teaching Interdisciplinary (ID) from the beginning of the course. (The course was only in its second year.) Three of the teachers were members of the English department, and the other three were members of the history, art and religion departments. The data that follows is categorized into six areas of investigation: teachers’ sense of the team’s work, use of time, professional growth, classroom autonomy, conflicts, and collaboration. Because information relevant to one question sometimes appeared as part of a response to another question, I have included that information as part of the respondent’s answer to the initial question asked.

Teachers’ sense of the team’s work. Respondent 1 was the newly appointed Dean of Studies. He explained the headmaster’s interest in the course:

RESPONDENT 1: He is very interested in this specific course. I think there has been a view that the 9th grade experience at Independent Preparatory School was somewhat scattered. Prior to this they would have been required to have taken 2nd Form (freshman) English. They would probably have taken an art history course as a foundation. They would probably have taken some form of religion course, normally world religions. They would have been required to take geography. Those were all separate courses. So, the originator of the idea was the headmaster and the Dean of Faculty who wanted to provide a more integrated experience for the 2nd Formers. I think their idea was mainly based around content rather than skills. That’s the origination of it. I think it’s actually probably now more a skills-based course rather than content-driven course.

INTERVIEWER: What do you think accounts for that?
RESPONDENT 1: I think lots of arguments about the content that needed to be covered in this course, or should be, or the idea that we shouldn’t be rushing continually. I mean, the first year was a rush. We did not stop for a breath the entire year. And I think the students and teachers at the end were all somewhat, “How are we going to pull back from the content?” I don’t think we’ve done a good enough job, to be perfectly honest, in our
reformulation of the course. The headmaster is very supportive of it, and I think in general there’s support in portions of the faculty, though among the faculty it’s a controversial course. In fact there are some members that are very anti this course.

RESPONDENT 2, a 25-year veteran of IPS also felt the headmaster saw the course as important:

RESPONDENT 2: I think he sees the importance in it. I think he values it. I think he sees it also as PR, important to the school. I don’t think we’ve heard much from him since he came, since he proposed that we create the course.
INTERVIEWER: The actual proposal for the idea came out of him or came from a group of teachers?
RESPONDENT 2: I believe it came from him. [Respondent 4] wanted history to be taught in the second form. And this was a means to do it, but I think the idea of the interdisciplinary course came from the headmaster and possibly the Dean of Faculty. I think the headmaster, though, was the original source of it.

Respondent 3, a 21-year veteran of teaching at IPS, had a different sense of the headmaster’s involvement in the course:

INTERVIEWER: What importance do you think the Headmaster puts on or attaches to this interdisciplinary course?
RESPONDENT 3: I’m not sure he’s given it much thought, to be honest. I don’t think it’s an issue for him. I should back up, because IPS and its day-to-day operation are more the responsibility of the Dean of Faculty. Our Headmaster is fairly removed from day to day operations.
INTERVIEWER: What importance do you think the Dean of Faculty attaches?
RESPONDENT 3: To the pairing? To how the pairing works?
INTERVIEWER: No, to the whole process of teaming.
RESPONDENT 3: I think she’s very interested in collaborative teaching. As a science person, she understands the lab situation pretty clearly and how important collaboration is in learning, whether it is teacher-student in the lab or teacher-teacher as well. I think she’s a big fan of it.

Respondent 4, coordinator of the course and a 23-year veteran of teaching at IPS agreed that the Dean of Faculty had much to do with the course:
RESPONDENT 4: Well, I think she’s very responsive and very supportive of it. I think what her concern is — I think it’s a good concern — that interdisciplinary teaching doesn’t result in an incoherent potpourri of curricular offerings that have little coherence. I think that that’s one of the reasons why she is so very much behind ID, because it’s interdisciplinary yet has focus. It provides a kind of a will when it becomes applied across the whole form, a coherent grounding for students. So she’d like to see that model continue through other forms, such as with a new course that’s being launched for the first time right now for the third form (sophomores).

Respondent 5, the third English teacher, believed the Dean of Faculty was responding from a mandate from the Board of Trustees:

RESPONDENT 5: The Dean, per se, I think responded to a Board need and a societal need and also a headmaster inclination, as I see it, that perhaps the school ought to adapt to a changing environment in the humanities discipline, first of all. You see it going on at many levels. How to go about that and how much emphasis is being put on it, I really couldn’t say. This initiative, I think, was started to try to get teachers to work together a little bit more, to try to trim down our disparate agendas and to try to give freshmen a more connected approach to their learning, to have them ask certain kinds of questions and to have certain kinds of skills to go into their four years here. And, also, in some way to help familiarize them with possibilities of learning and technology in the school, to prepare them, in some way, for the IPS education. That’s the emphasis that is coming from the headmaster and from the Dean of Faculty. In terms of how it impacts on the various departments, I don’t really know. It’s too early to say. I think there was a lot of trepidation, initially; there were some ruffled feathers. Who has those feathers, I don’t know.

INTERVIEWER: You made a comment about the Board. Does the Board have any say about the make-up?

RESPONDENT 5: Yes and no. The Chairman of the Board, right now, is a Provost. He has interest in interdisciplinary learning. We were actually sent a photocopy, because his wife is a scholar at Brown, and she does archaeology, and is interested in the questions, but wants to see how we would go about looking at the challenges of asking how our disciplines are related and how our curriculum interconnects. And, wants us to do that, I think, but no one has forced the hand of anybody, I don’t think. That seems part of it to me, but that could be just appearance.

Respondent 6, the religion teacher and youngest staff member, with only three years of teaching at IPS, underscored the Dean’s support of the course:
RESPONDENT 6: From her mouth, it is my understanding that she puts tremendous value on it. One of the reasons why I came here was because of this initiative, not just the ID thing, but the institution’s interdisciplinary leaning in general and that’s been my interest. That’s the way I think kids are best taught. She’s always spoken very highly about these things. She seemed to value it tremendously since I got here. On the other hand, she started the science initiative about five years ago – I guess, she and the head of the science department – which basically bridges the gaps between chemistry, biology, physics and so on for kids who may not be as strong in any single field. It makes the theories more important than the actual numbers. This is a way of looking at it. So, she’s always been supportive in that way.

He also stated that “the people that are involved in this course are people who wanted to change things. They really wanted to go out and teach some new things, and they wanted to do it in a new way.”

The disciplinary make-up of the course involved five English teachers, two art teachers, a religion teacher, a history teacher, and a French teacher, the only woman teaching the course.

RESPONDENT 1: We have six sections. Every section is required to have an English teacher as one of the two teachers. And that was the deal that was struck with the English Department. I teach with an art teacher this year. There is a religion teacher that teaches, I think, two sections. There is another art teacher. I can’t think what else. There’s a French teacher involved in the course. Last year, the head of the science department taught with me which, of course, was interesting. So there are actually other areas of the school involved in this. I mean also there’s a lot of help from the Director of Academic Technology, who is very, very helpful, and then the librarians are always present. There’s always a librarian present at the meetings. We have a very heavy library component to the class.

RESPONDENT 3: The English department mandated that every section had an English teacher in it, which, I think, crippled us this year.
INTERVIEWER: Was that true last year, too, or just this year?
RESPONDENT 3: Yes, it was true last year. But we were in the room at the same time.

INTERVIEWER: And one of the teachers on the staff is also a foreign language teacher, is that correct?
RESPONDENT 4: It is, actually, for the first time. We wanted to get a woman in on the faculty of this course. We didn’t have one, however hard we had tried. And French is under-subscribed, so there we were.

RESPONDENT 2: One of my partners is a French teacher. That’s unusual. It’s mostly one of the four disciplines (history, art, religion, English) involved in the course itself.

Respondent 5 believed that women were underrepresented in the staffing of the course:

INTERVIEWER: Is the French teacher the only woman who is involved in this course?
RESPONDENT 5: She is, partly because many women were asked and they all declined.
INTERVIEWER: Is that right? They just didn’t want to get involved?
RESPONDENT 5: I won’t make a general assumption knowing why; they each have their own separate, her own separate, reason. Some were already committed to running a house or having their own family, and it’s a large undertaking. You have some committed mothers; you have some people who are very committed in other areas. But, I don’t know, I think you always wondered what the reason to that was and I don’t know. I think I miss the vital presence of our female faculty.

The teachers also described the process that was involved in selecting the teachers to teach ID:

RESPONDENT 5: I got on board not because I was told to, but because I was asked in a way that they wanted me to be a part of this initiative. But I didn’t have to be a symbol of it or necessarily agree with it all, just take part in the discussion. The people who they had doing it were good, and my English Department chairman also said he really wanted me to do it because he wanted people in the department, since the department was being affected, to be involved to be sure, not to protect our interests, but to see what our interests are and to see how the thing would pan out. So, I’m not a spy, but I didn’t of my own accord jump in.

RESPONDENT 1: I don’t think there was much of a process. I think I was probably hired in some ways because of my background to teach courses like this. I had in the past done a fair amount of singing. I had also done a fair amount of fine arts and art history. So I think there was an interest in someone like myself teaching a course like this. But I don’t think there was any explicit process, other than the Dean of Faculty
knowing that I would be comfortable doing something like this and then putting me in an initial group of people doing it.

INTERVIEWER: Were there any people who volunteered who said, "This would be an interesting course. I'd like to be involved in it," and then you had to whittle it down because the course could only have X-number of people?

RESPONDENT 1: When we were in that planning stage, there were a lot of people who were interested. Some of that had to do with departments saying to people, "Would you be interested in doing this?" And I think they were genuinely interested. So that first year there was a fairly high interest group. I think as the course has expanded — because we went from four sections last year; it's now six sections this year — we had some people who were interested who couldn't fit it into their schedule this year or people who were interested but ended up being ill at this point and unable to do it. And some people were asked last minute to fill in, which doesn't work very, very well because there has been a fair amount of training of people involved through the whole process of getting others on board.

INTERVIEWER: When does that training occur?

RESPONDENT 1: During the summer. We've had summer sort of sessions for about two weeks. Paid summer professional development for the last two summers at the end of the school year at the beginning of June. But then to get other people has been a bit difficult because they've also heard the word that it takes a fair amount of time and there's a lot to learn and it's not always comfortable coming to class and not knowing as much as you know about areas you really feel quite comfortable with in your own discipline.

When asked how they were selected, both Respondent 3 and Respondent 6 were at a loss to explain how they were selected to teach the course.

RESPONDENT 3: I would love to know. I was chairman of the art department at the time. I think I've always been known to be someone who is interested in change. So, I just have stayed abreast of it. I have always been interested in interdisciplinary stuff and how it has affected my department, because it is replacing an art credit. So, I felt like I wanted to be involved for that reason, and I also wanted to be involved in teaching a course that was a year long.

RESPONDENT 6: Who knows. I'm in the Religion Dept. But I'd asked about it, and I think when I very first interviewed, there were things I talked about being interested in doing, so I knew the Dean from the very first knew that this would be something I would want to do. And as soon as I heard about it, I walked into the Dean's office and asked her if there was a way I could do it, and she said absolutely, that she always expected
me to do it. I was on from the planning stages of it in my first year here before the course was actually being taught.

RESPONDENT 2 explained it this way:

RESPONDENT 2: Well, for I would guess 10 or 12 years I’ve run the ninth grade curriculum. Part of the proposal was that the course involve a healthy bit of technology. Some of the kids are being prepared for use of technology better than they are now, and I was one of the pioneers in using technology in the classroom. And so I was a sort of a natural choice to be involved in it. And it appealed to me. So those two together were dictating that I be in it.
INTERVIEWER: There’s no actual process where people say, “I’m interested in being in it.” And the administration then had to whittle it down, or something like that?
RESPONDENT 2: No, no, in the English department it’s been more a process. We haven’t had to twist arms yet, but that’s probably going to come.

Respondent 4 was responsible for proposing the idea for the course and became involved in it as a result:

RESPONDENT 4: I backed into it in a circuitous way. When I became department chairman, one of my goals and charges was to get history taught earlier in the curriculum because it wasn’t really substantially taught, not with substantial numbers, until junior year. I mean, there were a few courses earlier on but not very many at all. So there weren’t wide, open spaces yearning to be filled by history earlier in the curriculum, the curriculums of the lower vacuum. So my predecessor as head banged his head against that for five years, and so we took a different tack. Rather than displacing requirements that were already there for history requirements, instead, we combined disciplines, of which history would be one, into a humanities course. And hopefully in the process, creating an ID and coherent course. So as I was the instigator of all this, I felt the need to be the organizer.

The course was designed so that teachers were paired and spent both class periods in the classroom together. Not all teachers continued this practice in the second year.

INTERVIEWER: Do you currently teach this course with another person in the room?
RESPONDENT 6: No.
INTERVIEWER: Last year you did?
RESPONDENT 6: Last year I did. Now I have two sections of it where one of them I’m teaching with a guy who taught it last year as well and one is with a new teacher, but we don’t really overlap at all. Or very rarely, anyway.
INTERVIEWER: Would you want to have that person back in the room, as you did last year?
RESPONDENT 6: I loved that.

INTERVIEWER: Do you ever have a chance to teach the class with your partner in the room?
RESPONDENT 5: Nope.
INTERVIEWER: Did you last year?
RESPONDENT 5: Yes, the whole year. It was great. [Respondent 4] is whom I taught with. Fabulous experience.
INTERVIEWER: You prefer to have somebody in the room with you?
RESPONDENT 5: Absolutely. It’s financial reasons. It’s just a question, I guess, ultimately, of expenses.

INTERVIEWER: You teach the course with Respondent 2, but he isn’t always in your class with you?
RESPONDENT 3: Rarely, this year.
INTERVIEWER: This year, at all?
RESPONDENT 3: Last year we were in there together, almost all of the time. This year he has been ill quite a bit, so I covered both -- I covered for him fairly often. I was there virtually every class, and he was there, I would say, 80% of the time. I was there probably 90% of the time. He was there, I would say, 75% of the time.

INTERVIEWER: Do you teach the course with your partner in the classroom at the same time?
RESPONDENT 1: Yes, today that will happen. Saturdays we normally do that. It’s difficult this year. Last year the two of us were in the class all the time. I have been coming in to help my colleague, who’s new to the course this year, get up to speed with things.

RESPONDENT 4: Well, I’m in a good position because every class that my pair teaches I am free for. He is not free for any of mine. So he never sees me teach, but I see him teach.
INTERVIEWER: Is that by your choice to go in and do that?
RESPONDENT 4: No, it was entirely last year, but that was the way the schedule happened.
INTERVIEWER: Right, but I mean in terms of your going in and being with him periodically?
RESPONDENT 4: Right.
INTERVIEWER: That’s your choice.
RESPONDENT 4: That’s my choice. Right.
INTERVIEWER: Do you teach this course with your partner in the classroom ever?
RESPONDENT 2: Last year we did. Last year the two of us were always together. This year I teach two sections, and one section with [Respondent 3]; we’re never together. The other section we’re together both periods.
INTERVIEWER: Do you prefer to have the other member present?
RESPONDENT 2: Absolutely.
INTERVIEWER: Why?
RESPONDENT 2: Because any number of reasons. One is simply organizational, so I know what’s going on in the course.

Because one of his partners was new to the course, Respondent 2 elected to share the classroom with her. He offered this explanation:

RESPONDENT 2: It’s a mentoring process. As a French teacher, she’s never taught anything close to what she’s teaching now. Literature to some degree but that is apparently very different for her. And grammar, she has a tough time with English grammar because French grammar is very different. So that’s kind of a mentoring process.

Respondent 1 and Respondent 4 discussed the purpose and future of the course.

RESPONDENT 1: Really, what we’re working on is such things like discussion skills, analytical writing, study skills, use of technology, as a foundational experience for all these students, and I think that’s what we’re hammering on, really. And also the idea of technology, getting teachers to learn how to use it in their classes. The English department here is structured that each term you change students. Also the other thing is that we have these students for the entire year. That makes a big difference as well.

INTERVIEWER: In the planning of this course and in particular coming out of last year which was your first year of running this, how did this course affect the choices of course materials for this year? Did it have an impact on it?

RESPONDENT 4: Oh, yea, a big impact, but basically we met last summer after the first year was over and reorganized the whole course. Some of it we organized because the previous summer — about 35 faculty had come together to design the units —
INTERVIEWER: 35?
RESPONDENT 4: Yea, it was a huge number. Maybe it wasn’t that many, but it was a large number, at least 25. And the vast majority were
not going to teach the course, but they were excited about the idea. And a lot of the stuff which they produced was really great. And it would have been wonderful as a graduate course, so a lot of it we had to say, “This is really exciting. We should archive this, but now I’ve got to redesign entirely because it’s too much.” It was just too much.

One whole unit we simply threw out altogether, because it just wasn’t going to work. We were trying to figure out how to do Islam and medieval literature because there’s all this baggage that the English dept. has been loathe to get rid of. They really wanted to do Sir Gawain, and we thought, well, the only place where you can do medieval literature and Islam is Spain, Medieval Spain. So we had this whole unit on Medieval Spain, but it was so difficult (laughter) we just looked at it after being in the course for a few months, even before we got there and said, “That’s not going to work. Throw that away.” And we did something entirely different.

The same thing with the China unit; I mean, it was fabulous, but the English department chair had us reading hundreds of pages of Dream of the Red Chamber, which is a difficult novel. (laughter) We read about four pages of it and the kids came back in the next day sort of bumping into the walls and their eyes glazed, saying, “What did we read? What was that all about?” So we said, well, we’re going to throw that away. So, we had to redesign a great deal. And then last summer we – of the stuff we redesigned – went over it again and tightened it up and focused it. And a lot of the other sections that worked quite well we realized we were making them do too much. They were doing too much, so we tried to throw stuff out whenever – a good deal of the time. So, trying again to get away from content.

INTERVIEWER: You’ve been integrating this so that next year hopefully the entire freshman class will be involved in this course.

RESPONDENT 4: Either that or we’ll take another trunk of the freshman class. We’ll either do a part, as far as whatever’s left, either take them all or part of that and then the following year do it all. We haven’t decided really.

INTERVIEWER: How do you select the students to get into this course, or do they just sign up?

RESPONDENT 4: They just sign up. We don’t select at all.

Use of time. Built into the original design of ID were paired teachers sharing the classroom for two consecutive periods and a scheduled weekly staff meeting that lasted about an hour over lunch. However, changes occurred between the first and second year.

RESPONDENT 3: After last year, I said I’m not volunteering five periods a week of my free time to teach this course and that’s what I did last year, which is like giving us another course. We all said we aren’t
doing that this year. *Pro bono* work is good for a year, but it won’t last forever. They said don’t worry about that. We’ll divide you into individual sections. And so you can plan with your other teacher, you’ll take a class time out of your 10. So, instead of 10 meetings a week, you’ll have nine. You won’t meet that class. If you can meet together then, fine. But if you can’t meet together then, fine. But the pay back is that you can take the time out somewhere else. So, I said, okay, that’s fair. But then our syllabus for the first five weeks has had 10 meetings in it and no time taken out for planning. So, my partner and I have agreed to meet sixth period on Monday after our meeting. We’ve done that twice. But, it’s hard to do because if we take a class out and all of the other sections are moving forward, we’re going to lag behind. So, I think the school needs to make good on that promise.

**RESPONDENT 4:** The school couldn’t afford to say, “Fine, that’ll count for two classes.” So we essentially did an extra class for free. So I was teaching essentially four classes last year. I was supposed to teach three, as department head.

**RESPONDENT 2:** The hassle of the scheduling just consumes far more of our time and emotions than it should. I fully understand why the school had difficulty, but it’s just really frustrating that it’s all simply a matter of money.

**RESPONDENT 5:** It’s financial reasons. It’s just a question, I guess, ultimately, of expenses. The only other sacrifice there is that you give up another period of your teaching so you’d be teaching. I’m only teaching three courses now because I’m in a house and I’m also coaching varsity. I like my courses and I like having diverse courses. If ID took up two of my three courses, I probably wouldn’t teach it. Last year I taught three, plus I spent a period in with [Respondent 4] of my own time. That’s a whole other question, I don’t know how you want to work that. But I didn’t want to give up teaching English. I like the discipline.

Respondent 5 articulated his concern about making this change:

**RESPONDENT 5:** My worry is that if you depend on teachers to communicate and reinforce one another in a shared curriculum, if they’re not in the same room together in a busy place like a boarding school, it’s not going to happen. So the only way that model would work is if you’re doing it where one person teaches for history, if it’s an English/history thing, and another teaches for English. I think it could work. But there would still be the issues; but not as many as when you’re trying to integrate a number of disciplines and you don’t necessarily have a teacher who teaches within those disciplines and so each teacher is trying
occasionally to address different parts of different disciplines. That's too ambitious.

Respondent 1 explained why they all put in extra time the first year:

RESPONDENT 1: Last year the two of us were in the class all the time. That was done completely pro bono. It didn't turn up in our schedules. And every one of the eight teachers teaching the sections was willing to put in that extra time in order to see the course fly, especially as there had been a certain amount of skepticism about whether it would be actually a very good experience for all the kids or not. And I think it has been an exciting course and is interesting to teach. We came down to last summer and there were various staffing models shared. But the eventual ruling that came down was that the school was not going to give any form of compensation or any form of ease of workload to the two people that would be in the class at the same time. So we then went to the two periods of two different teachers model which I think honestly is not at all the same.

All the teachers expressed their preference for having their partner present in the classroom with them. With the change to their teaching schedule, though, they found it more difficult to find the time to plan with their partners. Respondent 1, the new Dean of Studies, taught only one class and "was actually free most of the other periods." But he noted how different it was to meet with his partner this year over the previous year:

RESPONDENT 1: Last year my partner and I were in the classroom all the time. We knew exactly what was going on all the time. With this year, it's much more difficult with my partner. And neither he nor I have the time to find that much time to meet, so our meetings, to be honest, at this stage, are sort of a telephone call, you know, briefly, sort of earlier that day, saying, "Okay, fine. Are we all right?" And the thing is that I think he and I both feel comfortable with things changing continually. "Okay, we're going not to do this today and we're not planning on doing this today. That's not going to work out. We did sit down and try and plan out a few days ahead, but again it's a very short meeting.

INTERVIEWER: Like about how long?
RESPONDENT 1: Five, ten minutes. That's about maximum.

INTERVIEWER: Schedule on the run, in other words.
RESPONDENT 1: Yea, to a certain degree. I mean, some of that's a possibility just now. And because, obviously when the start of the term begins, I've got new duties pulling me in lots of different directions. There's an issue there.
RESPONDENT 2, who taught two sections of the course, preferred being with his partners for organizational reasons. "With [Respondent 3] it's always a matter of our having to make phone calls and sort of meet each other in the hallway before class or afterwards and find out what's going on. It's chaotic."

RESPONDENT 2: In theory the class meets ten periods a week, nine of which are actual class time, the other of which is staff planning time. But the three of us, my two co-teachers and I, don't have a common period when we can meet. But the three of us finally found a time on Monday, actually, one period when three of us can get together, but it's very rare. It's just the scheduling. I think it will be a litany with everyone you talk to. That's the big problem. There should be two teachers in the classroom at all times in this course. There should be a common meeting time for all the teachers. All of that is difficult but not impossible to get.

Most of his planning time with Respondent 3 was "a lot of time of short duration. I would probably say about an hour and a half per week." With his other partner, he was with her in the classroom all the time.

Respondent 3 noted that the first year he "did a fair amount" of additional planning outside the normal scheduled time:

RESPONDENT 3: This year it is an ongoing issue. Now, we do have a consultation period we can take advantage of, but some teachers are reluctant to give up their consultation period. We already do that for our Monday meeting. I'm hopeful that my two partners and I will be able to meet on Monday afternoons.

INTERVIEWER: So you catch as catch can at this point? 
RESPONDENT 3: We've met, I think, two or three times. We'll meet again.

INTERVIEWER: But not on a weekly basis per se?
RESPONDENT 3: No.

RESPONDENT 5 noted the difficulty of finding time to meet with his partner,

RESPONDENT 6:

RESPONDENT 5: The problem is that [Respondent 6] has been good about coming, but we realized after the first week that we have to meet
outside once or twice during consultation, and I always have kids, but we make time — 10 minutes there: it’s kind of piecemeal. Since we’ve both taught it, we can do that a little bit more often. But I think we would both admit that we’re not doing as good a job as we could be, but we’re strapped. He’s coaching soccer. It would require us sitting down weekly at night, which in a lot of ways, the course doesn’t leave room for because we have a lot of it; it’s too ambitious. It’s scaled down significantly and that’s all been for the good. But I think what happened is that the circumstances were imposed on us and over the summer we came to terms with the impact. But we have never really come up with a clear formula for how to address it in terms of our own preparation and our enjoyment of the experience. And the people who have never taught it before, they must just be dying. They must feel as if it’s all happening around them.

INTERVIEWER: Well, in light of what you say, in working with [Respondent 6] on a catch as catch can basis, what do you spend — 15, 20, 30 minutes a week?

RESPONDENT 5: If you add it all up, probably an hour. Ten minutes a day. We talk every day.

Respondent 6, who also taught two sections, each with a different partner, said that the first year he was in the classroom with his partner all the time. In the second year, he spent about ten minutes a day with both partners:

RESPONDENT 6: Well, I do it with each of them. I don’t find time with both of them at all.

INTERVIEWER: You just catch time as catch can?

RESPONDENT 6: Basically, yea.

INTERVIEWER: There’s no set time that you meet or something like that?

RESPONDENT 6: No, usually what we manage to do usually is that I seek one of them, one of them seeks me out during consultation. We meet every day. And every once in a while we’ll spend far longer, but usually when we’re grading papers and that kind of thing, to figure out consensus on some of these things.

Of the teachers, only Respondent 4 met with his partner on a regular basis:

RESPONDENT 4: We’re tending to meet on Monday dinners, Monday dinnertime.

INTERVIEWER: So, for how long, roughly is that meeting?

RESPONDENT 4: Oh, roughly, 45 minutes.

INTERVIEWER: That’s just once a week?

RESPONDENT 4: Right. And then we have phone calls and then we also talk before, after and during classes, the ones he’s able to be there,
that he's there for and I'm sitting in on. Yea, that's how we're doing it so far.

**INTERVIEWER:** So, if you were to estimate how much time per week you were giving that?

**RESPONDENT 4:** I'd say about an hour.

All of the teachers had responsibilities other than teaching that they had to balance with the demands from the course. In addition to being the Dean of Studies, which carried the responsibility for the overall curriculum for the school, Respondent 1 was also a Housemaster. Respondent 2 was a soccer coach. Respondent 3 coached intramural tackle football and took dorm duty. In addition to being the chair of the History Department and Coordinator for ID, Respondent 4 ran a program that organized trips to see theatre and dance. Respondent 5 ran a residence and coached crew, which had both a fall and spring season. Respondent 6 coached two varsity sports and was an Assistant Housemaster.

**INTERVIEWER:** Given all your school responsibilities, is there sufficient allotted time in the schedule for team planning?

**RESPONDENT 1:** No. There's not a lot of time to plan. I mean, really. There's no time. We catch as catch can now. The thing is that, one of the things we keep on saying is that we're a drafting, revising, type of environment, with everyone spending time and giving feedback in lots of different sources... I haven't had a chance to visit actually. I've never seen another ID class, which might seem bizarre. I don't have the time, and to be honest, none of us have the time to visit each other's classes. No one else has much time as well.

**RESPONDENT 2:** No, no, absolutely not. That's an easy one.

**RESPONDENT 3:** No, it's very difficult with night duty. In the winter term a lot of the sports are in the evening, so coaching and the variables increase, so it's quite difficult to find time. It's only a question of time. The teachers will give so much of their own time, sometimes so much so that it reflects on their own lives. You know, the big issue, is, can you handle this course while still carrying on your regular responsibilities? That said, I don't want to give up my other responsibilities. I like doing what I do regularly.
RESPONDENT 5: There’s no time allotted for rethinking the course. You basically, like any teacher does for the rest of their classes, read the material, rethink the questions, think up new questions, evaluate the students’ work. That’s your time and that’s all you’re going to give to it. There’s no extra time. You know, I think that now that we have done it enough, all that we would really need to do is try to do that more in our meetings and we might be okay.

RESPONDENT 4: For me personally, no. No. Another area that has been a major area of responsibility for me is that we just built that new building. In any new building there are a lot of issues. So I’m spending a lot of time just trying to make sure that all the equipment gets installed and that it’s working and then fielding these complaints and forwarding on this stuff for the punch list people. And so, for example, reach out to the arts? I haven’t had time to do anything with it this year, virtually nothing.

INTERVIEWER: Does that frustrate you?
RESPONDENT 4: Oh, it’s very frustrating, yea. I mean, there are times last year, actually, we were often meeting. And the year before, when we were planning this course, we were meeting at 7 o’clock in the morning.

RESPONDENT 6: It depends totally on what kind of a teacher you are. I know teachers here who aren’t in the house, who still manage to fill every hour every day planning and prepping and grading. I don’t have the luxury to have that kind of time to spend. At 25 I still make sure I find time to get out of here and enjoy myself, or I wouldn’t last long in this job and I wouldn’t enjoy doing it either. I know that. So, is there enough time? Well, I think I do a decent job at what I do. I could do a hell of a lot better job, probably, of each of the things I do. But I think part of what we’re teaching these kids is to be able to do a lot, with not necessarily a lot of time. I think that you’ve got to have some pretty high ambitions. I could be a better teacher of The Odyssey if I spent more time doing some research and doing a lot of outside reading, but I feel the way I manage to teach is pretty good. And it’s going to open up windows to these kids to do extra stuff that they might not do otherwise. But no, there’s no way there’s enough time. I could always do a lot more, and I know that even now, if I just shut down some of the other things that I do, I could probably do a better job than what I do. But I do feel that these kids have so many people in their lives at this point that I do with my amount of time as much as I can possibly do. But I don’t feel like – if I’m not managing with five or six of the kids, I do think there’re probably other places they are doing all right.

That sounds a little weak maybe, I don’t know, but, I mean, until this triple threat model of teaching changes or develops, this is going to be the case. And I want to be a varsity coach too. I love doing it. I love being in the house. I think that’s a huge part of what these kids experience
here, and I think I'd rather me be in there than countless other people
because I really am competent when I'm there and I love doing it. So I
wouldn't change the way things are, in that sense, but I think we could all
use more time. So it's tough. There's no question in my mind but that
this kind of teaching takes more time. But I do think in the end that it's a
hell of a lot more valuable to kids.

The lack of available time to accomplish everything related to the course was
apparent during staff meetings.

INTERVIEWER: I was struck when I was at the meeting and saw you
going through the syllabus. It was evident just observing that people were
in different places and questioning, "How am I going to keep up with
this?" and "I haven't had time to do that."
RESPONDENT 3: Right, and you came, what, I think, the end of
September? And we hadn't even had time to stray. You know, the river
was just starting, and all these tributaries were going to form and begin to
meander all over the place, so by the time we get to June, who knows.

The change to the teaching arrangement affected the way teachers felt about how
their time was spent.

RESPONDENT 3: Last year the kids really felt a part of something
special. And I think the bulk of that was the fact that they had – we had
two periods plus 10 minutes passing time, so they had 50 minutes periods,
they had an hour and 45 minutes of uninterrupted time. We didn't even
get up; we didn't even get up and go to the bathroom or leave the room,
pretty much. Now they have 50 minutes and then they start getting
restless, and they all got to go to the bathroom and more, and by the time
they get back, they have 45 and it's not the same.

I don't think the students know me as well as they did last year,
and I certainly don't know them as well as I did last year because of the
interrupted nature of 50 minutes one day and 45 minutes the next. Some
days I start them off. Some days I follow up. Sometimes I inherit a class
and I have no idea what went on. But I don't feel comfortable enough yet
with the kids. I can walk into classroom and really not know what has
gone on. So I don't know how to pick the ball up as smoothly. Even if we
weren't leading the discussion, we were there. So we had a clearer sense
of what was going on. There were days when we would divide the class in
half. And he would lead the first half and I would lead the second and
vice versa. But, being there, I knew how to segue. Not being there, it's
pretty awkward.
RESPONDENT 6: I think we began to have a sense of what the other person did better, what we did better. And now, aside from about ten minutes a day with each of these other two teachers, I can know what they did in a class, but I can’t really know, I can’t be there. I can’t actually see how the kids took it, what they really got fired up about, and also, where the other teacher’s strength lies. I don’t want to try and do the same thing that another teacher just did. I think from time to time that I do do that. The kids are usually pretty good about telling me, but in that sense, it can be a waste of your time to walk in here afterwards and have a really good idea of what you want to do and find that the other guy just did it. And it’s impossible.

There’s not enough time to meet with the other teacher and know exactly what happened in that class. So I miss that. Talking to kids and their parents from last year, one of the greatest things those kids took away is just that they had a really, really developed relationship with both those teachers. Those teachers were with them two hours a day. You can’t beat that, in my mind for what you’re actually doing with kids, you can’t – the more actual time you’re with them – and that means two teachers for two hours a day with twelve kids. You knew the kids so well, you knew how they worked, you knew how they wrote, I mean, not just what appeared on the paper, but you really knew how they went through the process. And I think that’s partly what we’re being able to do here. That’s nice. For two out of the five hours the kid is in class a day, he’s involved in related issues, and it’s not just close reading. It’s how this informs this and so on and so forth. That’s been great. And you still do, you just don’t have the same comfort level with each of the kids that you did then. And that was a real luxury.

RESPONDENT 5: Last year’s meetings weren’t necessarily enjoyable, but they were always valuable and big things were happening and we always needed more time to meet. For whatever reason, this year, it seems like we aren’t making extra meetings even though we have things we ought to be discussing. I think part of it is that maybe we aren’t as connected. I don’t know, I can’t put my finger on why. And I felt like some things we needed to change. We always have to make adjustments of the syllabus, not huge adjustments, but I felt like we hadn’t really spent time initially looking at the syllabus. We didn’t have a two-day thing before school where we got all of these anxieties out and then if there were big ones and if there were minor ones. You know, what was really going on is that you had some partners who didn’t have other mentoring during the time. Whereas, before, we were always together, so we could talk it through. We had a lot of that.

Respondent 6 was also aware that the new teachers did not have the benefit of all the time for planning the first year teachers of the course had:
RESPONDENT 6: You might also find that the new teachers are feeling a little bit more harried, and they need to get a little bit more out of some these meetings than some of us who have already done it. I know that a couple of people who are teaching it for the first time feel like we should almost meet every day because they’re still feeling like they’re not sure on a given day where they are, sometimes. And I know last year we had that sense, and we did meet a lot of the time twice a week just because we had to. And so I think it’s difficult for somebody who just doesn’t know the material as well, and doesn’t have the time to really dig into that well.

Respondent 5 felt that it was important to go slow:

RESPONDENT 5: It’s one of my old tendencies. You know, stick with the fundamental close read, because kids don’t know how to close read very well. You’ve got to do lots of close reading, give them more time for assignments, give them — I mean, all things I knew how to do but I’m doing better probably because I’m seeing the disastrous effect of speeding up.

Respondent 1 felt the course demanded much time of the teachers:

RESPONDENT 1: We shouldn’t be rushing continually. I mean, the first year was a rush. We did not stop for a breath the entire year. And I think the students and teachers at the end were all somewhat, how are we going to pull back from the content? I think this class must be a week behind the other one, right now. But, yesterday, for instance — and I know they’re going to continue it today, which is a change from what we were originally planning to do – they’ll probably continue today. By the time my partner had left — he had started it — he had done three pages of the Book I of The Odyssey. It’s something like ten pages — he’d done three. I ended up coming in and doing two stanzas. We didn’t even get through a page. So, it takes a lot longer.

He was also feeling worn out by week’s end:

RESPONDENT 1: This is not probably the best day for you to come and see us. But I think there are moments where I really feel that this is not ideal, in the sense of everything is perfect, but that it feels very good coming to the class. I’m enjoying it. It’s not difficult, though a lot of the time today, I don’t feel prepared enough for probably what’s going to end up happening. And there are various things that I wasn’t aware of. Actually the technology aspect, the students are not actually really up to what we want them to be able to do as far as web page design and connecting all that. So those sessions do end up being very directed by me, because there’s not really much other way than myself doing that in the beginning, at least. And some of the cleaning up of the information is
more directed than I'd like, but also that's partly a time thing as well. If I could say, okay, fine, we've got the next ten weeks to look at The Odyssey, then I'd be shutting up and saying we can do this, you can find this out for yourself. And I'd figure out ways of doing that. But the trouble is that we don't have time, at least right now. Some of it I've got to just give them.

With all his responsibilities, Respondent 4 stated:

**RESPONDENT 4:** In some ways, being the head of this course, as opposed to a teacher in the course has sort of raised the level of frenetica, regarding everything else I do. Because it's like being the head of another department, being the head of this course, and so, being the head of two departments is not an experience I would wish on anybody, especially if you're building a new building at the same time. So last year was extremely difficult. I mean, the course itself, what was happening in the classroom with kids, was fabulous. It was a lot of fun, but the tension and pressure that was surrounding those class periods were enormous.

Respondent 5 commented, "When we're asked to do too much, we don't do anything well. So we have to be careful about our ambitions."

**Professional growth.** In the first year of ID, paired teachers were present in each other's classrooms. In the second year, though Respondent 1 and Respondent 4 occasionally taught with their partners, Respondent 2 was the only teacher who elected to share the classroom with his new partner, the French teacher, full time. He did not find that discussions of teaching strategies affected his teaching: "I'm not sure that my teaching style has changed a whole lot as a result of teaching this course. Matter of fact, I'm certain of that." Yet he was aware of his partner's different strategies:

**RESPONDENT 2:** She has a wealth of strategies that she uses. For instance, I saw her doing something yesterday. The hardwood table - there are 13 kids sitting here and we're having a discussion and she had drawn the table and put the 12 kids in and was taking notes on each one's discussion skills. Whereas I've always depended on what I can remember in any given class about what kids have said.
Respondent 3 likewise felt that his teaching strategies had been unaffected by teaching the course:

RESPONDENT 3: I wish I could say that it has. I don’t feel like it has, and I think this is partly my fault; I’m a pretty strong personality, I’m not as good a listener as I should be, and I don’t know that I’ve been affected by a teaching methodology. So I would say that it hasn’t had a big effect on me.

Respondent 1, Respondent 5, and Respondent 6 all experienced the impact on their teaching from sharing the classroom with their partners.

RESPONDENT 1: My first year partner is really an excellent teacher and he’s really interesting to watch. I think we were both concerned that he didn’t feel as comfortable with the actual content as much, so he was learning as we were going along. On the other hand, he was also very much a brake on pushing for, “What are the student understandings of this material?” rather than to go on pumping the content if we really didn’t feel they were understanding stuff. And I think that’s affected me very clearly. I mean, I’ve almost made it a mantra that I refuse to push forward. I’d rather make sure that they understand those types of things than just aimlessly go through. And he is the one who really made me think about that far more cogently than I thought about that in the past:

RESPONDENT 5: Of course. Teaching with a paired partner, that’s where it would really happen. And then you would bring it over to group discussions. My teaching is always changing. It’s wonderful when that occurs, that was always good. It takes care of itself when you’re paired up. And also, when we were in together.

RESPONDENT 6: More than the discussion of it has been my being in other people’s classrooms. The thing I value the most is just being able to learn from somebody else, and that to me is just really neat, to be able to see somebody else in action and feel myself out a little bit. You get a lot of feedback between the two of you on just how to go about things. That’s great. All teachers should have that. It’s not as valuable to me right now to not have the other guys in my classroom and be in theirs.

I also realized almost in passing, watching another team teacher I taught with, that he just seemed to deal with the boys in the class a lot more than the girls. And a couple of girls who never said a thing had seemed to have figured that out and just stayed there. And I was angry when I left there. And I actually noticed it in my own teaching, and I did that more often than I ever realized. It wasn’t just the boys, just the girls. But there would be a particular group that I talked to much more than the
other guys. You got to know those things. It’s hard to focus on them if
you’re not watching somebody else. We don’t have lot of evaluation in
the classrooms going on here right now, so somebody’s got to be telling
you that. If there’s nobody in your classroom, nobody can do it. But it’s
hard to notice those things about yourself, and you just get accustomed to
what you do. And you’re not seeing much else. So that’s been valuable.

Respondent 4 found both discussions of teaching strategies and teaching with a
partner of value.

RESPONDENT 4: For me, it was wonderful to rediscover. I taught an
American Studies course when I first came here, 20 years ago, but I
haven’t taught literature for ages. So the whole way of getting back into
the literary mindset of teaching, how one goes about teaching a book, was
a wonderful sort of room to unlock again that had been locked up for a
long time, as far as the whole approach. So it really has expanded my
ability to teach different kinds of things. I like that a lot.

There are ways, when I was watching some people teach, that I
thought to myself, “Mm, I wouldn’t teach it that way. I think he’s talking
too much. He should let them talk more.” Or, for example, with my
partner who’s much older than I am and comes from a journalistic
background, it’s going to be great to see him. Now we’re doing this
electronic zine to see how a journalist approaches essentially creating a
piece of journalism. So I can’t wait to watch him do that and see what
kind of insights he brings to it.

All the teachers felt that teaching an interdisciplinary course required a
commitment to their own learning.

RESPONDENT 1: I’ve had the time to be able to study texts in a way
that I would like to have always studied them. I think we end up doing a
lot of formal study of the text with very little understanding of the context
of that text. I’ve always believed that context is very, very important. But
sometimes when teaching, I haven’t had the time or the ability to look at
the book in purely literary fashion. And I think that’s done a disservice to
the students. And it’s also not engaging myself. Now I’ve been able to
really look at some of these texts in a way that I think is interesting.

RESPONDENT 2: I think you have to be incredibly inquisitive or just
sort of compulsively inquisitive, because we’ve had to follow up on a lot
of things, again, that I didn’t know that much about and had to track down.
A lot of it involves, at least for me, learning, so I was one step ahead of the
kids. I’ve never taught art, I’ve never learned how to analyze a painting,
and I’ve had to learn.
RESPONDENT 3: I think I’ve expanded, gone even further in the sense of being more, I want to say global. It’s forced me to read. I’ve read and annotated and that whole thing has enriched my life. So, hopefully it’s overlapped, and I think it has. I think there’s an interaction between what I teach and what I read.

RESPONDENT 4: I think you’ve got to be willing to take on challenges and to learn. To know that, well, there’s going to be a learning curve for me on this course and find that exciting, rather than saying, “Oh, God, I can’t possibly teach Buddhism, I haven’t ever studied it before. If you read a book on Buddhism, you’re going to know a lot more than any freshman is going to know. There’s a certain fear level, sometimes. I mean, it’s nicer, I suppose, when you feel totally secure in the field you’re about to teach. But I’m not used to that, so it doesn’t bother me. I don’t know everything about Catullus, but we’re going to teach this class anyway. But some people simply aren’t put together that way.

RESPONDENT 5: You cannot bring somebody into a course like this, conscript them, if they don’t have a bug to always be rethinking and relearning and inquiring. You have to be kind of a learner/teacher, somebody who reads lively and likes to read. I already have that, so I’m always doing it anyway. That’s why I thought about being an academic, but I like to do it with other people.

RESPONDENT 6: To be the best teacher in this kind of a situation, you have to be a good interdisciplinary thinker. That doesn’t mean you mush everything together. It does mean that you have a sense of where these other things fit. And I’ve learned a huge amount of things I didn’t know as much about before. You’re encouraged to suck up to these other people and grab a little bit about how you’re going to wrap this, or what it was about Classical Greece that made architecture appear the way it did. And so in that sense, it’s a great experience as an interdisciplinary learner as well as teacher.

All the teachers felt that teaching ID affected their image of themselves as teachers.

INTERVIEWER: How has your image of yourself as a teacher been changed as a result of teaching an interdisciplinary course?

RESPONDENT 1: I think there are certain things I feel very happy about. There are certain teaching experiences that you say, this is almost heading into the type of area where I knew it was possible to feel about certain classes and it does, though not necessarily on a daily basis. I think it's
changed in some ways that I sometimes try and shut up more than I normally would do in a class, and I think I also feel very much more in a horizontal line with the students. I've been doing a lot of self education in technology and use of technology, and the thing is that normally that levels you, because you don't know as much necessarily as the kids know.

RESPONDENT 2: I think I see myself as a better teacher now than I was 14 months ago, when the course started. In that I've been teaching for 25 years, things get a little stale, more than a little stale. And I think this course really served to address a midlife teaching crisis in all kinds of ways. So I think in one sense it's made me a better teacher, but I think it's just reawakened my joy in being in a classroom. In part because of the novelty, in part because I can see the value of it and extending it into my single discipline courses. I think the kids perceive me as being a pretty good teacher. I'm not sure that that's changed.

RESPONDENT 3: But I would say that the biggest change for me has just been from doing the reading in the curriculum and not from the people.

RESPONDENT 4: I guess it's sort of broadened my sense of what I'm capable of doing.

RESPONDENT 5: All that the interdisciplinary thing has taught me is a renewed respect for not necessarily keeping the disciplines absolutely separate, but bring them to bear in discrete ways upon the overall learning experience not with trepidation but with a respect for also keeping them somewhat separate. It's the collaboration and not necessarily the interdisciplinary nature of the learning that's really fostered more self-awareness. And the vitality comes from the collaboration, not necessarily from the subject matter. But then again, I've always been interested in books. I think what does a lot for me as a teacher is looking always again at a curriculum and seeing how we do it, how we approach it, redesigning assignments with other people. You've got to keep people doing what they do well. And when they do it well and then do it in conjunction with somebody else doing it well, that's fertile, I think.

RESPONDENT 6: The place that I've really developed is just in my preparation, especially last year when my pair partner was in the hospital for about a month and a half, and so I had a two hour a day class with the same kids. But only I was teaching, and I suddenly became aware of the fact just how much you really can do when you're prepared for a class. So I would say that there have been moments when I wondered about my worth, as far as teaching goes. I knew what a lot of problems were with kids' writing. I knew how to sit and grade a paper, edit them even, but to actually get a kid to start seeing how not just to use language well but how
to develop arguments and that kind of stuff, to really point those things out. I didn’t know anything about it, and I really had a hard time doing that. And I feel now, largely due to the fact that teaching with other teachers and that I have these tools at my command, I’m eminently better, so that’s good. But there are days, and there will be days this year, when we’re teaching China, and I’ll think, what on earth did I teach today? I have no idea.

Both Respondent 2 and Respondent 6 recognized that teaching an interdisciplinary course boosted their confidence as teachers.

**RESPONDENT 2:** I’m realizing that even though I don’t know a lot of this stuff, I still know more than the kids. That comes slowly but surely to me.

**RESPONDENT 6:** I would say that my teaching is many, many times better than it ever was. I feel pretty much that after teaching this class, I could teach a lot more things now than I could have before. I have different tactics that I didn’t have before in my belt at that point. Just from watching some of these other people teach, every one of them does something better than I do. A lot them also do things I disagree with. But it encourages you to sit and think about those and decide what you’re going to do.

Respondent 4 and Respondent 3 found that teaching ID broke down barriers between departments and eliminated some isolation.

**RESPONDENT 4:** Well, I think this particular interdisciplinary environment has been helpful because there’s virtually no communication otherwise between the history department and the English department as to how writing should be taught. And so it is great to get an exposure to the English department because in every section of this course, one of the two people in the pair is from the English department. It’s great to get that kind of direct input all the time. So I think it’s going to be fantastic for the future of the school because the English and history departments won’t be these sort of separate entities that never talk, which, I think, is fairly common in many schools.

**RESPONDENT 3:** If I go all the way back to our planning sessions – 7 o’clock planning breakfasts for a year, once, sometimes twice, a week with a group of colleagues – one of the factors there isn’t much adult interaction in our job. You don’t have that at this particular level. You’re dealing with adolescents. They stay the same but you’re getting older.
But you don’t have enough adult interaction, so I saw this as a great opportunity for that, and that’s been probably the best aspect of it.

Although all the teachers preferred having their partner in the class with them, sharing a classroom with another teacher was a new experience for all the teachers.

INTERVIEWER: What adjustments have you had to make when you work with a partner in the classroom?

RESPONDENT 1: Well, I think you lose a certain connection with ego, regarding the loss of your space, and I think it’s not necessarily good.

RESPONDENT 4: Not too much. I wondered at the beginning of last year, when I thought, well, mm, my partner’s going to be in the same class as me all the time. Mm, interesting, wonder how that’s going to work. I wonder how I’ll like that, because virtually no one has ever visited my classes ever before, or very, very rarely, and within two weeks it was fabulous. I just loved it. It was great. So, having someone else there while I was teaching was fine. Because if you’re teaching about whatever it is, they pipe up with their ideas as well and also the idea of disagreeing with each other was – we did all the time. I mean, on a regular basis, I thought it taught a wonderful lesson to the kids. So that was great. I mean, we’re pretty compatible as far as our style, as far as what we mean as a minimum of standards of student attentiveness and so on. It hasn’t affected my style of teaching very much. Not yet.

RESPONDENT 2: Until this course I never envisioned myself able to teach with someone else. I always thought of myself as a solo act. I didn’t like people. I got nervous when people observed my classes. And now it’s second nature, almost, to share the room with another teacher. It’s quite easy. I enjoy it.

INTERVIEWER: How did you feel about sharing the time?

RESPONDENT 2: I love it now. It was tough at first. It wasn’t that I wanted the stage all to myself. It was just that if my partner is talking, and there’s an idea I want to get in there, it’s really tough, not as tough as it used to be, but it’s tough to just keep my mouth shut and let her go on and teach. So there’s some self-control that has had to be learned too. I think – especially if you are in the classroom with the teacher at the same time – a lot of it has to do with knowing how to deal with good interpersonal skills, because it is so different from what I’ve been used to. I’m the kind of guy where I am the teacher, so now there are two of us. I’m basically a fairly quiet kind of person. When I get in the classroom, I turn into a raging animal or something, but I’ve had to cut back on that and share the time. And that’s not always easy.
RESPONDENT 3: I don’t know. I really can’t answer that because I don’t really have a good sense of myself as a teacher. I’ve been evaluated once in 21 years, and I asked to be evaluated.

INTERVIEWER: But you prefer to have someone else in the class with you?

RESPONDENT 3: I think the benefit for being in the room at the same time was to model for the kids that interchange and discourse and willingness to disagree will be one thing and the second thing is that there is more than one way to look at a problem. We should be modeling learning methods. What better way to do that than dealing with something that you don’t know.

RESPONDENT 5: My problem is that I don’t tend to make many adjustments, which isn’t always a good thing. But you have to shut up and listen.

INTERVIEWER: But, you prefer having someone in the classroom.

RESPONDENT 5: Team teaching is really enjoyable, particularly if you get on well. We all have our strengths and weaknesses, and we can acknowledge them, even with some jokes about them. So, watching different styles, lots of modeling of arguing for the kids, modeling of different approaches. It was much more energetic and spontaneous for the teacher.

INTERVIEWER: So you basically liked having somebody observing what you were doing?

RESPONDENT 5: Oh, I loved it. I love it. That’s my character. I love that stuff. I love having other people in the classroom. I’m big on the open classroom. I have no problems with that. I know colleagues here that do, and I know that the departments actually die because of some of that atmosphere, and if we can get people working together, that’s a plus for something like this. I understand a little naysayer who says, “Well, but are they really learning about Classical Greece in the way the other classes are learning about it?” Well, yes and no. I mean, let’s not teach them bunk, but let’s not expect them to be, when they’re grade nine students, little budding classicists, because they won’t be. They have to first be interested in the questions. I think we cannot water down the historical experience or the Greek language and still offer them an introduction that’s going to be energizing and vitalizing for their whole quest of learning for their future. That I think is what’s important.

RESPONDENT 6: It took all of us a little while to get comfortable enough with another person in there. I think we were all a little ill at ease at first.

INTERVIEWER: Would you want to have that person back in the room, as you did last year?

RESPONDENT 6: I loved that. There was a side of it that I really, really liked, and that was that I think the best of both of us came out a lot better.
I think we began to have a sense of what the other person did better, what we did better. Different kids had a different sense of each of us, and some kids gravitated more towards one or the other. I think that still goes on to a certain extent, except that the really valuable thing to me was seeing what that person was doing, knowing where I might overlap or not, knowing where I could take an idea that they had presented and develop it in a different way.

The teachers found that teaching an interdisciplinary course led to other personal rewards.

INTERVIEWER: What personal rewards have you got from teaching this course?

RESPONDENT 1: It interests me the way things relate or don’t relate. I like looking at the larger ideas and the larger sense of cause and effect in cultures. It feels to me to be an intellectual process.

RESPONDENT 3: You know, I don’t know if it’s subject-based growth or whether it’s people based-growth. Some words like rubric – actually, I got that from the AP’s. Pedagogy, rubric, you know, all these paradigms, paradigm shift. You know, all these issues that really were not in the forefront of my mind at all before I got involved in stuff like this, has been positive.

RESPONDENT 4: I think that it is forcing me to learn things I didn’t know. I mean, I never had had any exposure to Confucianism before. I had never read The Odyssey before. So there’s this whole group, and I think people should know these things. When I was doing the Greek and Roman course, there was a lot of Greek and Roman poetry that I had never read before, plays I had never looked at. That really expanded my understanding of the subject because I had to do these things. I think that’s one of the prime excitments about it, and for me, one of the excitments is that teaching history, by definition, is interdisciplinary, so to have students from the very beginning exposed to that way of thinking as the norm is exciting. That’s the way it should be. And I hope it will pay off down the road.

Last year’s teaching was also some of the most exciting teaching I’ve ever had. The kids were incredible; they were so creative. We had to be spontaneous because we were reordering the curriculum as we were teaching it. So it was extremely exciting, just the whole process, and then realizing that it worked. It came out well.

RESPONDENT 5: I like to discover the perspectives and interests of my colleagues. I respect them. I’ve grown to increasingly respect them. I
think it causes you to get back to basics and really ask yourself what kind of learning is going on. I don’t like talking about things in the abstract unless I can really tangibly understand what it is that people are actually talking about. So, there’s sort of a no-nonsense atmosphere to a lot of this, and I like that. And it’s been invigorating ‘cause I get to see a big question that is in the future of liberal education being debated.

RESPONDENT 6: There are a couple of things. First, the most important thing to me about this experience is that people should not learn things disparately of other things. The ideas and information should not be separate. The other thing that always excites me about teaching is just that the kids are great and they really like it and they enjoyed it and I love being involved with them. As a member of the Religion department, I taught one-term courses for the most part. I like being involved in what a kid is doing. I love teaching freshmen too. That’s about my favorite thing to do. Beyond those things, I would say that professionally, I see myself developing as a teacher. I see my view of my understanding of how teaching works changing more rapidly than it would have if I weren’t involved in this. And I would say another one of the big values of it has been the opportunity to learn technology as a real teaching tool. And God, I don’t know what I’d do now in any of my classes if I weren’t using that stuff. And I think the kids benefit from it tremendously, they really do.

And as a young teacher and somebody who hopes at some point to go back to school and develop a more developed sense of how I want to teach, what I want to teach, that’s of tremendous value to me, to see these older people who have been teaching for quite a while, with a lot of the same questions at the same time trying to figure out some of the same answers. It’s been great. It’s been really good.

Respondent 2 not only had the reward of realizing he was capable of teaching the course, but he experienced the carry over from his ID sections into his regular English classes.

INTERVIEWER: What personal rewards have you got from teaching this course?
RESPONDENT 2: Finding out I could do it. Two or 3 or 4 years ago, when we were first planning the thing, [Respondent 4] proposed that everyone teaches everything, and I thought the guy is nuts. And I have found since then that it can happen. I still defer if I can to an art teacher when we’re working on art paintings, but I’ve found I have some competence in that area, given some little more experience than I used to have. So there has been a reward in that way.
I think too actually what goes on with the kids when they make the interdisciplinary connections. I think that’s really neat. When that happens, it’s a sort of class where I leave and it feels as if I’m walking off the ground. There’s one exercise we did recently where we brought out a Breugel painting and then had them read the Ovid poem and relate it all to the myth. And to see them just eat up, what I think is a fairly difficult poem, especially for a ninth grader, and apply it to the painting was just fabulous. More and more of that would happen in one of my regular English classes because I’m applying a lot of this to those. But it used to be that it wouldn’t. That’s probably, actually as I think about it, another valuable part of this. That a lot of what I’m seeing in here I’m taking out of here and using it in my other class.

Although the teachers experienced many benefits professionally from teaching ID, Respondent 3 was concerned whether being a generalist was as good as being a specialist:

RESPONDENT 3: Sometimes I feel like I’m wasting my time and I don’t have a voice. And I feel like I could be pretty much on something else that I could be painting. If I just focused on painting, I think I would be a better painter. Perhaps I’d be a better teacher of painting. As a generalist, maybe I spread myself too thin. If I stand next to the people who have more expertise than I and focus on minutia and take a slice straight down, my generalist approach has precluded me from doing that penetration. I don’t think I’d trade. I’ve been true to myself. I think I’d be bored stiff if I went the other way.

Respondent 5 was unsure whether being part of a team really caused him to grow as a teacher:

RESPONDENT 5: I wouldn’t have a good perspective on that. It’s helped me as a colleague, and, as a teacher, it’s helped me with understanding a little bit more about the value, actually, ironically, of the disciplines themselves. But basic disciplines. For me at the high school level, that’s ever more to the fore. And that’s where, as long as you did it rigorously with something like a basic introduction to big questions, it is a great idea. You want to bring the strengths to the basic disciplines to bear on that. So that I think is important. Oh, better teacher. God. How do we judge whether we’re effective? Do the kids learn? I don’t know. How do we test that they learn? Again, I don’t know. I can tell you this. I’m a pretty decent teacher of analytical writing. I’m a more limited teacher of creative writing, but then I have some skepticism about whether or not we can actually actively teach creative writing. We can give good
opportunities for it, and I could be much better at that. But I definitely prepped the kids for doing well at the kind of questioning and the kind of thinking and the kind of writing that they have to do at a school like this. I have total confidence in that. And I love grade 9 kids. I’m probably a better teacher of grade 9’s.

Respondent 6 wished there were more discussions during staff meetings about different teaching strategies and approaches:

**RESPONDENT 6:** It takes a certain amount of nervousness for something actually to start really getting into how you go about teaching it. That’s too bad. I’d like to benefit more from some of these people who know their way around the classroom better.

**Autonomy.** Respondent 1 stated that at IPS “the autonomy issue is very, very strong” and believed there was another reason for the course:

I know that there’s a subplot to this course that the administration for one, either consciously or I think even probably more unconsciously, is trying to move away from a completely autonomous classroom. But I’m not so sure that it was planned, really. I don’t think it was a conscious plan.

Given that rationale, Respondent 2 and Respondent 6 found the prospect of sharing the classroom with another teacher was initially unsettling:

**RESPONDENT 2:** I always thought of myself as a solo act. I didn’t like people. I got nervous when people observed my classes. And now it’s second nature, almost, to share the room with another teacher. It’s a major change.

**INTERVIEWER:** I think that, to some degree, we all feel a little intimidated with somebody in our classrooms observing us.

**RESPONDENT 2:** That’s exactly what always made me nervous and really no longer does.

**INTERVIEWER:** Sort of a control issue?

**RESPONDENT 2:** I think absolutely. I think that’s part. I think it’s sort of half a confidence issue and half a control issue. With **RESPONDENT 3** it’s a matter of biting my tongue a lot of the time because he takes a classroom by storm.

**RESPONDENT 6:** It took all of us a little while to get comfortable enough with another person in there, especially people who had been teaching for 25 years. It took a while to get comfortable enough with that
to actually do the things that you do and to really bring out your own personality. I think we were all a little ill at ease at first.

I think it's a very different thing if you are team teaching. If you're together in the classroom, it demands something totally different. And that was an experience in itself last year, just developing a kind of patience with another person's style and an open mind to that sort of thing. I mean, you begin to have your own expectations for what goes on in the classroom and what you think is okay.

I don't think in teaching institutions or in any schools period we use each other very well at all, probably because of this autonomy issue. I think teachers are used to having their own space and they're a little defensive about it, how they go about things. There's a huge confidence issue with teaching, and a lot of teachers, like it or not, aren't terribly confident about how well they teach.

Respondent 1, Respondent 3, Respondent 5, and Respondent 6 talked about adjusting to the presence of sharing the classroom with another teacher.

**RESPONDENT 1:** I think you lose a certain connection with ego, regarding the loss of your space, and I think it's not good, necessarily. But I think it's often that you feel that this is somehow your space and you can control this environment. Having someone else in the class pulls you out of that a bit, and I think that's a helpful thing. I mean, there's some good things about that. Sometimes it's nice to have your individual mark on a class or a classroom environment and the classroom experience. I've had some of my strongest educational experiences with teachers who had that very strong effect on a class and had a certain way of seeing the world, and I was really pulled in that and I think that was intriguing. I think that it does put a bit of a brake on that, and I'm not sure that that's not a good idea. It's not that it completely stops it, because my partner and I are reasonably distinct individuals, and we don't feel threatened by each other. I think we actually enjoy being in the same room together. But it puts a bit of a brake on that view that the class is your little world.

**RESPONDENT 3:** In ID, there isn't always a right answer. There are multiple right answers. And I think having two people in the room allows that to be demonstrated more equally. And, it takes the center out of the room.

**RESPONDENT 5:** My problem is that I don't tend to make many adjustments, which isn't always a good thing. But you have to shut up and listen. But I did. My partner and I also have firm ideas about what we think works and what doesn't work. Not super rigid, but pretty firm. I wouldn't say either of us is enormously flexible, but that's okay. We came to some agreement on how to work with that stuff and the rest took
care of itself. You just need people who like one another, and that’s why we work.

**RESPONDENT 6:** The tough thing about it is that you can’t have an off day. It’s not like you’re being judged all the time, but a lot of us, in an autonomous relationship that we have with our schools, allow ourselves a little space, and some of us don’t prepare as much as we should for some days of school. You can’t do that when you’re team teaching with somebody because they’re depending on you to do what you’ve got to do, and you’re depending on them to do what they’ve got to do. Another downside is that you’re not free to go and wander off on your own tangents, something that might end up being eminently valuable and then might not.

Staff meetings provided time to map out the course. Respondent 6 said, “The best thing about these meetings is that we take time. With ten of us, those same issues, when we know that we can actually institute whatever it is we come up with — we’re not waiting for an administrative person to say, ‘yes, that’s okay.’ We’ve been given a lot of leeway, which is really nice. Those discussions develop a tremendous amount of meaning and value.”

ID was also a pilot, or experimental, course with the syllabus mapped out for the entire year. Respondent 1 and Respondent 6 felt experimentation was an important aspect of the course:

**RESPONDENT 1:** It’s an experimental course and unless we experiment, and even individuals in their classes experimented, it would be very difficult to make any progress and figure out what’s working or what’s not working. I also think that individual classes should have their own alchemy so that therefore there has to be an understanding of that. If you don’t feel really that your class is ready to do this type of assignment, then I think you have to be able to change that.

**RESPONDENT 6:** Certainly, all of us are trying different things, and the nice thing is then when we do succeed with some different plan, they pretty much always manage to convey it to us. A lot of the things we’ve ended up doing have not been because they were planned. It’s been because somebody did it and it seemed to work and it went this way or that way, and so we’ve gone with it. We still have a curriculum that is
loose enough. I know some of us add – we did a Wordsworth poem the other day in one of my classes. I don’t think anyone else was doing it. Just little bits and pieces, so you can see that you can make your classes your own.

Even when teachers did things differently from what was planned, Respondent 2 and Respondent 1 felt that the ends justified the means.

**RESPONDENT 2:** I think we teach toward the same ends but use a lot of different means. And so, again, what is decided in meetings as far as what we’re going to arrive at usually is stuck to, but how we get there often changes.

**RESPONDENT 1:** I think some of us feel pretty happy with the general idea; this is what we’re doing. We’re going to definitely touch on these points. We may not touch on all the points at all the same time. The larger assignments we try to be common on so that they’re doing somewhat the same thing and there’s some room for wiggling there.

Respondent 6 and Respondent 3 explained the difficulty of teaching a course where a group of people was dictating what was to be taught:

**RESPONDENT 6:** Teaching a single subject course is different from just being a member of an ID team. We have all these meetings all the time. Anything you do by committee is tough, especially when it comes down to things like your own classes. And most of us, especially at a school like this, have begun to feel or have been taught to feel a little territorial about our class and what gets taught in it, how you do it.

**RESPONDENT 3:** We would leave a meeting and say this is the way we’re going to do it and then go off and do it completely differently. This school has a long tradition of autonomy in the classroom. People were very resistant. The excuse was always, “Well, this is a pilot, so since it’s a pilot, we’ll do it our way, you do it your way, and then we’ll compare the results at the end.” And I thought that one of the goals of this ninth grade course was so that you could know what had been accomplished with the kids in your 10th grade classroom. You could know that this was something they had done. With people inventing their own syllabus, it makes it less likely to happen.

Respondent 3 and Respondent 6 experienced the staff’s work as having some effect on reducing autonomy.
RESPONDENT 3: I have a sense of what’s going on in other people’s classrooms, which I don’t think you have if you didn’t do all the things like this. And I tell people this all the time. Ignorance is like the enemy. We all have walls in our classrooms; some teachers won’t allow anyone in and you’re dealing with ignorance or speculation. So to break down some of that is good, and I think one of the great things about this course is that the walls between classrooms get broken down.

RESPONDENT 6: I think that a tiny bit of that autonomy is gone. This is a course we planned together. We spent months and months and months deciding what things we were going to teach, months, not as what little books, but what periods and whatever it was. And the people that were originally involved – seven of us, or eight of us, whatever it was, two years ago – figuring those things out.

Conflicts. Respondent 2 believed that the staff had a good working relationship.

INTERVIEWER: What are your perceptions regarding team members’ ability to work together?
RESPONDENT 2: As far as I can tell there have been few, if any, conflicts. We’re all veterans. We’ve been around for a while, I think, and if there are disagreements, we’re all good enough to know how to deal with them. I don’t have a sense of any problems in that area.
INTERVIEWER: What kinds of conflicts do you experience arising, whether not necessarily between you and your partners, but even when your sitting at a staff meeting, and how do they get resolved? How effectively do they get resolved?
RESPONDENT 2: Gosh, again I don’t really have the great a sense of conflicts, if there are any. We know each other well. If there are conflicts, they’re usually minor and they’re resolved. I don’t think there’s a lot brewing under the surface either.
INTERVIEWER: So you would basically say that the conflicts are more, let’s say, professional and not personal?
RESPONDENT 2: Oh, no, no, no.
INTERVIEWER: So the outcome of that doesn’t really affect your relationship?
RESPONDENT 2: No, there are clearly no personal – no.

Contrary to Respondent 2’s contention, Respondent 4 acknowledged that conflicts arose among staff members.

INTERVIEWER: Are there conflicts that do arise from time to time?
RESPONDENT 4: Oh, yea.
INTERVIEWER: How do they get resolved?
RESPONDENT 4: Sometimes we just agree that – we’ll say for example, the configuration of a final exam. That’s often an area of contention. And we’ll just argue about it for a while. And eventually, we’ll come to some kind of compromise.
INTERVIEWER: Do you feel as if the outcome of that affects people’s relationships at all?
RESPONDENT 4: Yea, it seems to be it doesn’t take a toll on the group’s dynamic, at least, none that I can perceive.

Respondent 6 believed that some of the conflicts encountered by the staff were healthy and for the good of the course. But he admitted that they were not always resolved.

INTERVIEWER: What are your perceptions regarding the team’s ability to work together?
RESPONDENT 6: There’s been a little head butting in there. But some of that’s pretty valuable, and I think that almost everybody sees a little bit of their fingerprints on it. And there are a lot of good ideas that come out of eight or ten pretty educated people trying to devise a way to teach kids better. But sometimes it takes hours to get to what you think you should have gotten to in about ten minutes because you’ve got to draw some people in. You’ve got to let other people know they’re still being included. And I hate that kind of stuff, but it’s part of what has to happen. If you’re going to teach it, you’ve got to feel like you’re happy about what you’re teaching.
INTERVIEWER: You alluded to the fact that there are some tensions, so obviously there are some conflicts that arise in your meeting. How do those conflicts get resolved, or do they?
RESPONDENT 6: Well, they don’t, always. I’d say usually there develops through discussion some kind of consensus. With a bunch of headstrong individuals with big ideas, there’s always going to be somebody going away a little miffed that their idea wasn’t one that was grabbed, and they’ll be pretty big about it. And I think most people – it just happens when people are arguing – for the most part just don’t take these things very personally, which is good. But they’re not always resolved, and sometimes there is a little heat between people and in the end you walk away thinking, well, at least they’re really excited about what they’re doing. They’re interested. They want this to happen one way or another, and even if you disagree with it.
INTERVIEWER: Do you feel like that affects people’s relationships?
RESPONDENT 6: Yea, I’d say there have been moments, certainly, when the tension was a little greater than you wanted it to be. I’m a compromiser by my nature, so some of the time I’m appalled by the way some people just won’t let go of what it is that they’re saying, even though
you think, "Look, you've got to consider this in a different light." And so, I guess things are not always ironed out. The good thing about it is that we have a job to do, and you have to get back out there and do the thing that you're doing, and so usually, you have to find some consensus. There's got to be something that's going to work, and I don't think we all do the same things all of the time. We don't even necessarily all do what we agree to do. And so, I think there's some value. That probably helps us work some of these things out. Some people probably walk out of meetings sometimes and say, well, there's no way in hell I'm going to do that. I think there's a lot of this that goes on here, whether we agree to it or not. There are a couple of huge personality conflicts in there, and I would say the people who are involved in those have done a pretty good job most of the time of rising over them and really seeing what's best for kids.

Respondent 5 liked conflict and admitted that he sometimes provoked it.

INTERVIEWER: When conflicts arise, how do they get resolved?
RESPONDENT 5: Some people don't like conflict, and I do. And that can be a problem. I mean, I would pursue sometimes a line of argument in order to better test out an idea and see what the consequence would be for the curriculum, and I wouldn't try to do that at somebody else's expense. But sometimes I would -- I wouldn't necessarily take for granted what X or Y would. You know, flip that around, and I'm sure that there are certain things that I take for granted that I would be more than willing for other people to question. But the tensions would often arise when people's full pedagogical perspective was challenged, shaken up to the extent that they really didn't know what it is that they could base their teaching upon. And what would they do, if they had to change what they're used to doing? That's where you get into tricky areas.

INTERVIEWER: Did it have an impact on relationships?
RESPONDENT 5: Sometimes. I got into an argument with one person -- quite a vocal argument -- but I didn't think that it was a big deal. We both got kind of heated, but he's pretty used to that and mature enough to say, "So, we got a little heated about it, but I don't take it personally. We're still friends." And even though I couldn't tell at the time -- cause we weren't both yelling, but our voices were raised -- actually it was fine. And it brought issues to the fore, which I think needed to come to the fore. The problem with these things lies when people don't want to bring the bigger questions to the floor. And then the big lie just moves along. And then you just have your little course with your little name and you're doing the little sexy thing that everyone wants to hear and see, and yet it's not really vital; it's not really happening in a way that you can feel good about. I don't like that. I don't like doing that. And I think a lot of other people don't too, in the course, and that's why it's strong. But for whatever reason I don't think there's much of that energy happening at the
table when we get together. And I would come back to that as being not necessarily for the good of the future of the course. That’s the kind of thing brought to the pedagogy, which is really vital. And last year we had no problems with it. Actually, we had our ups and downs, occasional big disagreements, fundamental things, which I don’t think we always questioned.

INTERVIEWER: My experience when you’re in these kinds of situations is that you have to develop that trust and openness to be able to disagree.

RESPONDENT 5: It’s for the good of the course.

INTERVIEWER: Or, it’s really helpful, as you say, to the development of that course.

RESPONDENT 5: It is. You have to have that energy. You have to have a kind of fertile energy to which you’re willing to challenge yourself and challenge each other. And if you’re not, you stink in an environment like that. You’re not helpful. And that’s a problem.

Respondent 1 likewise acknowledged the presence of conflicts at staff meetings, and like Respondent 6, he did not feel that they were always resolved.

INTERVIEWER: You mentioned a few minutes ago about people having different discussions and orientations in your staffing. What kinds of conflicts arise between teachers, and how do they get resolved? Or do they?

RESPONDENT 1: I don’t think they do, actually. There’s been one that’s been going on for a long time. I give very few quizzes or full period tests. I think across the boards there’s very little tests given, save for some individuals who believe they need to have full period tests every so often. And those are most mainly pointed towards content-driven testing. Yesterday I gave this little pop quiz to figure out had they understood what they had read. I wasn’t collecting them or anything. I just did it for them to be aware that they’ve got to know some information. And then we went over it in class afterwards. But I don’t see why it’s necessary. That’s one that’s always come up. Are we going to have a final exam? What’s the final exam going to look like? And some of us are going, Why do we need a final exam? Why don’t we just have them continue the type of writing that they’ve been doing? They have to demonstrate in their writing a detailed knowledge. That’s what we’re constantly knocking on: good evidence, detailed evidence, close observation, close reading. Again, it goes back to a skill thing. But that’s something that comes up all the time.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think the way in which conflicts are resolved or aren’t resolved, affects relationships within the team?

RESPONDENT 1: Last year there were several times when people got very upset with each other about things.
Respondent 3 believed exams served a purpose.

**RESPONDENT 3:** In the fall term I said, "Look, let's take a common exam where they're confronted with an unknown." You know, we're supposedly teaching foundational skills. It's not a content-driven course; it's a process-driven course. I had to do it in the art department with the course, which was a foundation. I said we're going to have a common exam so that it forced us to stay on target. And then we'd examine our results as we graded them. That was with four teachers. You get 8, 12, whispers down the lane, you get further away, all of a sudden it becomes serendipitous, and the kids are getting vastly different experiences for what you want them to know. I thought the ID exam was a great exam, and we were supposed to correct it on a common framework, and that was the only thing we did, really, that approached that, and then we just went our separate ways.

The idea that ID was focusing on skills was a source of pedagogical differences between members of the staff. ID was created with the idea that it would focus on content and have students make connections. Respondent 1 and Respondent 4 saw the course as having a different emphasis.

**RESPONDENT 1:** The course is concentrated generally on skills. And I wonder sometimes whether it's because there are more disciplines represented in the class than a traditional English classroom. Therefore, what ends up happening is that you end up concentrating on the skills that are behind or common to various disciplines. What we end up doing is try to find larger skills that we want those students to have in various disciplines. Really, what we're working on is such things like discussion skills, analytical writing, study skills, use of technology, as a foundational exercise for all these students, and I think that's what we're really hammering on. I'm more of the opinion that it doesn't actually matter what we're studying as long as it is a rich area with multiple disciplines represented in it and it would allow for balances for those disciplines. I honestly don't think it really matters what we're studying that much. Obviously, it makes sense in the program of the school. I'm not saying content's not important, but I don't think that's really the biggest issue, although that has been a controversial issue, almost the largest issue, which I think is a misinterpretation of things.

I'm not sure if we were really in agreement about this being a skills-based course. The overall group, I'm not sure that they're all in agreement. Some of us are. I'm not even sure that [Respondent 4] is necessarily on board, as far as that goes. I mean, some of the original
planning was all we’re going to teach these students to do is make connections, and, personally, I don’t believe that at all. I think that’s a wrong aim. I mean, it’s true that there’s connection-making going on. I think also one thing that’s very, very difficult to make is valuable, provable connections, a very high order skill we’re thinking about right now. And I think there’s a lot of more preliminary things that need to be done in order to get to that stage, especially for students coming into a school right at the beginning.

**RESPONDENT 4:** There’s a difference insofar as content versus process. I mean, some people really are hot to give lots of quizzes. And they want to have in-class writing assignments. And others of us say, hold it. What’s the point of memorizing a lot of objective data? These kids need out of class writing time because they need to have time to work on their prose, not to have the pressure of the clock. And so there’s that kind of pedagogical difference that we saw last year, and I’m sure will continue this year.

Beyond pedagogical differences, another source of conflict occurred when people did things in their classrooms that disregarded staff meeting agreements.

**RESPONDENT 1:** It is conflictual when people do things in their classes that are different from other classes. We had several times when major assignments were changed within classes when somehow there seemed to be an agreement that we were all going to do the same assignment, and then suddenly people would find that the assignment got chucked out or something else had been done in its place. And that led to bitter disputes, I would say, on the part of certain individuals. Even behind the scenes, a bit of griping about what’s going on.

**RESPONDENT 3:** Conflicts that arise, like last year, were very frustrating. One section made it clear. We would leave a meeting and say this is the way we’re going to do it and then go off and do it completely differently. Things like, okay, we’re going to put a letter grade at the midterm on the reports. Well, they didn’t do it. They just said, no, we’re not going to. Or, we’re going to assign a five-page paper and give them X amount of days to do it. No, we’re not going to do that. So those kinds of things were very frustrating. I think a source of conflict. How they got resolved was that people did what they wanted. So we don’t have a strong voice at the center. [RESPONDENT 4] is the technical leader of the group, and he has to do the stuff in terms of setting schedules and things like that, but it’s kind of a volunteer basis.
Another source of conflict arose around the use of certain texts. During an observed staff meeting, the teachers discussed the use of the book *Ancient Greece*. The French teacher commented that the book was too dense and too complicated for students to comprehend. Supporting her claim, Respondent 6 noted that he was spending about two hours a night preparing, and he thought that was a lot to ask. In response, Respondent 3 commented that the choices for use in class were either too difficult or too simple: "You either get this book or 'Dick and Jane go to Athens'." Later in the meeting, Respondent 4 underscored that they wanted to drop the book. He added, "All we have to do is hang in there for another week. We're basically done with this book."

In another instance, the headmaster raised the issue of the appropriateness of freshmen reading a certain text in the course.

RESPONDENT 1: Another one that had come up that had been rather controversial was doing *Equus* at the end which even the headmaster was a bit upset, felt that maybe that it was a non-appropriate text for a ninth grader, and yet I think it's wonderful. I was surprised about it. And then when we ended up actually doing it, they treated it very, very seriously and they saw it as something that achieved the result we wanted, which was to come back to myth at the end.

RESPONDENT 2 was disappointed that *Frankenstein* was dropped from the syllabus at the end of the first year.

RESPONDENT 2: It's been pretty clear this past June what needed to go. The problem was that the course was too full. There's too much we were trying to do, so it wasn't a case of adding anything. It was a case of taking a few things away. One of which I was really disappointed we took away. INTERVIEWER: What was that? RESPONDENT 2: *Frankenstein*. It goes really well with these kids.

Respondent 3 believed that removal of *The Dream of the Red Chamber* was a mistake.
RESPONDENT 3: We had a China unit, which I thought was going to be critical to our interdisciplinary approach. And I was very disappointed to the way my colleagues responded to it, cause it was foreign. We had two texts, The Good Earth and The Dream of the Red Chamber. And The Dream of the Red Chamber was foreign and it's very Chinese. Well, immediately, kids said, "What is going on in this book?" So, unfortunately some of my colleagues said never again, that this book stinks. And they just chucked it in midstream. And I said at a meeting, "Wait a minute. You've got two perspectives. You've got a Western perspective and you've got an Eastern perspective. You need this other perspective and you need these foreign texts. The kids shouldn't jump into this culture and feel comfortable." It should be foreign, that's the whole purpose of exploring it, and I was impressed with the way people reacted to the strange and the foreign and that it is not comfortable, and the answer was, "How can I teach something I don't know?" And my answer is, "How can you expect students to learn something they don't know? Why do you have to be above the students?" And that happens way too often in this course. "Oh, I don't know. I can't teach this course. I don't know this material." Well, who does know it? What's the point? Kids don't know it either. You're supposed to be modeling that we're not a product course. We're a process course. We should be modeling learning methods. What better way to do that than you dealing with something that you don't know.

The decisions made at staff meetings reflected teachers' personal feelings about the value of the meetings.

INTERVIEWER: In the context of the staff meetings, how are decisions about what is taught and how to present it to students made?

RESPONDENT 1: We have actually syllabi sketched out for the entire year. And those are fairly specific, detailed day by day programs of study in each class. But it obviously doesn't work out in every class; things slow down or don't keep up, or whatever, and I think that's good. And I really don't think that matters, and there's a certain unease. Different people feel easier with that than others, and there's a tension there. [Respondent 5], who organized this and has been in this from the beginning, feels somewhat upset that he's looked to for every piece of information and every little bit of planning that happens in every class. And I think some of us feel pretty happy with the general idea; this is what we're doing.

RESPONDENT 3: Loosely, and we don't go into the meetings with a clear agenda very often.
INTERVIEWER: Do you wish you did?
RESPONDENT 3: This year we have added new teachers and we spent the summer supposedly revising the course; but we have deviated far afield from that syllabus already, and we haven’t even planned the winter and the spring clearly. So we’re flying by the seat of our pants too much.

RESPONDENT 5: Well, last year was a very different ballgame. Last year the course was being designed as it was being taught. It was being designed and tested. It was more vital during that period, but also more dangerous. It was a pretty open environment. Obviously, there were problems, and ultimately it was vote by consensus that some of us would give up after a while; but generally speaking, I think we would all have to agree before moving forward. This year is very different. I feel like for the people who have never done it before, it must be a very difficult experience. It’s taking care of business, but the bigger questions, I think we are open to them. I’m not even sure why we’re not really doing that kind of brass tacks, nitty-gritty, get down and dirty work, when we’re talking about whether or not something is working as we’re assessing it.

INTERVIEWER: How do you feel about what gets accomplished during a staff meeting?

RESPONDENT 2: I think a lot is accomplished. This course attracts a lot of very bright, very able, very independent teachers. I mean, it’s the nature of an experimental course like this or a pilot course. And so I think we teach toward the same ends but use a lot of different means. And so, again, what is decided in meetings as far as what we’re going to arrive at usually is stuck to, but how we get there often changes. And that used to be one my greatest sources of frustration in the course, but it’s not any longer.

INTERVIEWER: How did you deal with that frustration?

RESPONDENT 2: I just kept my mouth shut, played the good soldier—that’s my nature—but I also realized that I never wanted us going lock-stepped.

RESPONDENT 3: Last year I felt like we had pretty open interchange and shared some ideas. This year I feel as if we are rushing through. Some people are tired of the discourse and just want to rush through and get it over with. Last year could have been devoted to syllabus, and this year could have been devoted to evaluating what’s working, pedagogically working. We’ve talked about getting an outside consultant to come in and evaluate what are the results, because last year was a pilot. Somebody should be out asking, is this method of teaching better than freshman English and art and religion as three credits? Who’s evaluating the product of what we’re producing? I’m convinced that last year we taught the kids. So, I’m concerned with the course and I’m worried that we are going in the wrong direction.
RESPONDENT 4: It can be a little like herding cats. There are certain people in the group who are fine teachers and I like them a lot, but the concept of agenda does not compute. And there are times, especially last year when we were just really for the first time going at it and there were certain issues I had to get answers for them. 'Cause I needed the answers right away, and they would pull these other issues that needed to be decided down the road, and it was very hard to say that to your fellow colleague, “You've got to be quiet, 'cause we've got to do this.” 'Cause they don't want to hear it. I mean, in many cases they're department chairmen too; they've been here for a long time; they think what their agenda is is as important as anybody else's agenda. So that was frustrating at times.

RESPONDENT 5: Last year's meetings weren't necessarily enjoyable, but they were always valuable and big things were happening and we always needed more time to meet. I think part of it is that maybe we aren't as connected. I don't know, I can't put my finger on why. But, yeah, it's a totally different culture this year.

RESPONDENT 6: Where it becomes not necessarily the best use of our time, sometimes when there are too many voices, when there are too many opinions on a particular topic—we're going to try to do it this way. No. What about this way? What about this way? What about this way? And that's where you need some strong leadership, and we don't necessarily get it. So, it's frustrating, sometimes.

The teachers had other feelings about aspects of their work together or the course that they confided during their interviews. Both Respondent 2 and Respondent 3 indicated their personal struggle to reconcile their style of doing things with that of their partners.

RESPONDENT 2: It was tough at first. It wasn't that I wanted to share, that I wanted the stage all to myself; it was just that, if, in that afternoon class, if my partner is talking, and there's an idea I want to get in there, it's really tough, not as tough as it used to be, but it's tough to just keep my mouth shut and let her go on and teach.

RESPONDENT 3: At times, it was frustrating because you had to sit on an idea for a while. The biggest issue would probably come in terms of discipline. I think I'm known as being fairly stern. But, I make it clear when the kids are getting out of focus and off task. So, I will crack down
on them pretty quickly and my partner doesn’t. So, those two different
approaches made it tough to be in the room at the same time.

Respondent 3 and Respondent 5 did not feel that there was a clear assignation of
roles among staff members. Respondent 3 felt the course lacked “a strong voice at the
center...Okay, we need an exam. You want to do it? Okay, I’ll do it.” Respondent 5 felt
he got stuck in the role “of being the leader of the question and answer period regarding
the syllabus” because he inserted changes to the syllabus into the computer over the
summer.

RESPONDENT 5: It hasn’t been an enjoyable role. You know, it’s extra
work for me. I’m already the head of the third form for English and I
already do that and normally it stems from the meetings and also conflict
is directed my way. People who are having problems, I wouldn’t blame
them for thinking that I’m imposing these requirements on them. But I
wasn’t. It was group work which was assigned to and decided on in the
summer and then all of a sudden, I feel myself put in the position of, not
exactly defending, but explaining everything. I was willing to do it; but it
is awkward and an ill-defined role... Many people came up and said why
are you the one who has to do this all the time? And I said, well, I guess
because I’m the one who did it in the summer; but it has still never been
explained to me. Sometimes I had to guide the whole course, and it was
too big a responsibility, plus it was never briefed to me and I did not take
it on. It was like at meetings, people would say, “I wonder what is going
on.”

INTERVIEWER: That’s essentially what happened when I was there.
[Respondent 4] said to tell us about the upcoming week. And I was
struck, as I was sitting there, as you gulped.
RESPONDENT 5: Yea, I did. I didn’t understand the dynamic well at
the time, and I don’t think other people did.

Respondent 6 felt that the direction of the course was not as clearly mapped out as
it should be, and he felt that the teachers needed to be more in alignment with each other:

RESPONDENT 6: I think we all have a pretty good idea of what those
skills and dispositions are. But we haven’t mapped them out as well as we
could, where in the year we assess those things, where or at what point we
actually teach a given thing and how we build up. And I think that has to
do with the fact that we’ve just never said, okay, let’s line this baby up,
and let’s work it out. On the other hand, it is an intellectual exercise for us
all, every time we go to one of these meetings, to try to develop these things. I'm not sure it has to be that. And so the kids are left sometimes wondering, "Okay, if I don't do this, am I going to be okay?" And I think that's a little bit of a problem. It needs to be more course-wide. We have six classes. All of us have got to be a little more on the same page of some of those very straightforward steps that we're taking. I don't think that's gone very well.

**Collaboration.** The teachers believed that there were a variety of different qualities that contributed to making effective interdisciplinary team teachers.

**INTERVIEWER:** In your opinion, what qualities are important for teachers to make them an effective member of an ID team?

**RESPONDENT 1:** I think a willingness to put yourself at risk.

**RESPONDENT 2:** I would say a healthy dose of humility, to begin with. The recognition that you don't know everything. You know far from everything. That sort of thing.

**RESPONDENT 3:** I think they have to handle ambiguity well. Be willing to handle a curve ball and a fast ball. You can't be just a fast ball hitter or a curve ball hitter. You have to be able to adjust and do both. I think you should be curious, and I think you should convey that curiosity to the students. I think you should have a passion for one aspect of it that you can bring so that you can be asymmetrical, not just symmetrical in what you bring to the table. Knowing that if it is a true interdisciplinary course, and you are team teaching so you know that someone else is going to bring an asymmetry. So, the two together will create a more interesting whole than if everyone were just the same.

**RESPONDENT 4:** I think to be, by definition, a collaborative person. Will it, say, be fine? Maybe this other person's point of view on this approach is going to be interesting. Let's let it happen. So if you're doctrinaire and inflexible, we don't want you (laughter). And we have had other ID courses here some time ago that basically just fell apart because certain members of them were saying, "No, we're going to do it this way or not at all." And it just doesn't work.

**RESPONDENT 5:** I don't know. I think they have to love the subject matter. They can't be conscripted into it.

**RESPONDENT 6:** To open your mind in ways that your discipline actually is going to be able to allow you to present others, and they're going to help you out with yours.
Respondent 1, Respondent 4, and Respondent 5 all believed that team members worked together well.

INTERVIEWER: What are your perceptions regarding the team’s ability to work together?

RESPONDENT 1: I think we’re very good on that, actually.

RESPONDENT 4: I think we have a wonderful group. Some of their styles are very, very different, but generally, I think, we believe in what we’re doing, we think it’s very valuable, and we enjoy each other. I mean, meetings generally are very rarely acrimonious. They’re generally really fun, even if we’re laughing about the fact that this is a real challenge. So the group has been very self-selecting. People haven’t jumped into this who really shouldn’t be involved. It’s a good group. They’re very strong personalities, but it’s a collaborative group and we enjoy each other.

RESPONDENT 5: Actually, I think our faculty is great at working together. And, it’s only a question of time. They’ll give so much of their own time, sometimes so much so, that it reflects on their own lives. So, it’s really a question of scaling down the ambitions and accomplishing manageable objectives at appropriate time intervals. I don’t see collaboration as a real problem. We always try to argue things out in a way that is mutually respectable to one another.

He maintained that “collaboration works when you have, not necessarily like minded people, but people who are at the same level of openness to whatever collective pedagogy you’re going to be experiencing.”

Respondent 3 valued teaming with the larger group:

RESPONDENT 3: I have a sense of what’s going on in other people’s classrooms, which I don’t think you have if you didn’t do all the things like this. And I tell people this all the time. Ignorance is like the enemy. We all have walls in our classrooms; some teachers won’t allow anyone in and you’re dealing with ignorance or speculation. So to break down some of that is good, and I think one of the great things about this course is that the walls between classrooms get broken down.

Respondent 2 and Respondent 6 talked about the value of working with another teacher:
RESPONDENT 2: I think most valuable is the chance to work with another teacher, to see another teacher in action. I mean, again, that argues for the fact that the two of us should be together, but that’s probably the most valuable thing to me.

RESPONDENT 6: Well, I think it’s a very different thing if you are team teaching. If you’re together in the classroom, it demands something totally different. And that was an experience in itself last year, just developing a kind of patience with another person’s style and an open mind to that sort of thing. I mean, you begin to have your own expectations for what goes on in the classroom and what you think is okay. That’s different from just being a member of an interdisciplinary team. It’s coming up with the things together.

Respondent 1 talked about working with his current partner:

RESPONDENT 1: I have been coming in to help my colleague, who’s new to the course this year, get up to speed with things. It’s very easy with him. You’ll see. He has no problem. I mean, he’s an art teacher, but he has no problem handling the relationship of the writing, but I think he appreciated having a bit more support in the beginning.

Respondent 4, Respondent 5, and Respondent 6 commented on the benefit of sharing the classroom with another teacher and noted the effect of no longer doing it:

RESPONDENT 4: I liked the idea that when we were discussing material that either he was unfamiliar with or I was, there was someone else there to add another voice. So you didn’t feel like you were entirely on your own, you were flying by the seat of your pants always. Or if both of you were, at least both of you relied on each other to keep things going. It was very easy for us to coordinate cause we would typically meet out in the corridor before class started and say, well, let’s plan to go this way for this double period here and so on. Or we would turn to each other in the middle of class and say don’t you think we should X or Y now? And so it was very, very easy. Whereas now it has to be much more intentional, the phone call, the meetings, and so on.

RESPONDENT 5: Teaching with a paired partner, that’s where it would really happen. And then you would bring it over to group discussions. My teaching is always changing. It’s wonderful when that occurs, that was always good. It takes care of itself when you’re paired up. And also, when we were in together. As soon as we divided it, I guess the dividing happened all of a sudden. One person, one period and they hadn’t designed the course that way. They had designed it for last year’s model and then they changed it. Well, it does not work when you have an art
teacher here, a history teacher there, and a French teacher here and an English teacher there. It doesn’t work.

RESPONDENT 6: There was a side of it that I really, really liked, and that was that I think the best of both of us came out a lot better. I think we began to have a sense of what the other person did better, what we did better. And so that’s the hardest thing about not being in each other’s classroom. We actually do try from time to time — we’ll let our class before out five minutes early or go five minutes longer so that we can see each other a little bit, and that helps tremendously. You get so much a better sense of actually an angle you might take that’ll draw off of what he’s done instead of being two separate tracks running side by side but not overlapping. That’s tough.

Respondent 6 elaborated more about what it meant to him to no longer share the classroom:

RESPONDENT 6: We’re not in the room together. And I just don’t know how my partner is teaching it. I do, because we talk about it, but at the same time, not having been in the room for that experience, I really sometimes wonder if we’re not drawing the kids two separate directions. And that may be good, and I think it partly is good, but I think it can be confusing for some of the kids as well.

Respondent 5 and his partner talked every day, “which is fine for basic coordination or for assessing the kids, and we get together at report times and stuff; but, I don’t know, it’s not collaborative.”

The level of collaboration that teachers experienced during staff meetings underwent change from the first to second year of the course. Respondent 6 felt young teachers were not terribly confident. “And it’s hard to talk about it, so in this instance, when we’re actually teaching the same thing, and we’re teaching a curriculum we devised together, some of those boundaries fall away a bit. We feel much more free to talk about how we did things, what success we’ve had, and that to me has been tremendously valuable. So that meeting is valuable in that sense.” He commented more:
RESPONDENT 6: We have a lot of experienced teachers in that room. That’s what it comes down to – so you want to know what people have to say. I think we have, for the most part, a really strong group in that sense. It’s hard reaching consensus sometimes, but you know people are really excited about what they are teaching. It’s not a support group mentality, but it is nice for us to come together every week and just have a little bit of hashing things out, saying, how’d you manage this? What’d you do here? And so they’re really high points and they’re low points to it. The best thing about it is the first thing. You come together with 10 of us that are pretty much on the same page, and you really want to start something, and could use each other. By this time last year, we still didn’t really know where we were going to be right after Christmas. We had a pretty grand sense of it, but as we were teaching, we began to realize there are a whole bunch of little things we haven’t worked out here that we’ve got to get back to. So, a lot of it was still planning. We don’t do as much of that now.

Respondent 5 thought meetings were of greater value the first year because the teachers were all new to the course:

RESPONDENT 5: We all were in the same boat last year and had never taught it before. So, we could address our own concerns or frustrations or questions. Now it seems more like there is this tacit assumption that this thing is moving forward and that it is working. Some of that fundamental questioning about well, now let’s look back at this unit; let’s look forward at this unit and what would work, why and why not. It’s no longer going on. If it is collaborative, I’m not sure how much collaboration is going on. I couldn’t tell you. You know what was really going on, is, you had some partners who didn’t have other mentoring during the time. Whereas, before, we were always together, so we could talk it through. We had a lot of that.

INTERVIEWER: Some issues with communication.

RESPONDENT 5: Communication, and I think there is this assumption that let’s just have it happen. We’re not having fertile debates about those things. I would think we need to define the course, but it’s not happening. I don’t know why. Is that because the Dean of Faculty is always there? She never interjects or stops conversation or anything like that. When she was there last year, we still had the same discussion, so I don’t know.

INTERVIEWER: How do you feel about what gets accomplished during the staff meeting?

RESPONDENT 1: It depends on the day. Sometimes it’s very good. Sometimes we get actually something done. Other times we have lots of problems of decisions, getting into the arguments or issues about things.
So we don’t get that much accomplished. And they’re always interesting meetings.

**RESPONDENT 2:** (laughter) Um, see, I have two responses to that. Any issues that are raised I think we do a pretty good job of coming to a consensus on. And so in that sense, I think a lot is accomplished. The question then is whether what we go to that meeting thinking is what actually happens. That’s another issue entirely.

**RESPONDENT 3:** Last year I felt like we had pretty open interchange and shared some ideas. This year I feel as if we are rushing through. Some people are tired of the discourse and just want to rush through and get it over with.

**RESPONDENT 4:** It can be a little like herding cats. There are certain people in the group who are fine teachers and I like them a lot, but the concept of agenda does not compute. And there are times, especially last year when we were just really for the first time going at it and there were certain issues I had to get answers for them. ‘Cause I needed the answers right away, and they would pull these other issues that needed to be decided down the road, and it was very hard to say that to your fellow colleague, “You’ve got to be quiet, ‘cause we’ve got to do this.”

Responen 3 did not feel that they went “into the meetings with a clear agenda very often.”

**INTERVIEWER:** Do you wish you did?
**RESPONDENT 3:** I wish we did, and we don’t seem to leave the meetings with a clear statement of resolution as often as we should. Again, last year was easier as we had fewer teachers. And we had spent the whole year planning the course. So we were a little bit more on the same page. This year we have added new teachers and we spent the summer supposedly revising the course; but we have deviated far afield from that syllabus already, and we haven’t even planned the winter and the spring clearly. So we’re flying by the seat of our pants too much.

Respondent 5 ended up guiding the whole course. “I don’t know how it happened — I got stuck in the role, it hasn’t been an enjoyable role of being the leader of the question and answer period regarding the syllabus. It is awkward and an ill-defined role, and I don’t find it pleasant because it isn’t collaborative. I didn’t feel as if it were a shared role.”
Respondent 6 believed the sharing of different teaching strategies and approaches was done less in the second year. “I think last year we did more of that, for some reason. I think probably because we were all new to it, and this year, I think, a lot of meetings have been allowed to be led by the group that have already taught it for a year.”

As the Coordinator of ID, Respondent 4 was noted to lack the strength of leadership and vision necessary to keep the course on track. Respondent 2 believed that his leadership style was laissez-faire. Respondent 5 questioned whether it was possible to “handle this course while still carrying on your regular responsibilities.”

**RESPONDENT 5:** What you have to do is to have someone in charge of it, and the difficulty is that the Dean of Studies now would have been the perfect guy to moderate courses like. But he has all of these other responsibilities, so he doesn’t have the time to do it. And the Dean of Faculty has too many other things. So, there’s not one person. And [Respondent 4] is the Dean of the History Department, so what he did, he did out of the goodness of his heart. So, I wonder if there is anyone being in charge of it.

Respondent 6 felt that a difficulty of the current staff was that it needed a strong leader.

**RESPONDENT 6:** And I think [Respondent 4] is much more focused on this being an open forum for us, which is great. But at the same time it’s difficult for us to sometimes agree on things. And I think the kids even sometimes have the same sense that we’re vacillating between things, from time to time. And some of us aren’t even really sure always what the end goal is going to be. Part of that’s because we just don’t know, sometimes, what it’s going to be because we’re still discussing these things endlessly. The best possible interdisciplinary program is going to be run by somebody who has a real vision for what they’re doing. He doesn’t have all the information, but I think you’ve got to have a real legitimate goal of what you’re doing. And essentially our goal is to teach skills and disposition.
Dear Chair of the Interdisciplinary Department:

My name is Sherman English, and I am a doctoral student in the Executive Ed. D. program at Seton Hall University. I am writing to seek your help in assisting me with doing my data collection at your institution. The purpose of my study is to investigate the influences of interdisciplinary team teaching on the work lives of high school teachers at an independent school. Your school has been identified as one of a select group of independent schools that offers interdisciplinary courses at the high school level.

The purpose of this letter is to request your permission to allow me to make a presentation regarding my dissertation topic to member of your department to see whether any one of your interdisciplinary teams would be willing to participate in my study. Their participation would be entirely voluntary, with no risk or benefit to them for participating in my study. My aim would be to explain my method of data collection and to address any questions members of your department might have. To help me, I would also appreciate receiving, prior to the presentation, a list of all interdisciplinary courses and the names of the teachers involved in each one. This way, I will know, once the contact me, when I have an entire team’s involvement so I can then schedule interviews, class visitations, and team staff meeting attendance.

Let me assure you also that my interest is solely in the team members and their interactions with one another. Information from interviews will appear in aggregate form without attribution to or mention of the names of the teachers who participated in the study. Any discussion of students will not be reported. Finally, if one of your teams volunteer, I would also appreciate your providing me with any background history, materials, and recorded staff meeting notes associated with the planning and teaching of the course they team teach.

Your assistance in this study is crucial to its success. Thank you for your time and anticipated cooperation.

Sincerely yours,

Sherman M. English
APPENDIX E

Dear Prospective Participant:

My name is Sherman English, and I am a doctoral student in the Executive Ed. D. program at Seton Hall University. I am in the process of gathering data to complete my dissertation.

I am requesting your participation in a research study that involves investigating the influences of interdisciplinary team teaching on the work lives of high school teachers at an independent school. The study is both timely and of interest to interdisciplinary team teachers at the high school level. The literature has addressed many affective outcomes to students and teachers but has not examined the impact on teachers’ work lives.

Your participation is entirely voluntary, and there are no risks or benefits for participating in the study. If you agree to participate, you may withdraw at any time without penalty. Your identity will remain anonymous to everyone except the interviewer. All information will also be presented with no references made to your individually, and all data will be presented in aggregate form. Finally, I will request form the Department Chair a history and any background history, materials, and recorded staff meeting notes used in the planning and teaching of the course.

If you would like to participate in this study or have additional questions about it, please contact me. Your involvement will entail an interview which, if you agree to it, will be tape recorded and will take approximately one hour. I will also plan to attend one of your classes and at least one team staff meeting. However, my interest is only in team members and their interaction with one another, not student results. When my research is completed, I will be willing to share with you the aggregate results of my study.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Seton Hall University Institutional Review Board for Human Subjects Research. The IRB believes that the research procedures adequately safeguard the subject’s privacy, welfare, civil liberties, and rights. The Chairperson of the IRB may be reached through the Office of Grants and Research Services. The telephone number of the Office is 973-275-2974.

Thank you for your time in this research study.

Sincerely yours,

Sherman M. English
APPENDIX F

Informed Consent Form

I am asking you to participate in a research study that involves investigating the influences of interdisciplinary team teaching on the work lives of high school teachers at an independent school. The study is both timely and of interest to interdisciplinary team teachers at the high school level. The literature has addressed many affective outcomes to students and teachers but has not examined the impact on teachers' work lives.

I understand that I am a participant in a study investigating the influences of interdisciplinary team teaching on the work lives of high school teachers at an independent school. I have been informed that I will be interviewed, and I have ___ have not ___ given the interviewer permission to tape record the interview. If I allow my interview to be taped, I have been assured that the tapes will be destroyed once they have been transcribed. I understand that the interview will take approximately one hour. I also understand that my class may be observed by the interviewer and that he will observe one or more of my team staff meetings. Finally, the interviewer is interested only in observing staff members and their interactions with one another and will report nothing related to any students who may be discussed.

Further, I understand that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary, with no risks or benefits to me for participating in this study. My identity will remain anonymous to everyone except the interviewer. I may also withdraw at any time from the study without prejudice. Any direct quotes used in the dissertation will contain no direct reference to me individually, and any results will be reported in aggregate form. Finally, I have been informed by the researcher that he has requested from the Department Chairman a history and any background history, materials, and recorded staff meeting notes used in the planning and teaching of the course.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Seton Hall University Institutional Review Board for Human Subjects Research. The IRB believes that the research procedures adequately safeguard the subject's privacy, welfare, civil liberties, and rights. The Chairperson of the IRB may be reached through the Office of Grants and Research Services. The telephone number of the Office is 973-275-2974.

I have read the material above, and any questions I asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this study.

______________________________  ____________________
Subject or Authorized Signature  Date
Appendix G

Cross-Record of Participants' Responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Understanding of interdisciplinary team work</th>
<th>Respondent 1</th>
<th>Respondent 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. need for integrated experience for freshmen designed to be content-driven admin. supportive controversial among some fac. paired teachers - an English teacher and teacher from: art, French, religion, or history Director of Academic Tech and librarian always present at staff meetings no selection process -chosen for interest in arts and history interested people involved w/ course expansion, some people asked to fill in taking risks - don't know subject so look to common skills across disciplines connections occurring - wrong emphasis</td>
<td>1. Valuable as PR for IPS created to add history course to freshman year 5 English teachers, 2 art, 1 religion, 1 French, 1 history appealed to him ran 9th grade English curric. for years pioneer of using technology in classroom no process, tho' expects arms will be twisted in future 1st year always with partner 2nd year not w/ partner for 1 section; with partner for other section teachers 2 sections - w/ art and French teachers prefers partner in class for organizational reasons healthy conflict modeled</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding of interdisciplinary team work</td>
<td>Respondent 3</td>
<td>Respondent 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. DoF believes in collaborative teaching</td>
<td></td>
<td>1. DoF supportive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English dept. mandated an English teacher in every section</td>
<td>5 English, 1 history, 2 art</td>
<td>DoF likes that ID has focus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 English, 1 history, 2 art</td>
<td>1 religion, 1 French</td>
<td>1 religion, 1 French</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 religion, 1 French</td>
<td>no known process - was Art Dept. head, interested in change</td>
<td>instigated idea for course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no known process - was Art Dept. head, interested in change</td>
<td>interested in ID stuff</td>
<td>weak history courses at frosh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>preferred partner in class to model interchange and ability to disagree</td>
<td>handle ambiguity well</td>
<td>level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>handle ambiguity well</td>
<td>able to adjust</td>
<td>1st year taught with partner in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>able to adjust</td>
<td>be curious</td>
<td>classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>be curious</td>
<td>have passion</td>
<td>2nd yr visits partner’s room, but</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>have passion</td>
<td></td>
<td>he can't reciprocate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>his choice to visit partner’s</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>room</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1st yr did extra class for free</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>partner in class added a new</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>voice</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>take challenges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding of interdisciplinary team work</td>
<td>Respondent 5</td>
<td>Respondent 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. DoF responded to Board need for initiative to start getting teachers to work together, a bit more connected approach to their learning. Chair of Board interested in ID learning. Pairs - English w/ another dept. Only one woman - Fr teacher. 1st yr shared classroom. 2nd yr not w/ partner. Change made for financial reasons. Would be happy to teach course by himself. Works well if you get on well. Love subject matter. Teach to strength.</td>
<td>1. DoF values ID course, not sure of selection process, expressed interest in ID courses, wanted to be involved. 1st yr taught w/ partner in room. 2nd yr not in room w/ partner. Liked knowing what partner was doing. Sharing classroom demands patience. Must remember what your discipline is. Have be good ID thinker. Have curiosity.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Respondent 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>2. Housemaster</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dean of Studies - oversees curriculum for entire school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>teaches with new partner in classroom once a week; will cease practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1st year shared classroom and students for 2 periods - pro bono</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1st year willing to put in time to make course work</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2nd year - paired for same grp. of students; no longer share class different model - not effective cost a factor</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Respondent 4 is the leader weekly, scheduled staff mtgs. lasting 1 hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1st year always w/ partner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2nd year too little time meet 10/min/day; 1 hour/week for partner planning new duties pull at him catch as catch can for mtgs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Respondent 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>2. Soccer coach</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1st year always with partner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2nd year not w/ partner from art dept; with other partner always together</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>difficult to meet with art partner</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Respondent 4 is the leader weekly, scheduled staff mtgs. lasting 1 hour</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>meet 1 1/2 hour/week for partner planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>scheduling a problem - classes should all have both teachers present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>not enough time - of 10 periods can teach 9; use 10th for planning no common planning for all 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>scheduling consumes too much staff meeting time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Respondent 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Coaches intramural tackle football does dorm duty partner ill 2nd year - has filled in for him don't know kids as well as he did last year can't pick up conversation as smoothly, not being in classroom Respondent 4 is the leader weekly, scheduled staff mtgs. lasting 1 hour not enough time - of 10 periods can teach 9; use 10th for planning using period, when others don't puts you behind no common planning w/ partner night duty cuts into time winter sports at night consultation period can be used but not all willing to give it up catch as catch can meetings 1st year had 1 3/4 hrs of uninterrupted time cause of partners sharing classroom 2nd year, interruptions w/ change of teacher to class 2nd yr, kids get restless w/o both teachers present</td>
<td>2. Chair of History Dept. NJ Scholars Program Reach Out to the Arts Program Coordinator of ID Overseeing bldg completion opts to visit partner's class meet in corridor to coordinate rely on partner in class to segue ls coordinator of ID weekly, scheduled staff mtgs. lasting 1 hour meets w/ partner over dinner 45-60 min/week mtg time overseeing new bldg cuts into time for ID planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Respondent 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Soccer coach</td>
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<td></td>
<td>coaches crew</td>
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<td>fall and spring</td>
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<td></td>
<td>college guidance</td>
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<td></td>
<td>oversees frosh curriculum</td>
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<td></td>
<td>sharing classroom requires</td>
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<td></td>
<td>sacrifice of free period</td>
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<td></td>
<td>AdT is the leader</td>
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<td></td>
<td>weekly, scheduled staff mtgs.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>lasting 1 hour</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Respondent 6 good at coming</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>to meet, but mtgs are piecemeal</td>
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<td></td>
<td>meet 10/min/day, 1 hr/week</td>
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<td></td>
<td>more time at report time</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>no time to rethink the course</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>faculty good at giving time</td>
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<td></td>
<td>need to scale back ambitions</td>
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<td></td>
<td>and accomplish manageable</td>
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<td></td>
<td>objectives</td>
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<td></td>
<td>time not used to discuss big</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>issues</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Coaches 2 varsity sports
<p>|      | asst. housemaster |
|      | not sharing class, hard to know |
|      | what partner has done |
|      | can be redundant in teaching |
|      | not enough time to meet w/ partner |
|      | 1st year always w/ partner |
|      | Respondent 4 is the leader |
|      | weekly, scheduled staff mtgs. |
|      | lasting 1 hour |
|      | too many voices impedes value |
|      | of mtgs |
|      | new teachers at disadvantage |
|      | cause of time required |
|      | 1st yr lots of course undevelop'd and |
|      | held 2nd mtg to cover material |
|      | difficult for someone who does |
|      | not know material well |
|      | don't do as much planning as |
|      | 1st yr |
|      | finds time w/ both partners |
|      | catch as catch can |
|      | more time spent when grading |
|      | occasionally overlap a few |
|      | minutes for partners to see each |
|      | other's classes |
|      | not enough time, tho' could shut |
|      | down things he does |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professional Growth</th>
<th>Respondent 1</th>
<th>Respondent 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Dynamics occur from different views</td>
<td>3. Training in June for 10 days used to pare back course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>no agreement - skills-based or content-based</td>
<td>adopts other teachers' ideas but no change to his style or teaching strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>everyone teaching English - not all skilled; work at peer editing partner input - don't rush partner presence causes loss of some ego; class not your own students more engaged wrestling with belief structure study texts more deeply teaching students for whole year instead of one term taking discussions farther w/ the kids learning about technology to be able to teach the kids listening more, talking less</td>
<td>Fr. Teacher has wealth of styles but he uses memory w/ 2 partners, has made adjustments cause of approach and their knowledge mentors Fr teacher - whole course is new to her has had to learn self control w/ art teacher realizing he could teach other discipline's materials learning he could teach w/ someone else getting feedback interacting w/ another teacher seeing other teacher in action seeing kids make connections sees self as better teacher reawakened joy of being in classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Growth</td>
<td>3. Not enough sharing of teaching techniques unaffected by teaching methods has not been evaluated in yrs enjoys adult interaction - comes from small dept. teaming w/ larger group valuable knows what's going on in other people's classes breaks down barriers unsure if rewards are subject based or people based gained most from reading in the curriculum advocates observation and evaluation course has made him more global forced him to read and write more sharing classroom models no right answer teaming takes ctr out of room</td>
<td>3. Teachers have different styles but it's valuable exposure to pedagogical differences - skills vs. content rediscovered literary mindset expanded ability to teach different things compatible w/ partner, no effect on teaching methodology not always agree w/ partner's way of teaching loves learning from current partner who was journalist forcing him to learn things he didn't know expanding personal knowledge exposing kids to natural thought process of benefit down the road improve comms. between English and History dept. being spontaneous and redesigning course as they went along partnering was wonderful lesson for kids w/ shared perspectives broadened sense of what he can do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Growth</td>
<td>3. 1st yr course designed as it was taught - more vital 1st yr discussed teaching strategies teaching affected by teaching w/ partner w/ model changed, design problems understands financial reason not one to make adjustments came to agreement w/ partner likes discovering colleagues' perspectives gained more respect for them expanding breadth of talks gaining value of disciplines loves having other teachers in his classroom sees effects of speeding up collaboration fosters self-awareness ID taught respect for not separating disciplines entirely not affected desire for prof growth - has that thru reading can't conscript someone in course like this</td>
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<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3. Respondent 4 creates open forum for discussions need someone w/ real vision learning patience cause of height, feels he gets his way 1st yr spent more time sharing different teaching methodologies being in others' classrooms of more value than discussions offers time for reflections good for kids to see several teachers in action together view of himself as teacher is changing more rapidly cause of course values learning from someone else seeing someone else in action requires more preparation - can't leave partner out to dry given him value as a teacher learned a lot about technology better teacher cause of tools at his command</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Autonomy</td>
<td>Respondent 1</td>
<td>Respondent 2</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Prefers shared classroom</td>
<td>4. Prefers shared classroom</td>
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<td></td>
<td>current teacher and he get</td>
<td>mentors Fr teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>along well partner appreciated shared</td>
<td>healthy conflict w/ art teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>classroom since he's new 1st year partner acted as brake for pushing ahead</td>
<td>discuss course revisions at end of year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>loss of connection w/ ego puts brake on view of &quot;class is your little world&quot; current partner and he - distinct individuals - not threatened by each other</td>
<td>kept quiet when Frankenstein removed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>autonomy strong at IPS course an opportunity &quot;to move away from a completely autonomous classroom&quot; people disregarded assign. need to be able to experiment ID work useless w/o disciplinary knowledge</td>
<td>teaching style unchanged Fr teacher and he have same teaching style art teacher and he have opp. approaches, but get to same place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>if goes off on tangent, partner can pick up thread terrified initially sharing class but found he loved it</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autonomy</td>
<td>4. Teaching w/ another can be frustrating - have to sit on ideas 2nd year, have deviated from syllabus unaffected by teaching methodology methodology not discussed, &quot;just did what we did&quot; unaware of how partnering has affected him - no evaluation in 16 years wishes people would observe more course has affected him in art people do not stick to the plan</td>
<td>4. Visits partner's classroom whenever he can teaching together was positive experience - liked hearing from him in class people work together well self-selecting group differences of content v. skills very open to others' ideas compatible w/ partner 1st yr wondered how it would be to teach w/ someone since class never been visited - worked well decisions made to eliminate books and units w/o apparent difficulty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autonomy</td>
<td>Respondent 5</td>
<td>Respondent 6</td>
</tr>
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<td>----------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Great teaching w/ partner new teachers at disadvantage old and new in</td>
<td>4. Loved sharing classroom teachers used to having own space - get defensive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>different places cause of experience or lack of it teaching affected by</td>
<td>about giving it up took time to get comfortable w/ partner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>being in class w/ partner not sure whether course has affected him as a</td>
<td>not a big deal if people deviate from plan - an experimental course - need</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>teacher is big on the open classroom receptive to others' ideas</td>
<td>to experiment not free to wander off on one's own tangent w/ partner present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>have to give up some territory course loose enough to be added to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent 1</td>
<td>Respondent 2</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Conflict Resolution** | **5. Syllabus mapped out - not stuck to in every class deviating creates uneasiness and tension**  
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<p>| Some happy w/ general idea try to complete larger assign. Mtgs good depending on day discussions, arguments derail mtgs work well, but interesting dynamics no agreement re skills or content based course conflicts not always resolved long term one re tests &amp; quizzes feels tests not necessary 1st yr conflicts occurred when people abandoned plan and substituted - griping occurred course is experimental - need room to change assign. | <strong>5. Clear that course ambitious and needed to be pared back unhappy Frankenstein removed but said nothing mtg outcome different from expectation of what it's about staff has few conflicts being veteran teachers, know how to deal w/ them art teacher runs disorganized and unfocused discussions see opposites but achieve same results art teacher loves to bitch about course being disorganized knows self to be quiet conflicts are resolved no effect on relationships scheduling frustrating and draining</strong> |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conflict Resolution</th>
<th>Respondent 3</th>
<th>Respondent 4</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5. Decisions made loosely</td>
<td>mtgs have no clear agenda leave mtgs w/ vague resolution added new teachers summer spent &quot;supposedly revising the course&quot; &quot;flying by seat of our pants too much&quot; ambiguous decisions 1st yr - open interchange 2nd yr - rushing thru people tired of discourse, rush thru to get it over w/ believes in evaluation, but not had it in 16 yrs conflicts are frustrating people don't do what has been agreed to justify deviation cause course is a pilot claim comparison will occur, but it doesn't believes in importance of exam but left to do it on own - no follow thru by others after it no strong voice at ctr of ID feels as if wasting time - has no voice angry re dropping of The Dream of the Red Chamber- get 2 perspectives, but cause no one understood it, chucked it believed course should model learning methods</td>
<td>5. &quot;concept of agenda does not compute&quot; hard to tell others to be quiet tho' styles different, mtgs rarely acrimonious conflicts occur, but we just agree - come to a compromise configuration of final exam an issue conflict does not affect group's dynamic English Dept. loathe to get rid of some stuff, but planners did, cause too much for course</td>
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<td>Conflict Resolution</td>
<td>Respondent 5</td>
<td>Respondent 6</td>
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<td>5. All in same boat last yr cause new to teaching course new teachers at disadvantage seems like tacit assumption that course going forward and working avoiding the big questions not making extra mtgs put in role of being coordinator for 1st unit of course - unhappy cause not understood faculty works well together don't make many adjustments likes conflict, but knows others don't pursues line of argument to test consequence for curriculum tensions arise when someone's pedagogical perspective is challenged - have no basis for their teaching got into heated argument w/ another person &quot;made up,&quot; but brought issues to the fore openness and trust not really there for dev't of course dislikes when people don't discuss their discomfort w/ things</td>
<td>5. Can discuss topics endlessly not clear what end goal is too many opinions frustrate can take hours to get to simple decision - must include everyone intimidating at first to teach w/ more experienced teacher disagreement dealt w/ thru discussions leading to consensus people leave miffed cause idea not acknowledged people pretty big about it consensus must be reached so class can be taught some people not going to go along not a big deal if people deviate better to experiment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td>Respondent 1</td>
<td>Respondent 2</td>
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<td>6. Different people easier w/pacing classes according to student needs</td>
<td>6. Decisions made as group after 1st yr, course revised because it was too full</td>
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<td></td>
<td>mtgs always interesting</td>
<td>do good job of coming to consensus</td>
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<td>partner pulls you out of idea that class is your little world</td>
<td>teaching style unchanged</td>
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<td>a drafting, revising course - feedback valued to keep course authentic</td>
<td>Fr teacher has ltd background teaching lit. - requires time, but</td>
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<td>work to give idea of audience and purpose on assign.</td>
<td>styles similar</td>
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<td>try to do peer &amp; open editing revision process needs more attention</td>
<td>strong advocate for 2 teachers in classroom</td>
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<td>partner helped w/pacing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td>6. Loose decisions: vague agenda, unclear statement of resolution, 1st yr good exchange of ideas, 2nd yr people tired of discourse rushing thru discussions, new teachers impede process, people resistant to change - do their own things in classroom, common exam left to him to devise - not collaborative, adult interaction was collegial, partnering broke down walls discussing terms - pedagogy, rubric, paradigm - valuable, not being listened to re Dream book he saw as valuable</td>
<td>6. Despite strong personalities, a collaborative group argue till reach compromise, English and History Dept. talk, 35 people planned course and were able to eliminate materials</td>
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<td>Collaboration</td>
<td>6. 1st yr course designed as taught did fundamental questioning re what was done in past and what's yet to come being coordinator is not collaborative - not shared role new teachers not vocal defining the course is not happening conversations no different from last yr and DoF still present discussed teaching strategies all during first year collaboration works when people are like-minded and have same level of openness arguments bring issues to fore big on open classroom collaboration fosters more self-awareness than ID nature of course</td>
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<td>Respondent 5</td>
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<td>Respondent 6</td>
<td>6. Respondent 4 focused on mtgs as open forum need ldr w/ real vision cause involved in planning, can share success feel free to talk to one another new teachers lost - don't know material as well 1st yr more discussion of teaching methodologies 2nd yr several &quot;old&quot; teachers running mtgs don't always have to agree lots of feedback given between partners in shared classroom</td>
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