



Co-TEACHING FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)



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

- Co-teaching improves instruction for all students of all abilities (Hanover, 2012).
- 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).
- Co-teaching fosters a sense of support among teachers (Hanover, 2012).
- Participation in co-taught classes has a positive impact on school achievement of students not in special education (Szumski, Smogorzewska & Karwowski, 2017).
- Administrators, teachers, and students perceive co-teaching to be beneficial to general education and (at least some) special education students in both social and academic domains, and to the professional development of teachers (Scruggs, Mastropieri & McDuffie, 2007).

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.

Student Engagement: How can co-teachers increase student engagement on a virtual platform?

Engagement is increased when virtual learning experiences are relevant, authentic, and meaningful to the students. Suggestions from Novak & Weaver (2020) include:

- When posing a question, provide students with options for answering it. Options may include chat box response, survey/polling, use of a graphic organizer, draw it, journal response, breakout room, or gestural response.
- Model vulnerability and ask, “how can I do better?” Seek student input on how activities can be improved or what they need to be most engaged. This can be done using polls, one on one conversations during office hours, using an online collaboration tool (e.g., Google docs., Google Jamboard), in the chat box, or using an online survey.
- Offer the option of a kinesthetic poll when students’ cameras are on. Allow students to use hand signals or colored objects (e.g., sticky notes, colored markers, etc.) to display their responses to multiple choice questions.
- Give students the option to walk away or look away from the screen. Ask students to periodically look away from the screen or get up out of their chair.
- Value relationship building and cultural sharing. Get to know your students and their families on a personal level. Authentically show them that you want to know who they are, their identities, cultural norms, their interests, how they learn best, and what they need. Demonstrate empathy and understanding, be flexible, and ask questions.

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.

Use of Co-Teaching Models In-Person or in a Virtual Platform

Co-Teaching Model	Description	When to Use	How to Use In-Person or Virtually	Level of Planning and Recommended Frequency of Use
One Teach, One Observe	One teacher takes the instructional lead while the other teacher is observing students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In new co-teaching situations - When collecting data about students - To monitor student progress - To compare target student to other students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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 	<p>Level of Planning: Low</p> <p>Recommended Use: Frequent, but usually for relatively brief periods of time.</p>
One Teach, One Assist	One teacher leads and the other teacher offers assistance to individual students or small groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - One teacher provides instruction, while the other monitors the classroom/virtual gallery and supports where needed - As one teacher provides instruction the other teacher monitors the chat box or the classroom to provide on the spot assistance - One teacher instructs, while the other teacher restates directions, provides prompts, redirection, resources/tools 	<p>Level of Planning: Low</p> <p>Recommended Use: Seldom (or less)</p>
Parallel Teaching	General Educator and Special Educator each delivers instruction on the same content to a heterogeneous group consisting of approximately half the class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - When a lower teacher- student ratio is needed - To foster student participation in discussions - Use during pre-teaching, guided practice, or reteaching 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Each teacher instructs a group of students simultaneously - Use a breakout room or different virtual classrooms (Google meetups) - Plan who will instruct which students and why, pacing, materials needed - Facilitate smaller groups- utilize technology (ie. virtual discussion boards) and group discussions - Create heterogeneous student groups- do not automatically group students with IEPs. 	<p>Level of Planning: Medium</p> <p>Recommended Use: Frequent</p>

Station Teaching	Teachers divide instructional content into several segments and present the content in separate stations around the classroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - When content is complex but not hierarchical - In lessons which part of the planned instruction is review - when several topics comprise instruction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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 - Can use breakout rooms or different virtual classrooms as stations - A station can also be an asynchronous learning activity (ie. shared docs., shared google slides, independent research, etc.) - Can have each teacher and paraprofessionals support stations 	<p>Level of Planning: Medium</p> <p>Recommended Use: Frequent</p>
Alternative Teaching	One teacher works with a small group while the other teacher interacts with the larger group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use small groups/breakout rooms for pre-teaching when developing funds of knowledge (e.g., vocabulary, technology) - Use small groups/breakout rooms for re-teaching - Use small group/breakout alternative group for individualized interventions - Use small group/breakout alternative group for extension activities - Small group instruction during "office hours" or to facilitate a "What I Need" (WIN) session 	<p>Level of Planning: High</p> <p>Recommended Use: Occasional</p>
Team Teaching	Both teachers share in the planning and instruction of all students in a highly coordinated fashion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -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.) 	<p>Level of Planning: High</p> <p>Recommended Use: Occasional</p>

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

References

- Cramer, E., Liston, A., Nevin, A., & Thousand, J. (2010). Co-teaching in urban secondary school districts to meet the needs of all teachers and learners: "Implications for teacher education reform". *International Journal of Whole Schooling*, 6(2), 59-76.
- Friend, M. P. (2014). *Co-teach!: Building and sustaining effective classroom partnerships in inclusive schools* (2nd ed.). Greensboro, NC: Marilyn Friend.
- Hanover (2012). The Effectiveness of the Co-Teaching Model. Literature Review. Washington, DC: Hanover Research.
- Kaplan, M. (2012, May 10). Collaborative Team Teaching: Challenges and Rewards. Retrieved December 03, 2020, from <https://www.edutopia.org/blog/collaborative-team-teaching-challenges-rewards-marisa-kaplan>.
- Novak, K., & Weaver, T. (2020). The Key to Mastering Engagement in an Online Setting [Web log post]. Retrieved December 3, 2020, from <https://www.novakeducation.com/how-to-make-sparks-fly-online/>
- Murawski, W. W (2010). *Collaborative teaching in elementary schools, Making the co-teaching marriage work!* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.
- Scruggs, T. E., Mastropieri, M. A., & Mcduffie, K. A. (2007). Co-Teaching in inclusive classrooms: A metasynthesis of qualitative research. *Exceptional Children*, 73(4), 392-416. doi:10.1177/001440290707300401
- Szumski, G., Smogorzewska, J., & Karwowski, M. (2017). Academic achievement of students without special educational needs in inclusive classrooms: A meta-analysis. *Educational Research Review*, 21, 33-54.