

Co-Teaching: What it IS, What it is NOT

Element of co-teaching	Co-teaching DOES	Co-teaching does NOT
<i>“two or more professionals”</i>	involve at least 2 credentialed professionals—indicating that co-teachers are peers having equivalent credentials and thus can truly be partners in the instructional effort. The general education curriculum provides the instructional framework, with the flexibility of it being modifiable for students who require it (Fennick, 2001).	involve a teacher and a classroom volunteer or paraprofessional, many of whom have not had the professional preparation to co-teach nor is co-teaching an appropriate role expectation for them. This is not to say that paraprofessionals do not have important classroom roles—they just should not be asked to fulfill responsibilities of certificated staff (Friend, 2003).
<i>“joint delivery of instruction”</i>	mean both professionals coordinating and delivering substantive instruction, ensuring that both teachers have active roles. Co-teachers should work to ensure that their instructional strategies engage all students in ways that are not possible when only one teacher is present (Austin, 2001, Gately & Gately, 2001).	mean two adults merely being present in a classroom at the same time. It also does not mean that the general education teacher plans and delivers all of the lessons while the special education teacher circulates. Co-teaching does not involve taking turns lecturing to the whole group (Murawski, 2002).
<i>“diverse group of students”</i>	allow teachers to respond effectively to diverse needs of students, lower the teacher-student ratio, and expand the professional expertise that can be applied to student needs (Hourcade & Bauwens, 2001).	Include separating or grouping students with special needs in one part of the classroom or along the fringes, even if these practices are well-intentioned (Friend, 2003).
<i>“shared classroom space”</i>	Feature co-teachers instructing in the same physical space. Although small groups of students may occasionally taken to a separate location for a specific purpose and limited time, co-teaching should generally take place in a single environment—separating it from the practice of regrouping for pullout programs (Friend, 2003).	Include teaching teams that plan together but then group and instruct students in separate classrooms (Trump, 1966, Geen, 1985).

Co-teaching models between General and Special Education Teachers

	One Teaching, One Drifting	Station Teaching	Parallel Teaching	Alternative Teaching	Team teaching
DESIGN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead teacher models organization of the content • Lead teacher identifies skills and strategies needed for groups and individual students to complete the task(s) of the lesson • Support teacher assists 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead teacher and support teacher segment the lesson content. • Lead teacher and support teacher divide the number of stations they are responsible for • Both teachers plan and organize their station activities with attention to possible group differences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead teacher and support teacher collaboratively organize the lesson content • Lead teacher and support teacher identify strategies needed for groups and individual students • Lead teacher and support teacher divide the students into two groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead teacher and support teacher make decisions about the content and organization of the lesson • Lead teacher and support teacher determine the appropriate structures for alternative remedial or enrichment lessons that would promote learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead teacher and support teacher make decisions about the content and organization of the lesson • Lead teacher and support teacher teach simultaneously to the whole class
INSTRUCTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead teacher conducts formal teaching • Support teacher teaches components of lessons with small groups of students • Support teacher provides content support to lead teacher's lesson 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead and support teacher segment learning to small groups or individual students at the stations they design 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead teacher and support teacher independently deliver the lesson plan to each of the groups • Lead teacher and support teacher facilitate learning in their respective groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead teacher conducts formal teaching • Support teacher implements supplemental activities for the whole group, small groups or individual students before or after the formal lesson 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both lead teacher and support teacher conduct formal teaching

Co-teaching models between General and Special Education Teachers

	One Teaching, One Drifting	Station Teaching	Parallel Teaching	Alternative Teaching	Team teaching
MONITORING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead teacher uses pre-assessment to determine students' need for support • Support teacher assesses students' skills and facilitates self-regulation during the lesson • Students use self-assessment as they request assistance during or after a formal lesson 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead teacher and support teacher use pre-assessment to determine how students are selected for stations (e.g., skills, interests, random) • Given the organizational structure and tasks of each station, assessment done by students can also be used during the lesson 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead teacher and support teacher monitor their own groups of students • Lead teacher and support teacher use post lesson reflection to share their expectations using the same lesson plan with different groups of students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead teacher and support teacher pre-assess the students to plan for alternative lessons • Lead teacher and support teacher assess the students during the formal lesson to identify students who would benefit from the alternative lessons • Student self-assessment and/or peer-assessment encourages students to articulate their need for alternative forms of instruction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead teacher and support teacher pre-assess the students • Lead teacher and support teacher assess the students during the formal lesson to identify students who would benefit from alternative lessons
BENEFITS	Having two teachers to help individual students after the lesson is presented (individual guided practice)	Facilitates small group learning and is responsive to individual needs. The notions of "mini-lesson," 'accelerated learning,' 'mastery learning,' and other ideas that teach to many levels can be readily addressed	Parallel teaching is very helpful whenever we want to increase the likelihood of participation. It also allows for intensive work with a small group of students	Allows for the use of alternative methods to re-teach or extend the lesson vertically or horizontally. This model allows for multiple means of delivery	Team teaching is very powerful when the entire class is participating in a particular inquiry project

Preparing to Co-Teach

Actions	Questions to ask yourself or others
Assess the current environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What type of collaboration currently exists between general and special education? • Has there been any discussion of inclusion, collaboration, or co-teaching? • How do teachers react when they hear about students with special needs in general education classes? Who reacts favorably?
Move in slowly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is our joint understanding of co-teaching as a service delivery model? • May I co-teach a lesson with you? • Are there any areas that you feel less strongly about, in which I might be able to assist?
Involve the administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How is the district addressing the LRE mandate and the inclusive movement? • Would our school site be willing to be proactive by including co-teaching? • What discipline areas will we target first? • How will we ensure that support is provided across all content areas, including electives? • Would we be able to count on administrative support, especially with co-planning time and scheduling assistance?
Get to know your partner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could we complete a co-teaching checklist to help guide us in discussing our personal and professional preferences? • Are there any pet peeves or issues that I should know prior to our working together? • Do we both have similar levels of expertise about the curriculum and instructing students with disabilities? • How shall we ensure that we are both actively involved and neither feels over- or under-utilized? • What feedback structure can we create to assist in our regular communications?
Create a workable schedule	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How often will co-teaching occur (daily, a few times a week, for a specific unit, etc)? • What schedule would best meet the needs of the class and both teachers? • How can we ensure that this schedule will be maintained consistently so that both co-teachers can trust it? • How will we maintain communication between co-taught sessions?

The two teachers looked at each other in disbelief. One was a tenured secondary English teacher who had taught for 6 years in this large middle-class, suburban high school. The other was a first year special education teacher who recently received her master's degree. They had been co-teaching a ninth grade English class for 4 months, and although the beginning weeks were a bit overwhelming, they were rather proud of their cooperative and respectful relationship. They had been co-planning, co-grading, and co-teaching, and they were certain the class would go well. The students responded to the co-teachers' combined efforts, and both social and academic progress was noted for all students in the class.

The teachers were looking at their observation reports. The special education and English chairpersons had decided to observe the co-teaching class at the same time. The special education teacher read her report: it was glowing. Her supervisor recognized the adaptations that were made in the materials, saw that she worked with individual students, observed her contribution to the teaching of the mini-lesson, noted the parity she enjoyed with her co-teacher, and acknowledged the acceptance and respect of her students.

The general education teacher held back tears as she read her write-up. How could this be? She had never received an unsatisfactory observation, and prided herself on her competency in the classroom. Her supervisors had repeatedly recognized her skills as a teacher. She read through the comments—her chairperson thought there hadn't been enough time spent developing the content of the lesson and that the student group work detracted from more formal delivery of content. The chair also felt the general education teacher had relinquished too much of her role as content specialist to the special education teacher and noted there was too much interaction between the co-teachers.

Co-Teaching Observation Guide

How can I determine if a co-taught collaborative inclusion class is being taught as effectively as possible?

Questions I should be asking myself as I observe. . .

- **The Basics: Meaningful Roles for Each Teacher**
 1. Can the role of each teacher be defined at any given point in the lesson?
 2. Is each role meaningful? Does each role enhance the learning process?
 3. Do the teachers vary their roles during the course of the lesson?
 4. Is each teacher well suited to the role(s) he or she is assuming?
 5. Are both teachers comfortable with process AND content?
 6. Is the special education teacher working with all students?

- **Strategies to Promote Success for ALL Students**
 1. What evidence is there that teachers engaged in co-planning the lesson?
 2. Are the teachers focusing on process as well as content? Are they reinforcing important skills?
 3. Are directions clear?
 4. What strategies/modifications are being employed to assist struggling students?
 5. What adaptations were made to materials in order to help struggling students complete tasks?
 6. What strategies are being used to actively engage students?
 7. How are students being grouped? Does it fit the task? Is it purposeful?
 8. What reinforcement strategies are being employed?

- **Evidence of Success**
 1. Are struggling students answering/asking questions?
 2. Are students engaged in meaningful work throughout the period?
 3. How are teachers assessing the learning of each student?
 4. What evidence exists that all students have been appropriately challenged?

Co-Teaching Rating Scale for Supervisors

RATING: 1=rarely; 2=sometimes; 3=usually				Comments:
1. Nonverbal communication is observed	1	2	3	
2. Both teachers move freely throughout the space	1	2	3	
3. Teachers appear competent with the curriculum and standards	1	2	3	
4. Teachers agree on the goals of the co-taught classroom	1	2	3	
5. Spontaneous planning occurs throughout the lesson	1	2	3	
6. Both teachers take stage and present during the lesson	1	2	3	
7. Classroom rules and routines have been jointly developed	1	2	3	
8. Many measures are used for grading students	1	2	3	
9. Humor is often used in the classroom	1	2	3	
10. Materials are shared in the classroom	1	2	3	
11. Both teachers appear familiar with the methods and materials with respect to the content area	1	2	3	
12. Modifications of goals for students with special needs are incorporated into the class	1	2	3	
13. Planning for classes appears to be the shared responsibility of both teachers	1	2	3	
14. The "chalk" passes freely	1	2	3	
15. A variety of classroom management techniques is used to enhance learning	1	2	3	
16. Test modifications are commonplace	1	2	3	
17. Communication is open and honest	1	2	3	
18. There is fluid positioning of teachers in the classroom	1	2	3	
19. Both teachers appear to feel confident in the content	1	2	3	
20. Student-centered objectives are incorporated into the classroom curriculum	1	2	3	
21. Time is allocated (or found) for common planning	1	2	3	
22. Students appear to accept and seek out both teachers' help in the learning process	1	2	3	
23. Behavior management is the shared responsibility of both teachers	1	2	3	
24. Goals and objectives in IEPs are considered as part of the grading for students with special needs	1	2	3	

S3a

The Coteaching Rating Scale

Special Education Teacher Format

<i>Respond to each question below by circling the number that best describes your viewpoint:</i>			
1: Rarely	2: Sometimes	3: Usually	
1. I can easily read the nonverbal cues of my coteaching partner.	1	2	3
2. I feel comfortable moving freely about the space in the cotaught classroom.	1	2	3
3. I understand the curriculum standards with respect to the content area in the cotaught classroom.	1	2	3
4. Both teachers in the cotaught classroom agree on the goals of the classroom.	1	2	3
5. Planning can be spontaneous, with changes occurring during the instructional lesson.	1	2	3
6. I often present lessons in the cotaught class.	1	2	3
7. Classroom rules and routines have been jointly developed.	1	2	3
8. Many measures are used for grading students.	1	2	3
9. Humor is often used in the classroom.	1	2	3
10. All materials are shared in the classroom.	1	2	3
11. I am familiar with the methods and materials with respect to this content area.	1	2	3
12. Modifications of goals for students with special needs are incorporated into this class.	1	2	3
13. Planning for classes is the shared responsibility of both teachers.	1	2	3
14. The "chalk" passes freely between the two teachers.	1	2	3
15. A variety of classroom management techniques is used to enhance learning of all students.	1	2	3
16. Test modifications are commonplace.	1	2	3
17. Communication is open and honest.	1	2	3
18. There is fluid positioning of teachers in the classroom.	1	2	3
19. I feel confident in my knowledge of the curriculum content.	1	2	3
20. Student-centered objectives are incorporated into the curriculum.	1	2	3
21. Time is allotted (or found) for common planning.	1	2	3
22. Students accept both teachers as equal partners in the learning process.	1	2	3
23. Behavior management is the shared responsibility of both teachers.	1	2	3
24. Goals and objectives in IEPs are considered as part of the grading for students with special needs.	1	2	3

The Coteaching Rating Scale

General Education Teacher Format

<i>Respond to each question below by circling the number that best describes your viewpoint:</i>			
1: Rarely	2: Sometimes	3: Usually	
1. I can easily read the nonverbal cues of my coteaching partner.	1	2	3
2. Both teachers move freely about the space in the cotaught classroom.	1	2	3
3. My coteacher understands the curriculum standards with respect to the content area in the cotaught classroom.	1	2	3
4. Both teachers in the cotaught classroom agree on the goals of the classroom.	1	2	3
5. Planning can be spontaneous, with changes occurring during the instructional lesson.	1	2	3
6. My coteaching partner often presents lessons in the cotaught class.	1	2	3
7. Classroom rules and routines have been jointly developed.	1	2	3
8. Many measures are used for grading students.	1	2	3
9. Humor is often used in the classroom.	1	2	3
10. All materials are shared in the classroom.	1	2	3
11. The special education teacher is familiar with the methods and materials with respect to this content area.	1	2	3
12. Modifications of goals for students with special needs are incorporated into this class.	1	2	3
13. Planning for classes is the shared responsibility of both teachers.	1	2	3
14. The "chalk" passes freely between the two teachers.	1	2	3
15. A variety of classroom management techniques is used to enhance learning of all students.	1	2	3
16. Test modifications are commonplace.	1	2	3
17. Communication is open and honest.	1	2	3
18. There is fluid positioning of teachers in the classroom.	1	2	3
19. I am confident of the special education teacher's knowledge of the curriculum content.	1	2	3
20. Student-centered objectives are incorporated into the curriculum.	1	2	3
21. Time is allotted (or found) for common planning.	1	2	3
22. Students accept both teachers as equal partners in the learning process.	1	2	3
23. Behavior management is the shared responsibility of both teachers.	1	2	3
24. Goals and objectives in IEPs are considered as part of the grading for students with special needs.	1	2	3

Table 1

***Goals and Objectives of Geneseo
Central School Co-Teaching Program***

1. Special Education students will be academically successful in a general education classroom with the appropriate supports in place.
 - 1.1 The general and special education teachers will co-teach in general education classrooms, resulting in academic success for all students.
 - 1.2 The students with disabilities in co-taught classrooms will have access to the general education curriculum with appropriate accommodations and modifications in place.
2. Special Education students will demonstrate appropriate social and behavioral responses that will improve throughout the 1997-1998 school year.
 - 2.1 All students in a classroom will adhere to classroom rules, and act appropriately with all those involved in the school community.
 - 2.2 Students will be measured on self-concept to determine students' feelings about themselves in the social environment of the classroom.
3. Teachers and parents will be satisfied with the new blended model being implemented at the 4th and 7th grade level.
 - 3.1 Parents will express both the positive and negative impact the blended model is having on their child during the 1997-1998 school year.
 - 3.2 Teachers will express both the positive and negative impact of the blended model during the 1997-1998 school year.

Table 3

Parent Survey Protocol

1. Are you satisfied with the educational program currently being provided to your child?
2. As a parent has the staff involved you in developing an appropriate education for your child?
3. Do you think the classroom teachers are interested in your opinions about your child?
4. Do you have open and continuous communication from your child's classroom teacher?
5. Are you satisfied with the opportunities to participate in parent-teacher conferences?
6. Are you satisfied with the staff to student ratio provided in your child's classroom?
7. Do you think your child has a positive outlook about school this year?
8. Are your child's social needs supported by the current educational program?
9. Do your child's classroom grades accurately reflect what your child has learned?
10. Does the present report card system accurately reflect what your child is doing?
11. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about you and your child's experience this year at school?

Table 2 lists the evaluation questions that were created to address the goals and objectives of Geneseo's co-teaching program as well as the methods used to address each question.

Table 2
Evaluation Question and Methods Addressing the Objectives of the Co-teaching Program

Objectives	Evaluation questions	Methods
1.1	I—What training did teams receive regarding co-teaching? P—What collaboration is currently observed in the classroom? O—Are students successful with this model?	Professional development review Observations Test results and report cards
1.2	I—What are the accommodations and modifications needed? P—Are they observed? O—Are students academically successful with modifications in place?	IEP review Observation during instruction and testing Test results and report cards
2.1	I—What are the classroom rules? P—Is adherence to the classroom rules observed? O—Do most students follow classroom rules?	Teacher interviews/documents Observations Behavioral referrals
2.2	I—How is self-concept defined? P—How is self-concept measured? O—What were the self-concepts of children in blended situations?	Piers-Harris manual Piers-Harris manual Test scores
3.1	I—What were parents asked about the blended model? P—How were the parents surveyed? O—What were the parents' satisfactions and concerns?	Survey protocol developed with stakeholders Survey methods Survey results
3.2	I—What were teachers asked about the blended model? P—How were teachers surveyed? O—What were the teachers' satisfactions and concerns?	Survey protocol developed with stakeholders Survey methods Survey results

Note: I indicates input question, P indicates process question, and O indicates outcome question.

Teacher Survey Results

Grade 5 N=2			Grade 4 year 2 (n=2)			Grade 4 year 1 (n=2)			(Answered survey together)
Yes	No	DK	Yes	No	DK	Yes	No	DK	Questions
2	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	Are you satisfied with the educational program currently being provided to your students?
2	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	As a teacher have you made specific modifications for students in your class?
2	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	Do you think parents are interested in your opinions about their child?
2	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	Do you have open and continuous communication from your students' parents?
2	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	Are you satisfied with the opportunities to meet as a team?
2	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	Are you satisfied with the ratio of students with disabilities to those without disabilities in your classroom?
2	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	Do you think your students have a positive outlook about school this year?
2	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	Are your student's social needs supported by the current educational program?
2	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	Do grades for all students in the class come from the same method of assessment?
2	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	Does the present report card system accurately reflect what your students are doing?
Is there anything else you'd like to tell us about you and your child's experience this year at school?									

Gr. 7 year 1 (n=6)			Gr. 7 year 2 (n=4)			Gr. 8 (n=6)			
Yes	No	DK	Yes	No	DK	Yes	No	DK	Questions
3	1	0	4	0	0	6	0	0	Are you satisfied with the educational program currently being provided to your students?
5	0	0	4	0	0	6	0	0	As a teacher have you made specific modifications for students in your class?
4	2	0	3	0	1-NR	4	0	2	Do you think parents are interested in your opinions about their child?
3	2	0	3	1	0	3	3	1	Do you have open and continuous communication from your students' parents?
2	2	0	4	0	0	3	3	0	Are you satisfied with the opportunities to meet as a team?
4	0	0	2	2	1-NR	2	4	0	Are you satisfied with the ratio of students with disabilities to those without disabilities in your classroom?
3	0	1	4	0	0	2	3	2+1-NR	Do you think your students have a positive outlook about school this year?
2	2	2	3	1	0	2	1	3	Are your student's social needs supported by the current educational program?
2	3	0	2	2	0	3	3	0	Do grades for all students in the class come from the same method of assessment?
3	2	0	3	2	0	3	3	0	Does the present report card system accurately reflect what your students are doing?
Is there anything else you'd like to tell us about you and your child's experience this year at school?									

S4c

From: Evaluating Co-teaching as a Means for Successful Inclusion of Students with Disabilities in a Rural District by Michael W. Wischnowski, Susan J. Salmon, and Karen Eaton. Rural Special Education Quarterly, 2004, 23(3), 3-14.

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