Co-Teaching

Academy 2 v.1: Co-Teaching Strategies
Participant Handouts

Great Urban Schools: Learning Together Builds Strong Communities

2005 National Institute for Urban School Improvement™
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Module 5: Co-teaching

Academy 2: Co-teaching Strategies

This academy explores the research behind co-teaching as a professional development strategy as well as an effective instructional practice for students. A variety of co-teaching strategies are explored and evaluated in light of their impact on student and professional learning.

Academy Outcomes

As a result of the activities and information shared at this Leadership Academy, participants will:

- Identify a set of co-teaching strategies and their research base
- Distinguish between exemplars and non-exemplars of practice
- Measure co-teaching skills and identify areas for improvement
- Examine how these models can be expanded to provide blended special- and general-education opportunities for students
- Analyze strategies for developing Co-teaching skills and practices among their general and special education staff

Agenda

We constructed this Leadership Academy to occur within a 3-hour timeframe with 15 minutes or so for breaks and other time adjustments. The times listed below are approximate but reflect the time these activities and lectureettes have previously taken. Facilitators should be flexible, read their audience, and work to achieve the overall purpose and outcomes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>EVENT</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15 min</td>
<td>Introductions and Greetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 min</td>
<td>Activity 1: Co-teaching: 9 Approaches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 min</td>
<td>Lecturette 1: The Foundation of Co-teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 min</td>
<td>Activity 2: The Case for Co-teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 min</td>
<td>Break</td>
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<tr>
<td>15 min</td>
<td>Lecturette 2: Exemplary Co-teaching</td>
</tr>
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<td>20 min</td>
<td>Activity 3: Perfecting Co-teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 min</td>
<td>Leave-taking and Feedback</td>
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Notes
Lecturette 1: The Foundation of Co-Teaching

What Research Says...

- Research on co-teaching is limited but growing.
- Studies generally provide an optimistic picture of the impact of co-teaching.
- Students with and without disabilities fared well academically and socially.
- Concern about caseloads for Special Education teachers.
- Reported high satisfaction with co-teaching from teachers.
- Concerns about communication with parents, lack of continuity across grade levels, and availability of other service delivery options as needed.

The 9 Co-teaching Strategies

Duet Model

**Pro:**
- Fully utilizes each others expertise;
- Research supports as best method.

**Con:**
- Very time intensive; Try this one for subject or lesson if not time to do it all the time.

Lead and Support Model

**Pro:**
- Specialist not involved in time intensive planning.

**Con:**
- Specialist could have tweaked instruction from the beginning.

Speak and Add/Chart Model

**Pro:**
- Anybody can do it;
- don’t need in depth knowledge of curriculum; no planning time.

**Con:**
- If special education person is used only in this fashion, they are underutilized;
- Once in a while you step on each other’s toes.
### Lecturette 1: The Foundation of Co-teaching

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Pro:</th>
<th>Con:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Skill Group Model</strong></td>
<td>Focusing instruction on instructional level.</td>
<td>Starts sense of tracking; therefore, mix up who teaches groups and mix up groups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Station Teaching Model</strong></td>
<td>Focusing instruction where needed.</td>
<td>Isolates them; not recommended beyond 4th grade.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learning Style Model</strong></td>
<td>Ensures four learning styles are addressed.</td>
<td>Requires greater effort to monitor and evaluate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parallel Teaching Model</strong></td>
<td>Reduces teacher-student ratio.</td>
<td>Both teacher need to know equal amounts of subject.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Complementary Instruction Model</strong></td>
<td>Great way for specialists to bring in specialty.</td>
<td>Can feel choppy or disjointed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Adapting Model</strong></td>
<td>Very little co-planning.</td>
<td>Doesn’t make a fundamental impact on teaching and learning process.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## Co-teaching Strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategies</th>
<th>Teacher A</th>
<th>Teacher B</th>
<th>Pro/Con</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Duet Model</td>
<td>Both teachers plan and design instruction. Teachers take turns delivering various components of the lesson.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lead and Support Model</td>
<td>Primarily responsible for planning a unit of instruction.</td>
<td>Shares in delivery of instruction, classroom monitoring, and evaluation.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speak and Add/Chart Model</td>
<td>Primarily responsible for designing and delivery of instruction.</td>
<td>Adds and expands with questions, rephrasing, anecdotes; records info on charts, transparencies, or boards.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills Group Model</td>
<td>Students are divided into 2-4 groups based on instructional need. Each teacher takes responsibility for ½ the group.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Station Teaching Model</td>
<td>Responsible for overall instruction.</td>
<td>Teaches specific skills to a small group that they have not mastered.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Style Model</td>
<td>Both teachers share in the design and delivery of instruction. One teacher is primarily responsible for the auditory and visual instructions, the other for tactile and kinesthetic instruction.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parallel Teaching Model</td>
<td>Both teachers plan and design instruction. The class splits into two groups. Each teacher takes a group for the entire lesson.</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complementary Instruction Model</td>
<td>Primarily responsible for delivering core content.</td>
<td>Primarily responsible for delivering related instruction in the areas of study and survival skills.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adapting Model</td>
<td>Primarily responsible for planning and delivering a unit of instruction.</td>
<td>Determines and provides adaptations in the moment for students who are struggling.</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Perfecting Co-teaching

Where are you on the co-teaching scale: exemplary or average? Check the box next to the practices that fits you best.

Philosophy:
□ Exemplary Practices:
• Teachers are deeply committed to educating all students.
• Teachers believe that two viewpoints create a stronger instructional environment.
• Teachers believe the possibilities are endless and that there is always something new to learn/try to help students succeed.
□ Average Practices:
• Teachers want all students to succeed, but express reservations about co-teaching as a means of providing services.
• Teachers tend to take on the responsibilities that are associated with their roles and are uncomfortable with taking risks related to role responsibilities.
• Teachers want co-teaching as part of inclusive practices, but believe that “there are limits”.

Personal characteristics:
□ Exemplary Practices:
• Teachers are flexible and forgiving of each other.
• Teachers are strong and highly competent professionals.
• Teachers have highly developed skills related to their areas of expertise (e.g., curriculum, individualization).
□ Average Practices:
• Teachers tend to want to know who should do what.
• Teachers characterize themselves and implement classroom practices based on role (e.g., general educator as keeper of the curriculum, special educator as individualizer).
• Teachers are expert in their areas of expertise, but may experience difficulty in blending them. For example, the classroom teacher may comment that a student in fifth grade reading at the first grade level won’t benefit from the literature program. A special educator may not know how to use strategies in a large-group setting.

Collaborations:
□ Exemplary Practices:
• Teachers tend to use “we” language in discussing students and instruction.
• Teachers share key decisions, but complete many tasks individually.
• The contribution of each professional is equally valued, and teachers can discuss differences without becoming defensive.
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□ Average Practices:
  • Teachers genuinely believe that each person makes a significant contribution to the classroom.
  • Even if assigned to work together (instead of volunteering), teachers want co-teaching to work.
  • Teachers work well together as long as issues are small; when a serious problem arises, they are uncertain about what to do.

Classroom practices:

□ Exemplary Practices:
  • Students look to teachers equally for guidance.
  • Classroom instructional practices are highly differentiated.
  • Special services are unobtrusive but clearly carried out.
  • A variety of co-teaching approaches are employed.

□ Average Practices:
  • Both teachers are willing to work with any students
  • Instructional differentiation occurs, but it is seen as an event or special option.
  • Teachers struggle to map a student’s IEP goals and objectives onto the general education curriculum.
  • Special educators spend most co-teaching time “helping,” not teaching.

Context:

□ Exemplary Practices:
  • Teachers use allocated planning time efficiently and effectively, and they create additional planning minutes as needed.
  • Teachers recognize the place of co-teaching in a larger service delivery system.
  • Teachers make decisions on services based on student needs, not traditional practices.

□ Average Practices:
  • Teachers use allocated planning time, but they frequently mention that they cannot effectively co-teach without weekly planning time.
  • Teachers schedule co-teaching in elementary schools based primarily on pragmatic factors (e.g., when they are available, when a paraprofessional can be in the room).
  • Teachers tend to allow competing priorities to interfere with co-teaching (e.g., calls from the office, parent drop-ins).

Selecting a Co-teaching Strategy

1. **Student characteristics and needs**
   The first considerations in thinking about co-teaching approaches are student characteristics and needs. For example, if students tend to become disruptive during transitions, an approach should be selected that minimizes transitions. Conversely, if students need extra motivation, an approach with frequent changes might be preferred.

2. **Teacher characteristics and needs**
   Co-teaching will be different in different classrooms and at different times of the school ear based on teacher characteristics and needs. For example, if co-teachers vary significantly in their teaching styles, it might be best to select approaches that enable them to teach independently. Alternatively, if co-teachers work easily together, a more shared approach might be appropriate.

3. **Curriculum, including content and instructional strategies**
   The content to be taught and the instructional strategies that are most effective for addressing the content are additional considerations in selecting co-teaching approaches. Highly structured content and procedures, such as teaching step in a process, would require one approach while less structured content, such as a discussion of ideas, would suggest another approach.

4. **Pragmatic considerations**
   The preference for co-teaching approaches should also be tempered b the realities of the setting. For example, in an open school, noise is a consideration in selecting an approach. In a crowded classroom, an approach not particularly dependent on access to larch amounts of space might be the best choice.
Philosophy

Exemplary Practices:
- Teachers are deeply committed to educating all students.
- Teachers believe that two viewpoints create a stronger instructional environment.
- Teachers believe the possibilities are endless and that there is always something new to learn/try to help students succeed.

Average Practices:
- Teachers want all students to succeed, but express reservations about co-teaching as a means of providing services.
- Teachers tend to take on the responsibilities that are associated with their roles and are uncomfortable with taking risks related to role responsibilities.
- Teachers want co-teaching as part of inclusive practices, but believe that “there are limits”.

Personal Characteristics

Exemplary Practices:
- Teachers are flexible and forgiving of each other.
- Teachers are strong and highly competent professionals.
- Teachers have highly developed skills related to their areas of expertise (e.g., curriculum, individualization.)

Average Practices:
- Teachers tend to want to know who should do what.
- Teachers characterize themselves and implement classroom practices based on role (e.g., general educator as keeper of the curriculum, special educator as individualizer).
- Teachers are skilled in working with children (this is, they have strong pedagogical knowledge, skills, and dispositions).
- Teachers are expert in their areas of expertise, but may experience difficulty in blending them.

Collaborations

Exemplary Practices:
- Teachers tend to use “we” language in discussing students and instruction.
- Teachers share key decisions, but complete many tasks individually.
- The contribution of each professional is equally valued, and teachers can discuss differences without becoming defensive.
### Collaborations

**Average Practices:**
- Teachers genuinely believe that each person makes a significant contribution to the classroom.
- Even if assigned to work together (instead of volunteering), teachers want co-teaching to work.
- Teachers work well together as long as issues are small; when a serious problem arises, they are uncertain about what to do.

### Classroom Practices

**Average Practices:**
- Both teachers are willing to work with any students.
- Drifting is used often as an approach to co-teaching.
- Instructional differentiation occurs, but it is seen as an event or special option.
- Teachers struggle to map a student’s IEP goals and objectives onto the general education curriculum.
- Special educators spend most co-teaching time “helping,” not teaching.

### Exemplary Practices:
- Classroom visitors seldom can tell which educator is a general educator and which educator is a special educator.
- Students look to teachers equally for guidance.
- Classroom instructional practices are highly differentiated.
- Several services are unobtrusive but clearly carried out.
- A variety of co-teaching approaches are employed.

### Context

**Average Practices:**
- Teachers use allocated planning time, but they frequently mention that they cannot effectively co-teach without weekly planning time.
- Teachers schedule co-teaching in elementary schools based primarily on pragmatic factors (e.g., when they are available, when a paraprofessional can be.
- Teachers tend to allow competing priorities to interfere with co-teaching (e.g., calls from the office, parent drop-ins).

**Exemplary Practices:**
- Teachers use allocated planning time efficiently and effectively, and they create additional planning minutes as needed.
- Teachers recognize the place of co-teaching in a larger service delivery system.
- Teachers make decisions on services based on student needs, not traditional practices.
- Teachers can implement fluid service delivery.
Self Assessment

This is a non-graded, anonymous self-assessment. You have 10 minutes to complete the following questions taken from the content of this academy. After that time the group will have the opportunity to share answers. Note that occasionally we collect these self-assessments to measure the effectiveness of the academy.

1. What are two of the nine co-teaching approaches and when might you use them?

2. What are some exemplary classroom co-teaching practices?
As a result of my participation in this academy, I am going to ...

If I were on the next academy planning team, I would ...

Please let us know how useful you found the topics and activities:

**Activity 1: Co-teaching: 9 Approaches**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>Great</th>
<th>5</th>
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**Activity 2: The Case for Co-teaching**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>Great</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Activity 3: Perfecting Co-teaching**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Poor</th>
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<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>Great</th>
<th>5</th>
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</table>

**Self Evaluation**

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<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>Great</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

I am affiliated with an:

- Elementary School
- Middle School
- Secondary School

Three things I learned that made me go... AH HA!

1. ______________________________________
2. ______________________________________
3. ______________________________________

I am a

- General Ed Teacher
- Administrator
- Special Ed Teacher
- Parent
- Paraprofessional
- Other ________

I am affiliated with a(n):

- Elementary School
- Middle School
- Secondary School

As a result of my participation in this academy, I am going to...
Resources


Studies the effectiveness of co-teaching in a general education life skills class in providing inclusive instruction to students with and without disabilities. Case study of inclusive instruction; Context for general and special education collaboration; Planning ongoing accommodations.


Richard Rose, writing in this journal in his role as Research Section Editor (BJS*, Volume 29, Number 1), argued that teachers should learn to do research in collaboration with other professionals, as part of a drive to make teaching a ‘research-based profession’. In this article, Joan Forbes, Senior Lecturer in Educational Studies in the Faculty of Education at the University of Aberdeen, explores this idea in greater depth from her perspective as course leader for an MEd module on inter-agency collaboration. She proposes that recommendations for collaboration to support children with language and communication disorders do not attend to the difficulties involved between professionals from different backgrounds who use different discourses and draw upon different research evidence as a basis for practice. Her paper draws on ‘postmodern’ research approaches and Michael Foucault's views of ‘discourse’ to examine a variety of theoretical perspectives previously applied to collaboration. It argues for the value of further theoretical diversity and methodological plurality and introduces discourse analysis as a tool for helping to understand the notion of collaboration. At the end of her challenging and intriguing paper, Joan Forbes offers some suggestions concerning the value of ‘new’ questioning kinds of analysis.

The National Institute for Urban School Improvement

Because research has found that differentiation of instruction for gifted students does not typically occur within the general classroom, collaboration between gifted and general education teachers is critical in order to ensure appropriate services to students with high abilities. Gifted education teachers are now being called upon to provide services to their students in the regular education environment. This fundamental change in setting mirrors mandated changes in special education, wherein students with disabilities are increasingly served in the general education classroom. This article provides a new definition of collaboration within the context of gifted education and expands on the utilization of coteaching as a collaborative strategy. Five models of coteaching originally developed for meeting the needs of students with disabilities were adapted, and examples of their use with gifted students in the general education classroom are provided.


Part of a special issue on communication and collaboration. Advice for teachers on how to create and maintain co-teaching relationships at the high school level is provided. This advice relates to teachers knowing themselves, knowing their teaching partners, knowing their students, and knowing their classroom roles, responsibilities, and work.


Because co-teaching is the most widely used inclusion model, identification of the skills necessary for successful co-teaching is pertinent to teacher preparation in both early childhood education (ECE) and early childhood special education (ECSE). This pilot study considers one aspect of co-teaching; how the co-teachers related to one another. Specifically it explores associations between co-teachers’ perceptions of similarity (in philosophical beliefs, personal characteristics and traits, and professional style) with one another and two quality outcomes. The outcomes are (a) quality of the preschool environment, as measured by the Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale (ECERS), and (b) child engagement. With disability status controlled for, there was a significant relationship between the co-teacher relationship and one of the program quality measures; quality of the environment. The findings are discussed in terms of implications for teacher preparation.

Collaboration between special and general education teachers has received increased attention over the past decade as part of the effort to create inclusive classrooms and to blur the boundaries between programs and students. Yet collaboration can have multiple meanings. This special issue presents data related to collaborative practices derived from three projects funded under a U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs research priority, Beacons of Excellence. Research projects funded under this priority were to identify schools achieving exemplary results with students with disabilities, as well as with their peers. Researchers from the separate projects whose results are presented in this issue studied schools in very different contexts using different methodologies. Researchers identified characteristics of their schools and then came together to identify features common across all schools that appeared to be dominant forces in creating the exemplary schools. Collaborative practices were among a handful of such features that emerged across projects. Collaboration in these exemplary schools included both specific teaching practices as well as a climate and culture that supported a community of professionals working together to improve teaching and achievement for all students. Findings from these projects provide important insights into how schools are defining and implementing collaboration.


This article describes a promising form of professional collaboration: coteaching between a content area teacher and a special education teacher. In an investigation of a schoolwide coteaching model in an urban middle school that places students with disabilities in heterogeneous classrooms, researchers interviewed key school leaders and made detailed observations of coteaching. The study found that although content teachers conduct more of the instruction and special education teachers provide more individualized assistance, both use a full range of instructional roles. Essential to the success of coteaching partnerships were collaborative school structures, equal status rules for teachers, a commitment to all students' learning, and strong content knowledge.


Part of a special issue on communication and collaboration. Some practical ideas for preparing to co-teach at the secondary level are provided. These ideas relate to talking to administrators and colleagues before initiation of the co-teaching process and considering the roles of the
principal and co-teachers in a co-teaching environment. In addition tips and strategies on planning, instruction, and assessment in the co-teaching process are presented.


Parent Perceptions of a Co-Taught Inclusive Classroom Abstract Parent perceptions of a co-taught inclusion classroom were examined. Parents of 42 students, 12 identified exceptional students and 30 general education students were surveyed. Responses were obtained from 67 percent of the parents. Findings suggest that these parents are in favor of an inclusive class setting. Increases in self-esteem, social skills and academic achievement were reported by parents. Most parents commented that the uniqueness of the co-teaching model was the most significant benefit for their children as it offered diverse opportunities for learning. Based on these findings, the authors recommend a continued investigation of this model as it relates to inclusion programs and preservice teacher training.


Proposes four alternative models for co-taught classrooms that rely on flexible teacher schedules and the use of paraprofessionals. Benefits of cooperative teaching; Need for new instructional models; Traditional co-teaching; Collaboration scheduling.


We examined co-teaching in secondary classrooms by interviewing and observing special education teachers in co-taught and special education classrooms. Using qualitative methods and a grounded theory (constant-comparative) method of data analysis, we identified salient, recurrent patterns that suggested a description of co-teaching definitions, role, and instructional actions and then compared this description to roles and actions in special education classrooms. We found that special educators take on various roles when co-teaching that are different from the roles that they reportedly assume when they are teaching in special education classrooms; the differences between these roles are influenced by personal definitions of co-teaching and perceived pressures from the classroom, administration, and professional community. During co-taught classes, special educators may simply provide support for students in the general education classroom, teach the same content in a separate classroom, teach a separate part of the content in the same classroom, or teach as a team with the general educator. In co-teaching situations, teachers engaged in actions that helped
students get through assignments and instruction given to the entire class. In special education classrooms, however, special educators engaged in different strategic and explicit forms of these actions.