

What Faculty Say

TBL is so preparation driven for both student and teacher. The instructor needs to be better prepared than is some other teaching methods.

William Ofstad
Cal North State University

The more I do it, the more explicit the instructions are that I give about the actual thing they're supposed to do.

Laura Madson
New Mexico State

Figuring out how to pitch the course and then managing the pushback, the resistance, and knowing in advance that the resistance is coming and there's nothing wrong with it—it takes you two or three rounds to get the point where you say, yeah, that's okay.

Bill Roberson
SUNY Albany

After the first couple of activities, at the end of the class, I try to save five minutes to help students realize how much they have learned and to sort of translate what they just did into what a lecture could have looked like. So that they can see that all of the information that could have been in that lecture is what came up in their conversations.

Laura Madson
New Mexico State

I try to make it so the students are the ones that are doing most of the work and I am just there to organize, create the assignments and keep things moving forward. I'm not doing the work for them. They're doing the work.

Holly Bender
Iowa State University

It's important to get out of the students' way. When I teach other people about Team-Based Learning or even just teaching in general, one mantra that I end up repeating is make the students do it.

Laura Madson
New Mexico State

Faculty need to be willing to take the risks. The lecture environment is so well controlled. We can time it to the minute of the order things are going to happen. In TBL classroom, it's a much more dynamic environment and you never know which way things are going to go, but that's not a bad thing.

Pete Ostafichuk
University of British Columbia

It's important at the end of the activity to bring it all back together, for closure or summation, and really taking all the things that have been learned and expressed by the students and kind of repackaging it. Reminding students of the things that they've gone through, what they've expressed.

Pete Ostafichuk
University of British Columbia

I try to help faculty get into a playful experimental mood. Most university professors are horrified by surprises. You have to get them to the point where that's no longer an issue, that surprises are good. So when students don't want to do something and push back because they say you're not teaching us, you say--flip that--that's a compliment. You've got them where you want them. You've started to provoke what I call productive frustration. We want our students to be pushed into a point of productive frustration. That's when learning begins. Sometimes, it's an uncomfortable moment for you the teacher as well as for the students. But, learn to enjoy--learn to understand that you have provoked that intentionally. Accept the responsibility of having provoked it and enjoy that because that's your job as a teacher.

Bill Roberson
SUNY Albany

I think that my level of preparation is good for everyone because I get some positive comments on it in my evaluations at the end of the semester - "I liked the way that we knew what was going to happen in the class" "I liked the way that the teacher was prepared" "I liked the way the class was organized".

Mary Gourley
Gaston College

The activity basically runs itself. The students understand the activity, so they're doing what they're supposed to do. They are so engaged in their conversation with each other and the task that, literally, they don't know where I am; they don't care where I am. And my favorite days--this doesn't happen often, but my favorite days are when I have to tell them to leave.

Laura Madson
New Mexico State

Why TBL Works

Teams focus on making decisions

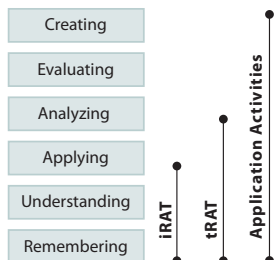
Having TBL assignments based on discussion and decision-making, and not building lengthy product prevents many of the undesirable group behaviors common in "divide and conquer" product based assignments. Many traditional group assignments are actually individual assignments, with little reason for student interaction, except at final product compilation.

Teams problem-solving improves

Teams quickly switch from voting/compromise to real problem solving as they get to know and trust each other. Birmingham and Michaelsen (1999) found that two thirds of teams (n = 192 teams) started by using voting and compromise to avoid decision-making conflict early in team development and that NO teams used voting or compromise after only 5 test together. Focus changed from "who is right" to "what is right"

Activities progress through Bloom's levels

Since the primary course goal in TBL shifts from conveying course content to helping the students learn how to apply course concepts to solving relevant, interesting and significant problems, the TBL instructional sequence naturally progresses to higher Bloom's levels as individuals progress through the modules.



The initial acquisition of content and important foundational knowledge occurs during the Readiness Assurance Process which has the students progress through **Remembering**, **Understanding** and into the simple **Applying** level of Bloom's taxonomy. The Application Activities can take students through the higher Bloom's levels of **Analyzing**,

Evaluating and **Creating**. The whole class discussions following the simultaneous report in the Application Activities give the students the opportunity to articulate and examine their own thinking, to explore a variety of different perspectives, and finally arrive at a socially verified version of the "truth" or optimal solution.

Teams outperform best member

By reviewing student performance part way through the semester you can send a powerful message about the effectiveness of team work.

In the Past 20 years, over 99.95% of the teams have outperformed their best member by an average of nearly 14%.

In fact, the worst team typically outperforms the best student in the class!

Michaelsen et al, 1989

Attention focuses on harder concepts

As students progress through the Readiness Assurance Process, there is a natural shift in instructional focus to the harder, more difficult concepts. This shift is caused by the underlying structures in the Readiness Assurance Process. The differential attention on more difficult concepts begins in

the Team Readiness Assurance Test. During the tRAT, the teams will often vote on questions, accepting consensus when it exists and quickly moving on. On more difficult questions, where there is no simple consensus, they will discuss for a longer period of time. The length of the discussion is affected by the overall difficulty of the question and the underlying concepts. Each time the team scratches off the IF-AT card and does not find the correct answer, they return to the question for further discussion. Following the tRAT, the teams are encouraged to appeal incorrect answers. This pushes the teams into further discussions and back into the reading material, exactly where they are having the most difficulty. Once the Appeals Process is complete, the instructor can provide a targeted mini-lecture on the most troublesome concepts.

	Easy Concepts	Hard Concepts
Required Pre-Readings	✓	✓
Individual Readiness Assurance Test	✓	✓
Team Readiness Assurance Test	✓	✓
Appeals Discussion & Research		✓
Appeals Preparation		✓
Mini-lecture Instructor Clarification		✓

Works in large class settings

TBL was originally developed by Larry Michaelsen, at the University of Oklahoma Business School when his classes went from 40 to 120. He was unwilling to give up the effective outcomes that were possible in the smaller class using Socratic discussion. When he first tried TBL, he was surprised at how effective it was. TBL is now routinely used in large classes (up to 400, but more typically 120-150 Students with a single facilitator) and is even possible in difficult classroom spaces (i.e. tiered lecture theatres). Bottom line is - give students something compelling enough to work on and they will ignore the limitations of the room.

Can Large Classes Be an Asset?

What was the impact of the large class size on what you gained from taking this course?

Helped more than it hurt	49%
Helped and hurt	18%
Neutral	24%
Hurt more than it helped	7%
Hurt a great deal	2%

Michaelsen, Knight, Fink, 2002



a place of mind
THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
FACULTY OF APPLIED SCIENCE

CENTRE FOR INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT

by Jim Sibley and Sophie Spiridonoff

jim.sibley@ubc.ca

sophie.spiridonoff@ubc.ca

www.teambasedlearning.org