Co-Teaching: What are the benefits of co-teaching?

- Inclusive classrooms, where general education and special education teachers co-instruct, show an improvement in learning for students with learning disabilities (LD) (Cramer, Liston, Nevin & Thousand, 2010).
- For students with disabilities, co-taught classes eliminate the stigma of being in special education classes (Hanover, 2012).
- Participation in co-taught classes has a positive impact on school achievement of students not in special education (Szumski, Smogorzewska & Karwowski, 2017).
- Co-teaching improves instruction for all students of all abilities (Hanover, 2012).
- Co-teaching fosters a sense of support among teachers (Hanover, 2012).
- Differentiation is easier to implement when design, implementation, and planning is supported by both teachers instead of one (Beninghof 2012).
- Co-teaching improves instruction for the educators as they are able to "connect, fuse, and recombine," their skills in order to develop the best methods for their students (Beninghof 2012).
- Classroom management is supported through systems and support directly derived within the classroom. Teachers and students become more accustomed to working independently with consistent proximity control which naturally focuses students on their learning. (Beninghof 2012).
- Students tend to achieve closer to the high expectations maintained within the general education setting when they are provided the ability to leverage their strengths (Beninghof 2012).
- Time on Task is greater when students aren't removed from the classroom to obtain their specific remediation. (Beninghof 2012).

Co-Teaching: How to make co-teaching effective

- Having an administration team that understands the pedagogy and practices of co-teaching implementation (Willard 2019).
- Teams creating and maintaining a shared vision and commitment to collaboration and improving together for their students, (William & Mary Training & Technical Assistance Center 2017).
- Co-teaching allows special education teachers to incorporate accommodations and or modifications into the lesson plan directly for implementation (Weiss & Glaser 2021).
- High expectations are maintained within the general education setting (Beninghof 2012).

Co-Teaching: Who can be considered a co-teacher?

- All certified educators can be considered co-teachers. When there are two adults in the classroom supporting student learning there is an opportunity for the co-teaching models to go into effect. Any combination of the following professionals make great co-teachers teams and should be included in co-teaching professional development (Beninghof 2012):
  - o Counselor
  - o English Learner Specialist
  - o General Education Teacher
  - o Literacy Specialist
  - o Occupational Therapist
  - o Physical Therapist
  - o School Psychologist
  - o Special Education Teacher
  - o Speech/Language Pathologist
  - o Technology Specialist

Co-Planning: How can co-teachers balance the individual priorities and high demands of their workload?

Sharing the workload of co-planning, co-instruction, and co-assessment can be a challenge. Marilyn Friend (2014) suggests the following considerations:

- Co-teachers should discuss which teaching responsibilities could be shared or how their work could be divided.
- Listing specific responsibilities can help everyone involved gain an understanding of the nature of roles and responsibilities for each teacher.
- Consider having ongoing discussions between co-teachers about current work-related responsibilities and tasks to determine how to balance the workload.

Co-Planning: How can co-teachers co-plan most effectively and efficiently?

Co-planning is a crucial aspect to the delivery of co-taught instruction. Suggestions on co-planning by Marilyn Friend (2014) include:

- Co-teachers should discuss their preferred methods of communication and strategies to make communication most effective and efficient. For example, what times of day are the best to communicate, preferred modes or technology platforms to use for communication.
- Traditional lesson planning approaches, such as a daily session of lesson planning for every class being co-taught, is not always possible, so it is important to consider a variety of lesson planning approaches.
- Scheduled face-to-face/virtual co-planning is one way to lesson plan. This would require scheduled planning time with a clear process for how to be most efficient and effective. Consider a structured agenda and a lesson planning document that is used on an ongoing basis.
- Electronic planning can be used as a complement to face-to-face/virtual planning. This can be done using any electronic collaborative platform agreed upon by the co-teachers (e.g., Google docs., email, Padlet, shared drives).
- On the spot planning will be needed in addition to all other planning methods. Teachers can communicate on the spot during in-person or virtual instruction while students are engaging with a prescribed activity/working independently. In a virtual classroom, this can be done using the chat box, in a breakout room, instant messenger, text, etc.

Social Emotional Learning: Do students benefit from having diverse learners in the classroom?

- All students belong in a co-teaching environment. When all students are included in the learning environment the stigma associated with special education is removed (Beninghof 2012).
- Students are able to understand that everyone has strengths and weaknesses. therefore they continue to do their best at their level to meet the expectations for the entire classroom (Beninghof 2012).
- Teacher Access is increased in a co-teaching environment because students have access to two teachers as well as their peers as they are learning (Beninghof 2012).

Communication: What are effective ways for teams to communicate with each other?

Positive communication is a vital piece of maintaining effective co-teaching partnerships. Teachers can enhance their communication by (William & Mary Training & Technical Assistance Center, 2016):

- Furthering Responses: Using nonverbal cues (gestures, head nodding, etc.) and verbal responses such as, "I see," "And then?"and additional questions that encourage the speaker to expand on their statements.
- Paraphrasing: Repeat what the speaker stated in order to solidify the meaning of the statements so that there is less room for misinterpretation.
- Responding to affect: Reflect the emotion that was identified through the conversation to allow the speaker to confirm their needs. For example, "I hear you saying that it is frustrating when there aren't enough materials for each student."
- Questioning: Use appropriate questioning to clarify what was stated or to obtain additional information. Remain on the current discussion topic in order to expand the discussion and reach a conclusion regarding the topic. By expanding the conversation through discussion teams are able to effectively plan and gain an understanding of each other's perspectives.
- Summarizing: Once the discussion has come to a conclusion, review what was accomplished in a concise manner. This way the team has action items and maintains an effective collaboration to remain on schedule for lessons.

Communication: How should co-teachers manage communications with families/parents?

- Co-teachers should come to a joint decision about the coordination of parent communication (e.g., how to keep track of who they spoke with and what the discussion was, how to prevent mixed messages or double responses...)
- Communication decisions should represent the reality of busy professionals and should be sustainable (i.e., don't agree to daily phone calls if you will not be able to keep that up).
- Communicate with families/parents in a way that demonstrates the co-teaching partnership. Use both names on newsletters and notes. Say "we" instead of "I" when speaking with families.
- Consider how both teachers can participate in and remain informed about all family/student communications. Use Google docs to log communication.
- Decide what information about the two teachers and the co-teaching partnership should be shared with families/parents at the beginning of the school year. Explain to families what co-teaching is and how it benefits the students.
- Both teachers' names should be on all written communication to families/parents.

Use of Co-Teaching Models

Co-Teaching Model	Description	When to Use	How to Use In-Person	Recommended Frequency of Use
One Teach, One Observe **Planning Level: Low**	One teacher takes the instructional lead while the other teacher is observing students.	- In new co-teaching situations - When collecting data about students - To monitor student progress - To compare target student to other students	- Observe student engagement, academic progress, behavior - Provide feedback to each other regarding instruction, student progress, lesson design, etc. - Note technical issues for teacher or students - Collect data for IEP goals and progress monitoring - Note adult follow-up needed	Frequent, but usually for relatively brief periods of time.
One Teach, One Assist **Planning Level: Low**	One teacher leads and the other teacher offers assistance to individual students or small groups	- When the lesson lends itself to delivery by one teacher - When one teacher has expertise for the content - In new co-teaching situations - In lessons emphasizing a process in which students need close monitoring/support	- One teacher provides instruction, while the other monitors the classroom and supports where needed - One teacher instructs, while the other teacher restates directions, provides prompts, redirection, resources/tools	Seldom (or less)
Parallel Teaching **Planning Level: Medium**	General Educator and Special Educator each delivers instruction on the same content to a heterogeneous group consisting of approximately half the class	- When a lower teacher- student ratio is needed - To foster student participation in discussions -Use during pre-teaching, guided practice, or reteaching	- Each teacher instructs a group of students simultaneously - Plan who will instruct which students and why, pacing, materials needed - Facilitate smaller groups- utilize technology and group discussions - Create heterogeneous student groups- do not automatically group students with IEPs.	Frequent
Station Teaching **Planning Level: Medium**	Teachers divide instructional content into several segments and present the content in separate stations around the classroom	- When content is complex but not hierarchical - In lessons which part of the planned instruction is review - when several topics comprise instruction	- Design a variety of learning stations to provide students with choice activities or provide stations with different activities that each student has an opportunity to access - A station can also be an asynchronous learning activity (ie. shared docs., shared google slides, independent research, etc.)	Frequent

			- Can have each teacher and paraprofessionals support stations	
Alternative Teaching **Planning Level: High**	One teacher works with a small group while the other teacher interacts with the larger group	- When students' mastery of concepts taught or about to be taught varies widely - When extremely high levels of mastery are expected for all students - When enrichment is desired - When pre-teaching or reteaching is necessary	- Use small groups for pre-teaching when developing funds of knowledge (e.g., vocabulary, technology) - Use small group/alternative group for individualized interventions - Use small group/alternative group for extension activities - Small group instruction during "office hours" or to facilitate a "What I Need" (WIN) session	Occasional
Team Teaching **Planning Level: High**	Both teachers share in the planning and instruction of all students in a highly coordinated fashion	-When teacher experience is comparable -During a lesson in which instructional conversation is appropriate -In situations in which the teachers have considerable experience and a high sense of comfort	-Both teachers instruct the whole class in a shared space -Plan out who is teaching what, time allocation, who is monitoring student needs, who is providing redirections/clarifying instructions -Both Teachers provide frequent feedback and collaborate with students and families (e.g; Google docs., slides, email, phone calls, texts, etc.)	Occasional

Adapted from Figure 1.1: Co-Teaching Structures (Hanover, 2012)

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