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All right. Welcome to this week's teaching comments podcast. I'm your host, Jenna Ledford, Teaching Excellence Consultant with the Center for Learning Enhancement, Assessment, and Redesign. This week we're discussing team-based learning with Judi Bradetich and Jessica Craig. Judi is a senior lecturer and online course design 2016 winner, with the Human Development and Family Science Division in the EDPSYCH department. And Jessica is an Assistant Professor with the Criminal Justice Department. And they are here today to talk about this particular method of team-based learning of which, Judi, what's your specific title that you have with it?

Oh, I'm a Trainer Consultant.

Trainer Consultant. So Judi is officially certified. And Jessica recently started. Jessica, when did you start doing TBL?

Yes, my first time with TBL was last fall, so fall of 2016.

All right. And so Jessica is a complete convert. And so we've got someone who's been doing this for about how many years, Judi?

Successfully, I would say about five. About five years. I've been interested in about for about seven.

All right. And then we have someone who's new to it. So I'd like to just go ahead and get started. Judi, will you tell us what is team-based learning, or as you'll probably hear us call it, TBL, for short.

OK. Well, TBL is a real specific teaching strategy that successfully addresses all sorts of problems professors sort of meet in the average classroom. For example, student preparation, and active engagement, and group work, and getting students to participate in discussions. And then also to sort of help prevent social loafing in those groups. So it was started about 30, 35 years ago by a guy named Larry Michaelsen, up at the University of Oklahoma, and he designed it because he had been teaching small classes, and then all of a sudden he was asked to teach big classes, and he didn't want to lose that sort of small class feel.

So this really helps professors just be able to work with students, have them work in groups, and have a lot of discussion. And it just has such wonderful strategies to it, and very well lined up, and very well thought out. So that it makes you feel like somebody has your back and there's a real structure to it. And if you follow the pretty strict guidelines of it, then you can't help but be successful.

So TBL is actually a specific model, or method would be a better word? Or strategy.

Strategies for approaching teaching.

Yeah, because I always hear people say team-based learning, but they're not specifically talking about this model.

Well, lots of times people equate it to problem-based learning and it's somewhat similar to that. But team-based learning has sort of more protocol to it, a little bit more structure than problem-based learning, because you have the simultaneous report of the students reporting their information. They have specific choices that they have to make. And they have-- what are the four S's? It's simultaneous

report, specific choice—Significant choice. Significant problem. And something else, I can't remember off the top of my head. But--

We'll will think about it as we go along. But anyway, because it has those components in it, it really helps you kind of just structure the content in the way, because what really is helping people do is be prepared outside of the classroom to come into the classroom and be able to practice applying the material with the help of your colleagues and your professor, as opposed to just being told the information and then asked to regurgitate it on a test.

So you can you walk us through what a general class period with TBL, how would that go?

Well, with team-based learning, you can break the content of the course into modules. And so at the beginning of a module, before you even discuss the module, you have the students read. And you have them come on the first day of that particular module and take a test. And they take that test by themselves, and then they turn around and they take it with their team. And the team is made up of between five and six members, because that's sort of been decided as found to be the most practical and best number of students in a group.

And so when you take it by yourself, and then you take it with a team, with the team you use a scratch-off or a scantron, like a lottery card. And you have to agree as a team, OK, it's A, B, C, or D, which is it going to be? And three of us said C and two of us said B, which one are we going to do? And so, generally, they'll go with C, and then they scratch it off and they realize, oh, there's no star under C, well, then, why?

So then they have to talk to each other, and it's in that talking that they're really, really starting to solidify their learning. So it's just a wonderful, magical thing. And you see the students, they high five each other, and go, oh, yay. It's just it's a fun way to have class. And it's very loud.

Yeah. And then after that test process, what we'll do is we'll debrief. If they have any questions, they can ask us, like hey, why was number two B, let's go over that. And then they can also appeal questions, as well. And so if they as a team decide that, hey, I think C is really a better choice, or just as good a choice is the right answer, then they can appeal that question to us.

And the way that works is there's a written form that they have to fill out, where then they provide evidence of why they think C is the right choice. And then they submit that to us, and we tell them, OK, thank you. We'll go and we'll review this at the end of class, once class is over, and we'll let you know at the next class. And if we decide that, hey, yeah, their argument's sound, then we'll give that team only the points back. We won't give that to the entire class, so it's a way to reward them for kind of going above and beyond to really make their point.

And the RATs, is what we call those reading assessment tests, so if we hear about RATs, that's what we're talking about. And they're just really sort of the first step of a module, because that's kind of allowing us to realize that we've reached a level of common knowledge.

And then from that, we do what are called application activities or application exercises. And they are sort of more in-depth questions. And as teams-- now this is where the four S's come in. Because you put up a question. It's a significant problem. And you only give them four or five specific choices to choose

from. And they have to agree as a team, OK, it's going to be A, OK? Or team nine says it's going to be D. And that's fine.

And so then they agree as a team. And then when on their specific choice, and we have voting cards, A, B, C, D, and then you count, one, two, three, and you have to reveal their cards then. And so then you look around the room and it's like a rainbow of color. You see three or four different choices, if it's a good question. Because you want the answers to be challenging and maybe even slightly ambiguous, so that there is that chance for discussion and struggle with the content.

And then you hear each other's arguments and you have them kind of give their reasoning. It's all about hearing their reasoning. It's not really about who has it right. And lots of times there are certain questions that may help two really closely right answers, and you want to hear them explain it. So it's listening to all of that kind of explanation that, again, helps get the students engaged and wanting to stand up for themselves. Or they have those a-ha moments of, like, oh, I haven't thought of it that way.

Because lots of times when they hear material spoken from their own colleagues, they understand it better, or they hear it better. We sort of have this expertise problem, where we already know all these assumptions and they're the novices. And when somebody else says it in their lingo or language, then all of a sudden, it hits and they can understand it better.

And they tell personal stories, too. Get a lot of storytelling. And they love that, too. That another great part about the team is that really get to know each other at a fairly intimate level. And I don't think it's only because I teach human development. I think it's just innate that they bring their own lens to understand the story, the answer, and then that helps people understand it better.

Well, Jessica, is it similar in criminal justice? Or in what ways is it maybe similar and different in a different department or topic?

Right, so the teams, they definitely gelled. So the class I taught in that last fall, it was an 8:00 AM class. And it's criminology. So it's theory of crime, why do people offend? So for a bunch of criminal justice majors, that's not always their favorite class. But you saw the students excited to be there. And sometimes, the students would bring each other breakfast. They'd bring donuts for their team or breakfast tacos, or whatever it is. And so that was just really cool to see that, see that melding.

And for me, the activities, I had both the ones where they had to make a specific choice, and then I also had activities where students would have to write out a policy. So, OK, based on this theory, what would be a good policy that we could create to reduce crime? And so I would bring in these big pieces of the big post-it paper type of thing that you would get in meetings. And the students would write out their policies. Then they would post it along the wall.

Then I would hand each team one or two little post-its. And, as a team, they had to go up and read all of the other team's posters and vote on who they thought was the best. And so they really enjoyed that, to getting to be a bit more creative with their answers and then again to see what other people had come up with as well.

Right. And that's just another application activity.

And so we have the RATs as the first one, and then you have the four S's, the simultaneous reports, and then you have with the gallery walks lots of times, or other types of-- you can give examples of just

different ideas or different structures, or you can do all sorts of different things. And have a team write that up and then you put that as a gallery walk.

But then you don't let them vote on that until everybody has gone around and, as a team, again, you want the team to work together to come up with which is their favorite poster that's not theirs. And then they all vote on it at the same time. Again, as that simultaneous report, because otherwise it becomes sort of a popularity contest.

And so I also have a strategy, which I've learned, which is the last to report is the first to talk. So you can obviously see these teams, they're struggling with, OK, is it A or C, A or C? And finally they look around the room and they're the last ones to put their card up. Well, they're going to be the first ones to have to explain why.

And sometimes they're pretty also saying, well, it was in the book, or whatever. Yeah. It's just fun. It's playful. And I think that's another really important part is that it's playful.

So, I mean, you all talked about the strategy within the classroom, but when you compare it to say other knowledge or experience with other types of group learning or small group learning, what makes TBL different?

Well, again, I think it's the inherent structure. But also a really very important part is the peer evaluations. And some people even allow the students to determine how much the peer evaluations count as part of the ultimate grade. But for the peer evaluations, you ask them to spread a certain number of points. So if it is a team of five people, then I ask them to take 40 points and spread it among the other four people.

And then they also have to write justifications. Or say one good thing that this person contributes to the team and one way that they could contribute more. So we talk a lot about team cohesion, and group building type of things. And so I think that's a lot of it, is the peer evaluations.

The students resist having to evaluate each other, and I have to tell them that they cannot give each other the same number of points.

I use that when I use peer evaluations.

Oh, yes, because nobody wants to-- and I say, well, OK, but why would you give that person who has been late every single day to class, why would you give them the same number of points as the person who's here before you every single day. It's just not fair. It's OK to give them one less point and the other one, one more point.

And so in their life as adults, working in the workplace, they are going to be in a position at some point of evaluating somebody else. So this is just sort of one more step in the lifelong learning process of practicing things that we don't like to do, to evaluate other people.

But then another thing that I have been really sort of fiddling around with this year is talking about how to take criticism, because, yes I do give them their comments back anonymously from their team members. And sometimes people are, especially to the sort of semi-social loafers, people are kind of mean or not necessarily tactful.

And so I talk about-- they'll come to me and they say, well, I only got 92 out of 100 points. I go, yeah, that wasn't-- I didn't give that to you. Those are your teammates. Well, why? Well, what were your comments? And they don't want to have that mirror held up to them. None of us do.

So I've been talking more and more about that in terms of saying my own student evaluations. Any kind of negative comments, they hurt. But also, there's also generally an element of truth in them. So I talk a lot about that, too. I talk a lot about the feel of learning, because it's different in this type of class.

Yeah. And I'd like to add that something else that TBL does differently is how you form the groups. You do not let the students pick the groups, at all. Instead, it can be a random process. Or what I have done is on the first day of class, I'll try to get a sense of kind of the demographics. OK, how many of them are majors? What their grade level? Are they seniors? Do they have prior experience? How many of them are returning students? That kind of thing.

And then whenever it's time for them to get in groups, I will ask for, OK, so for those that are nontraditional students, can you stand up and come from a single file line. And then I'll call the next group, OK, so for those that want to go into corrections, can you stand up and stand behind them. And so on and so forth, until everyone in the class has found some attribute that they identify with. And they get in line. And then I count them off, based on however many groups I have. And that is their group.

So ideally, they should never really know anyone, or maybe one person, but it shouldn't be their best friend. You don't want anyone to already have an established relationship. And so they come together and they can identify their own group norms, their own new relationships together. And then they're in those groups the entire semester.

So you're creating these groups, because you mentioned if somebody wants to be in corrections or something like that, you're creating them based off having kind of an equal dispersion, I guess, of different--

Yeah. You want that diversity.

--different types. Yeah. OK.

Yeah, so you want people to have different experiences and to have different interests. So it's not just everyone that wants to go be a police officer, or for example, in my field, you have people that want to be a police officer, or maybe want to go into law school, or aren't criminal justice majors at all. So you can have that diversity, and experiences, and viewpoints represented in your groups.

OK. Well, as I said earlier, Judi, you've been doing this, well, five years successfully as you put it, but you've been interested for seven years. Jessica, you started it last fall. So I wanted to know, can you share your experience when you converted to TBL? Like what was that moment for you that was just like, oh, this is it.

Well, it was after I went to the first conference that I went to was in 2012. I went to the first TBL, team-based learning collaborative conference. And that's where I found the scantrons. I mean, I had read the book by Michaelsen, and another book, and I'd seen it, and I'd gone to a presentation by another TBL guy.

And so I went to the conference. And the way they run that conference is every single workshop is in the TBL format, where you walk in, you're put into lines, and counted off, and you sit at a table with people you don't know, and you solve problems together, answer questions together. And we're supposed to have pre-read things, so some of us have. And some of us haven't. And just like any normal students. And so it's a really wonderful sense of building that. And so I got that.

But then it was the scantrons. When I got the scantrons, and really saw how they were used, I was kind of making up my own little thing. And it wasn't that successful, but once I saw the scantrons and the voting cards, then it really clicked with me. And it was like, oh, OK, this is it. And so once I started teaching really that way, I could hardly wait to convert my next classes, because I felt almost, I don't know, very self-conscious about lecturing, as opposed to letting the class sort of create its own learning. Yeah. They really do.

I mean lots of times in class, I'm just walking around listening, and kind of problem solving in small circles. I'm not at the front leading things. In fact, when I do the critical incident questionnaires, at the end of a couple of weeks or something, or the end of a module, say, when were you most distanced? When in the last two weeks have you been most distanced? 90% of the time is, when there was lecture. And I'm thinking, I hardly talked at all. It was just a clarifying lecture.

But they just turn off. But when they can be really actively involved in problem solving, they stay on it most of the time.

Yeah. So for me, as I said, I taught at an 8:00 AM class for a required theory course. So for majors, this is not going to be their favorite class. And so you would think most the time a lot of them would skip if they were able to. So I had no idea what to expect whenever. I was, like, well, we'll just try this TBL as an experiment.

By what I found was it was better than I expected. Most of the time, I had most students there, every time. They're engaged. They were there early before 8:00 AM. It was great. But a lot times they beat me there. And they were very excited to get into the case studies and to really discuss the theories.

And for me, what really sold me on it was maybe half-way or 2/3 of the way through the semester, when students were bringing up theories that we had covered in the first week. And they're like, oh, well, deterrence theory says this, but what about this theory? And they are comparing and contrasting on their own, without me trying to do that. And I didn't have to review that theory. They just remembered. And so for me, that showed how much deeper that learning was and that they were forming those connections without me trying to force it down their throats kind of thing. And so that was really exciting for me.

So do you think TBL works better in certain class sizes, or types, like maybe introductory classes, or major classes, more so than others? Or is it pretty applicable to a lot of different class types?

As far as I'm concerned, it's applicable to pretty much any class. If anything, I would imagine smaller classes are also harder, just because it's harder to reach a consensus, or it's easier to reach a consensus, perhaps. I don't know. You just have to run them slightly differently.

I know that people in the team-based learning collaborative have classes as large as 500 students. I'm not quite sure how they manage. But I think they use team-building programs, computer programs, to

help build the teams. But other than that, I think the good part about it is that in any class size it helps build a small community for students.

And one of the number one reasons why students don't come back to school is because they haven't found a friend. Well, in a team-based sort of a class, they found four friends or five friends that they really-- most teams bond, quite a lot like, like Jessica was just saying, so--

And they stay in the groups the whole semester?

The whole semester.

Well, and as far as topics, I know that there are some actually high school and even middle school teachers who are using team-based learning in their classes. But team-based learning has been adopted by probably 90% of medical schools as a means of being a larger umbrella going from the straight learning classes to the clinical. They really found that there was a huge disconnect for some of those students.

But with team-based learning, they have found that the students that use team-based learning, there isn't that disconnect, because they've been practicing applying things in their basic classes, so that when they get to the clinical, they've gone, oh, yeah, we've already kind of thought about these things in this same way.

And so a huge number of medical schools all around the world are using team-based learning. Pharmacy schools, nursing schools, and so forth. I know engineers use it. I haven't heard of anybody who doesn't use it. There's quite a large collaborative of people. I'm not quite sure what the membership is right now, but it's quite a group.

Yeah. Very multidisciplinary.

Very multidisciplinary. Yeah.

On the collaborative, on the website, you can scroll through the kind of lab where people have submitted their modules, or their activities, and so you can just see the number of disciplines that are represented.

Oh, wow.

And what's the website link?

Is it TBLC.org? I think that's it.

All right, well, we'll have at the end of the podcast some information on that. So since TBL is an active learning method, and I imagine it's new and unusual for a lot of students, do you encounter resistance? And if so, what are some ways you handle it?

I don't really encounter resistance. You encounter curiosity. A lot of students are like, wow, I never have learned in a team before. But I would say 95% of them say they absolutely love it. They're sort of unsure about it sometimes. And sometimes some of the grading feels confusing to them, because you have to kind of find a fine balance between having enough RATs, enough reading assessment tests, and not too many. Because you don't want to have one every single week. Because it's just too much.

Then they feel like they're being tested all the time. And you're not supposedly teaching them. And so what I have found is that I just really have to talk a lot about the sensation of learning, and how they are so used to being told, and that if it only comes from the professor's mouth is it the truth.

And you have to kind of really sort of debunk some of those feelings. Because we have all been through the whole process of the teacher is the expert in the room. And I keep telling them that I am not the only expert in the room. So you have to talk a lot about what it feels like and remind them that they are learning. Because generally, on the reading assessment tests, the average is usually around-- They usually get about 65% to 70% correct. And a lot of students are very frustrated by that. They are used to getting 85%, 90%, 95%. And here they are getting 65s.

And they're shocked at themselves, and they're embarrassed, or ashamed, or whatever they are, and they're frustrated, and they start even taking it out on me. In terms of they just feel frustrated. And so then you reassure them that 90% of the time or 100% of the time, almost, when they take the test again with their peers, they score better as a team. Collective intelligence is greater than individual intelligence.

And they get the luxury of retaking a test and finding the answers and getting an explanation for why their answer choice was not as good as another answer choice, all in the same class. You're not waiting half a week or a full week to get your score back. You're getting it immediately. So you get that immediate feedback for your learning.

So it just feels-- it does feel different than chew it and regurgitate of the lectures.

Yeah, and what I had to do on the first day, is I had to sell it to them. I told them, this is what we're doing. But then more importantly I told them why we were doing. I had to explain why this method, I believed, was more effective than me just lecturing to them and then just taking notes. I had to go over the research. I give an overview of here's what we'll be doing, here's what the evidence says, and open it up to questions.

And so I definitely didn't have resistance in as much as I had some students who were anxious. Every time they hear the word teamwork, they're like, why do I-- I don't like this. And so you just have to kind of calm some of those fears they have, and tell them, OK, so I asked them, what are your concerns with group work? Why do you not like group work?

And I would write down their reasons. And then I would go through reason by reason. Here's how TBL deals with each of these issues. And so, I think that helped them, but then just once they tried it, like we just jumped right in, that next day, and they are like, oh, OK, I get it now. And so within a couple of weeks, they were sold.

So we talked about student anxiety about this new approach. But what about other faculty's anxiety about this? Who want to try it, but it goes against a lot of what they've been trained on. Judi, I know you've run workshops with other faculty. So what do you think some of the faculty resistance might be to it? And how do people overcome that and change their mindset, essentially?

I don't think there's actually-- I think when they come to a workshop and they experience it, they understand it better. And they go, oh, OK, yeah, we see why this works. Or whatever. Some of them automatically say, this is not for me. I don't want to do it. And that's fine with me. I don't care.

Research is showing us more and more that active learning is much more effective-- even poorly taught using team-based learning is more effective than the lecture. There's been a couple recent articles about that. But most people are afraid of the work that it takes to convert. And it does take a fair amount of work. You have to sort of switch your gears, but you don't have to jump in and do a whole course at one time. You can do, say, one section of the course, that perhaps you've been struggling with in terms of getting content across or whatever, and just do just Jessica said.

Just present it as this is new to me, this is new to you. We're just going to try this. And if you make it kind of lower stakes, I think at first that might actually help quell the fears. But Jessica and a few others have just jumped right in and everybody's really loved it. I mean, like I said, once you start using it, you don't want to go back. And it's-- so we just don't.

That's generally what I heard from people who've attended the workshops. And they've said they've had a very similar experience, like Jessica said, you tried it and you're like, OK, I'm hooked.

Yeah.

I'm into this.

Almost collectively, that's what I hear from people.

Right, because suddenly all the students are actually talking. Wow. They're talking. It's not just one dominant student. And even with that, team-based learning has a sort of a way of, if you do have one dominant student, they kind of among the collaborative people have said, well, I have this rule that you can only talk for your team one time, and then another person has to do it. Or have the whole team stand up and talk. Which I do sometimes. And they all kind of self-consciously stand up, and look around, but you find that some of the quieter people will actually add something, if they're standing along next to somebody else. So you get a little bit more engagement that way, too.

And something else, I know this is an issue I had when I first started redesigning the course to be in the TBL format, was I have too much material. Initially, when I taught the class the first time, I was sticking with the textbook. And so I was trying to cover 15, 16 theories in 15 weeks. And in the TBL format, you just can't. To be able to go in-depth and to have the application activities, you just have to cut some of the material.

And so I had to come to realize that, wait, OK, so whenever I taught the class the first time lecture-based, with 16 different theories, how well do I feel my students really understood it at the end of the day? Did I feel that they really had an in-depth understanding? Were they able to compare and contrast theories? And I just didn't feel that.

Right. I was like, eh, maybe a handful, but by and large, I didn't feel they all had an in-depth understanding. And so what TBL offered as an alternative is, yeah, you may not cover as much material, but you get to go so much more in-depth into the material you are including that the students have a much better understanding of it. And they're able to apply it. And so whenever you're talking about after they graduate and they go into their fields, I think it's better for them to know how to apply the material versus just being like, wait, I think we covered that concept in the class, but I couldn't tell you much about it. And so--

Because covering a concept is completely different than applying it.

Yeah, it sounds like it would be inevitable because in the TBL format, the learning's not entirely instructor controlled. It's very student controlled. And so that impacts the pacing of the course and what you can include, because, like you mentioned earlier, Judi, that difference between you're the expert and they're the novice learners.

So you get something, you're looking around the classroom like, you've got it? And everyone's going mhm, and that doesn't really mean they've got it. And then you're moving on. But in this case, you actually get to see if they really do have it or not. Is that a fair assessment?

Oh, yes. Yes.

Yeah.

OK. Well, and Judi you mentioned this earlier, but about-- I mean, I know it'll vary with people, but about how much prep work does TBL require say before class or at the beginning of the semester if you're redesigning?

Jessica's looking at me. She could probably answer that better. Because you kind of just do it as you go along. At least that's my prep way. I mean, yes, you have a grand scheme of what you're going to cover, but in terms of, I don't know. Go ahead, Jessica.

Yeah, I mean, I'm doing it right now. I'm redesigning a research methods class as we speak to be in the TBL format. And so just the way I work is I like to get all the prep work done ahead of time as much as I can before the semester starts. So then with research and other demands, I'm not having to be like, oh, the night before, I really have to prep these case studies.

Oh yeah, no you can't do that.

And so I would say it may be a little bit more work than your traditional lecture-based class, but it's not as much work during the semester, because once you have the activities created, and you have the tests written, and all of that, it just runs itself. And you have a little bit of grading, but that's like-- you can do the grading of the RATs while the students are doing--

While they're taking the RAT.

--the team RAT, and so you don't have to worry about, OK, I have to grade all night, or anything like that. And so for me, it's a little bit more prep work at the beginning. But once the semester gets going, it's less work during the actual semester. So that's a huge plus.

Yes, it is.

So one of instructors' biggest concerns with group work, and Judi you mentioned this term earlier, social loafers, or students who don't put in the work, but they get the credit for everybody else's work. How do you handle that in TBL?

Well, that really is where the peer evaluations jump in. And I think they are grading their own tests as they go. They realize without telling anybody else around them, or perhaps with telling other people around them, how well they did on an individual RAT. So there's sort of some self-correction going on.

And so you can't avoid social loafers, but the students generally kind of say, you know, they'll-- or I'll look over and there's somebody who's kind of off to the side and three or four teammates are working

on a poster together. And I'll go over and I'll say, you know, so what, you know. Oh, yeah, I've been helping. And so I just kind of keep an eye on them and watch them. But I know that that is one of the biggest complaints or worries about group work.

Yeah, in any class.

Any class. And the good thing about team-based learning is that all the teamwork is done in the class. So it's not like you're waiting until midnight for somebody to turn in their PowerPoint slides before you have to do a presentation at 8 o'clock the next morning. You're not doing that. This is a completely different kind of teamwork. This is all about team cohesion, like I said earlier, it's about working together as a group.

And what I have found, which I think I want to start taking data on, is that the teams that seem to score the highest on the team RATs seem to be done earlier than the teams who are not, who don't score as high. And that means that they, of course, are generally better prepared students.

Or else in a team, especially early on in the semester, you'll have a couple of teams that are still trying to work out the kinks of who is the voice and who has more power, or whatever. And so you can kind of see that working out. And you can see it in their RAT scores, too. But when they have a low team RAT score, they all sort of pull together and improve.

Yeah. And something else I'd add is the team RAT, what we call the team RAT, it's only one part of that grade. For me, about at least half of their grade is based on individual projects that they do outside the class.

And so the teamwork that's actually graded is a small component of their grade. And so along with the peer assessments, you can kind of balance that out.

So is it kind of similar like some more traditional classes, what would be like participation, in terms of grading?

I have what I call my team-based activity days, which days when perhaps we've really done some really deep, good discussions. And I don't necessarily know that that's going to be a team-based activity day until after it's been that day. And I'll give everybody who was there 10 points for that day.

So over the course of a semester, they'll have between 10 and 12 team-based activity days. And if they were there, they get 10 points for it. And if they weren't, they don't. And that's just how it goes. And, so yeah, it is a participation thing. But that's instead, in lieu, of grading like a team project. We don't grade a team project, because that's just too difficult. Because it's again that's the emphasis on grading, and we're really trying to emphasize learning.

And so even if somebody produces a kind of lousy poster or whatever, there is still a lot of talk going on, and a lot of discussion about negotiation on what needed to be put in it, and that's where I feel like the learning is taking place. In those activities, and then also between the IRAT and the team RAT. Because they took that IRAT, the individual reading assessment test, and then it's quite a luxury. I remind them that it's quite a luxury to be able to turn around and take the same test over, because if you're like me, you kind of second guess yourself when you hit the wrong answer.

Oh, and also with the IRATs, each question is worth three points. And so I allow them-- well, most people, allow them to divide those three points across the way. So you can say, well, I really like C, but I also of like A. So I'm going to put two points on C, and one point on A. So you can get partial credit for having the right answer, which is beneficial to us as instructors, because then we can see, oh, most people they got the answer right, but barely, or all these people were really confident and they get this.

So you can really kind of judge which are problematic concepts and which are not. And you don't have to go over the non-problematic ones. And you can delve deeper into the other ones. Yeah.

So it sounds like TBL, how you're describing it, it's more about the process of teamwork, as opposed to the product.

Right.

Of the team.

Absolutely. Absolutely.

So based on what you've learned from TBL, do you have any particular techniques or strategies for helping students work better as teams?

As a team? I guess again, it's just for me it's talking about when you can kind of tell how the class is feeling kind of iffy about things or whatever. It's addressing the elephant in the room. And talking about what it means to be a team member. Sometimes you have to just take a day and talk about what's working in class for them and what's not. Or how they particularly are feeling.

In fact, my newest thing with my peer evaluations is I'm adding on a section that they don't give themselves points, but they do have to reflect on one thing that they are doing to help the team, and one thing they could improve on. Because I think that's important, is this whole reflection process. If there's one part of team-based learning that has not been emphasized very much is the reflection. Because it's when you reflect that you really learn. That you stop and realize what you have learned. And so I try to build that in too. So I don't answer if I answered your question, but--

I think so.

Yeah, I don't know if I have anything much to add, because I've just done it the once. And I didn't have any issues with groups not getting along. And they all seemed to come together pretty quickly and form their own group norms. I think it helped that they didn't get to pick their own groups. That they were very diverse.

And one thing I do on the first day is not only help them form groups. But then they come up with their own little group names. So you try to give them a little team identification.

Introduce themselves.

Introduce themselves, right.

Get to know like, OK, where you're from, kind of the basic introductions.

Right.

So you give them the space to do that.

Because really learning occurs best within the context of a relationship. And so that's what team-based learning is, is relationships.

OK. Well, on that note, I have one final question for you all. So as college instructors, what has TBL taught you about student learning and teaching and higher education?

Well, I know that teaching does not cause learning. And we as teachers can advance learning by influencing what the students do. So by providing an enriched environment. In other words, this type of application activities and opportunities, and also, I really feel like it's important to discuss the feelings of learning, the concept of learning.

Again, maybe it's just because of my human development background, but I think even other majors could benefit from of the humanistic approach towards how we take in knowledge, and keep it, and make it important for ourselves.

For me, I have to ask myself, so what? What's the point? It kind of goes back to the backwards design idea of asking on the last day of class, what is it that you want your students to walk out with? And what are the implications of that? What's the so what? We can cram in a lot of facts, right? But, so what? What do we want them to do with that material? What do we want them to really understand and to be able to do whenever they're they've completed our course?

And so that's been really emphasized to me is just again it's the idea of going deeper with less material. So you can really get to those important implications that we each have in our fields.

So during the recording, we did a little research on some things that we could not remember the details on. So Judi and Jessica have the four S's. If you'll please share.

OK, so this is when the teams are voting on significant problems. And it's the same problem. That is how TBL actually differentiates from problem-based learning, because the problem based-learning it's set up in a whole bunch of different ways. Some people within a class, different groups are different problems. In team-based learning, we're all given the same problem, the same case study, for example, and then ask the same questions at the same time, and answer them simultaneously.

So the four S's are significant problem, same problem, specific choice, and then, very importantly, the simultaneous report. So you always have to kind of tell the students, wait, I don't want to know what you're saying yet, because other people will, and then they'll go, oh, those people said C. But we were thinking A. I'm like, oh, that's great. Keep it that way. I want to hear your conversation. So the whole point is to get a whole rainbow of color out there and not have everybody have the same answer.

And we also looked up the web link, which Jessica, will you share that, please?

Yes, so for the collaborative, it is teambasedlearning.org. All one word, no hyphen. So teambasedlearning.org. And that will be on the show page, as well.

Yes, you'll have on the show page a list of resources from the team-based learning collective, as well as some we have personally at UNT and in the UNT library. So look to that if you're interested in checking out more about TBL.

And thank you, Judi and Jessica, for to be talking about it today.

Thank you.

It's been fun.

Enjoyed it.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

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