

We have designed each “White Paper” to explore a fundamental educational principle and key issues engaging the education community we serve. It is our goal to partner with our readers as they meet the challenges they face.



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Team Teaching & Castle Learning Online

Team teaching is a strategy that has been around for years. It traditionally involves a group of educators who plan and work together cooperatively to help age / grade level groups of students learn. These teachers will design a course syllabus, prepare lessons for individual students or classes, and evaluate the progress students make in their learning. Working as a team, teachers can share their perception of the student’s weaknesses and strengths, and can determine the best approach to making their educational experience meaningful.

Teams have been known to form within a single discipline (ex. Science) or as interdisciplinary teams (ex. Science and Mathematics), or be housed in a “school-within-a-school.” The results are the same; students will meet an agreed upon set of goals over a particular time period. Experienced teachers are often paired with new teachers, and the administration usually encourages innovation, unusual time / period structures, and diversification of the class size. The class can be mixed by student learning styles, personalities, needs, or level of interest. Other unique features of a **team** include –

- Encourage students to initiate new approaches to learning, working democratically with classmates
- Respect for differences are Recognizing and respecting differences
- Encouraging students to work closely together, yet have opportunities to work independently.
- Teachers select materials, organize lessons and develop assessments that evaluate the results of learning during the week(s) together, allowing adjustment of their approach to better meet student needs.
- Sub-teams within the larger team can address the need for remediation or the level of learning that can allow enrichment, making available appropriate and effective curricula for students with special needs or interests, no matter what part of the learning spectrum they fall within.
- Preparing individualized assignments that recognize students learn at different rates.

Castle Learning Online has a “home” in the environment of **team teaching**. Assignments can focus on basic, intermediate and advanced question levels, formed from content in courses in Math, Science, Social Studies and English from elementary through into the high school. Assessment reports are immediate and function as a way to differentiate remedial assignments or advance students into new content areas.

Our field study of educators who use *Castle Learning Online*, has brought these reflective comments –

- Castle Learning is a “[diagnostic tool, targeting the weaknesses of students who must prepare for EOC \(End-of-Course\) and EOG \(End-of-Grade\) exams.](#)”
- Differentiating the instruction was the focus of a teacher who explained that “[I think most students benefit. High end achievers can move at a pace that doesn’t bore them, while struggling students don’t feel rushed or overwhelmed by getting ‘left behind’ because the pace of the rest of the students is too quick for them.](#)”
- “[I can assess the areas that need to be re-taught or reviewed,](#)”
- A teacher of AIS (Academic Intervention) said that *Castle Learning Online* helps to identify students who have weaknesses, and then “[use the questions that they got wrong to determine if we need to review the overall concept.](#)”

The learner is the beneficiary of an education that includes *Castle Learning Online* in the **team teaching** setting. Together, with good teachers, goals have been set, and their strengths and weaknesses are identified. Solutions are essentially within their reach to meet problems in this exciting environment for the learner.