

Trialling TBL* in Large Classes: Successes & Costs

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*TBL = Team-Based Learning

Before & After TBL

	U of A FAIL	Bradford FAIL
2008	28 %	68%
2009	15 %	10%

Other variables:

	U of A	Bradford
Teacher/student	300 : 1*	20 :1
Hours per week	3	4
Standard – higher & tougher		

Some basic info

My course: Yr 1, Sem 1 Business Info Systems &(M)

TBL = Team-Based Learning (students in teams in Seminar (300+ in tiered Lecture Theatre + 150- in repeat Seminar)

Individual & Team tests immediately Seminar starts, based on readings & online lectures.

Appeals on “better answers than official ones”

Mini-lecture to address obvious gaps

Engagement activities using flash card reporting

Build portfolios

(also software workshops & exams)

True or False?

“The University of Adelaide strongly supports innovative teaching and the practitioners who engage in it.”

- Discuss & consensus or majority vote: True or False? (flash card)
- Discuss responses

Sorry – obviously that needs more time...

If this was a real TBL classroom:

You would have adequate time to discuss in your groups before being forced to commit to a decision;

We would have had a class-wide discussion based upon the flash-card answers

THEN... we would engage in any minor “lecturing” to fill in gaps that were identified during discussion.

Also – the wrong question

(Note:

in class, my students would challenge this and we would have a lively debate about the quality of the question and how better to word it.)

In this case: The University?
 Or the Faculty?
 The School?

“Successes”

- Reduced fail rates with tougher marking
- Students read text before attending class
- Students attend class
- Students engaged and excited in class – often highly involved classroom debates
- Students willing to challenge text & teacher
- Honesty in peer evaluation!
- Engaging with concept of “better/weaker” and higher order cognitive engagement instead of “right/wrong” & memorisation.

“Costs”

- At first: too many and too high (half dead)
- After revision (me “getting it right” and better applying more of the TBL principles)
 - worth it...
- In future – going to be better yet (with less cost to me)

Note: very painful to make mistakes: eg – wrong scratches!

What Costs & What Trials?

Suitcase & folders – admin, logistics, TIME
Disability issues (suitcase & stairs & access)
Wrong facilities & poor Seating options
& facilities’ false information (warning)
When solo, tied to desk instead of free to move
(*NOT good – but requires budget to not be solo*)
Marking – falls back on Seminar not Tutes
Adjusting USA equipment to Australia
Working it out

What Costs & What Trials?...

Equipment & USA/Aust conversions – when it works it works, but when it doesn’t it is VERY painful
Frustration & Pain of learning to create QUALITY questions that meet the “4 S” criteria (is VERY hard until you get the hang of it):

Specific problem	Same problem
Significant problem	Simultaneous reporting

Also potentially:
Scary - training students to challenge you & text
Can’t “pre-plan” lecture beyond a certain point

Challenges to “Getting It”

Letting go of content
Analysing CORE “must-learn” achievements
Writing quality questions
Course design around challenges & limitations
Asking for help, not assuming you won’t get it
Workload pressures interfere with clear thinking

Worth It?

Definitely.

Next?

Way better...

And upcoming further research with other practitioners with more experience in the Australian environment.