# **Co-teaching**

#### Objectives

- Get to know the principle of co-teaching: How we do it and how you can too.
- Learn the team teaching concept and how to tailor it to your situation.

#### Instructor note

Teaching: 15 minExercises: 10 minDiscussion: 5 min

### **Overview**

CodeRefinery lessons benefit from the application of the concepts of co-teaching.

#### Octeaching

Co-teaching can be defined as "the division of labor between educators to plan, organize, instruct and make assessments on the same group of students, generally in a common classroom, and often with a strong focus on those teaching as a team complementing one another's particular skills or other strengths".

Co-teaching can be used in various forms, some of which are present in our workshops:

- **Teaching + support**, e.g. one of the teachers leading instruction while the other watches over and maintains the collaborative document (HackMD/HedgeDoc/...).
- Another similar example is remote learning groups that watch the streamed CodeRefinery lessons guided by the local instructors.
- Having open-source material and planning jointly allows multiple instances of a lesson to be held by multiple teachers:
  - o parallel teaching, to different audiences at the same time,
  - alternative teaching, to different audiences at the same or different time, with potential content adjustments (for example, different installation procedures).
- **Team teaching**, where the lesson is presented by multiple (in most cases, two) teachers who actively engage in conversation with each other. The team-teaching concept is explained in more detail in the CodeRefinery manual.

Co-teaching — Train the trainer workshop documentation https://coderefinery.github.io/train-the-trainer/co-teaching/ In reality, different forms are very often mixed or fused together, even within a single lesson.

Co-teaching is not an online-only concept. However, it is very practical in online teaching due to larger number of instructors and learners potentially available to join a teaching session.

## Co-teaching and team teaching benefits

- It saves preparation time. Co-teachers can rely on each other's strengths while creating/revising the material as well as in unexpected situations during the lesson.
- It helps with onboarding new instructors. One of the co-teachers can be learning at the same time, either the subtleties of the material taught (in this case literally being the "voice of the audience") or the teaching process itself.
- Team teaching **looks more interactive and engaging** to the audience in many cases, without forcing the learners to speak up if they can't or don't want to do so.
- It also ensures responsive feedback and less workload by having more active minds.

## Are there any downsides?

Not every learner and not every instructor might like the team-teaching approach.

- It might seem less structured, unprepared, and chaotic, even with preparation.
  - It might create situations where instructors accidentally talk over each other or "interrupt" and change the flow of the lesson.
  - For some instructors it can be stressful to not know in advance what questions they get asked from the co-instructor.
  - Sometimes when an unexpected question is asked that throws the other instructor off, it can add to the feeling of chaos and unpreparedness.
- It can be interactive and engaging but it can also end up awkward if the co-teachers don't have a good synergy.
  - Can sound awkward: Main instructor talking all the time and at the end asking coinstructor whether everything is clear and co-instructor only saying "yes".
  - Possibly more engaging: Co-instructor asking questions which help with the flow and a common understanding of the material.

## Team teaching specifics

- For successful team teaching, additional **coordination** is needed, first of all to agree on the teaching model (see below) and the person in control (the **director**) for the lesson or its parts.
- It's useful to keep track of the lecture plan. The discussion is a good way to make lesson
  more interactive and adjust to the audience, but deviating too much will become
  disorienting (for example, if someone dropped their attention for a minute and now is
  trying to catch-up by reading lecture notes).
- Experienced solo teacher might have a habit to keep talking (lecturing), while the co-

Co-teaching — Train the trainer workshop documentation https://coderefinery.github.io/train-the-trainer/co-teaching/teacher might not want to "interrupt". Therefore, it is important for the leading presenter to anticipate and allow for remarks/ questions, and this can be different from one's previous teaching style at first.

## **Team teaching models**

We propose two basic models, but of course there is a constant continuum.

## Guide and demo-giver

One person serves the role of **guide**, explaining the big picture and context of the examples.

Another, the demo-giver,

- shows the typing and does the examples,
- might take the role of a learner who is asking about what is going on, to actually explain the details, or to comment occasionally.

Hands-on demos and exercises work especially well like this.

#### Presenter and interviewer

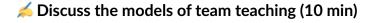
In this case, one is the **presenter** who is mostly explaining (including demos or examples), and trying to move the forward through the material.

Another, the **interviewer**,

- serves as a learner or spotter,
- fills in gaps by asking relevant questions,
- tries to comment to the presenter when things are going off track.

This can be seen as closer to classical teaching, but with a dedicated and prepared "voice of the audience".

### **Exercise**



While in breakout rooms, discuss one of the basic team-teaching models presented here:

- Have you already tried this or similar model in your teaching?
- Does it seem natural to apply this model in your subject area (tell what it is)? How could it be adapted to fit best?

## **Summary**

### • Keypoints

- Co-teaching focuses on complementing individual skills and strengths in teaching process.
- Co-teaching may save time, reduce teachers' workload and make lessons more interactive/ engaging.
- Team teaching requires some adjustments in lesson preparation and delivery.