

# Effective Co-Teaching Practices

---

A Simple Guide to Co-Teaching

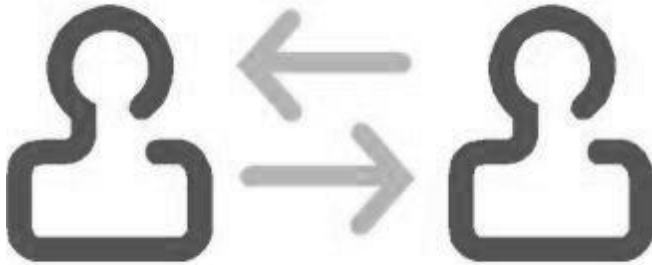
# Table of Contents

What is Co-Teaching? .....	3
Co-Teaching Models .....	6
Getting to Know Each Other .....	9
Classroom Environment .....	11
Parity .....	17
Planning .....	19
Best Practices .....	21
Reflecting .....	25

# What is Co-Teaching?

---

When a general education teacher and a special education teacher work together to plan and deliver instruction to a diverse population in a general education setting.



# Characteristics of co-teaching:

## Service Delivery

- Students who receive special education and/or related services are instructed in the general education classroom.

## Two Educators

- These educators collaborate to facilitate students' access to the general education curriculum.

## Shared Responsibilities

- Both educators are responsible for the following:
  - Planning
  - Delivering instruction
  - Adapting materials
  - Parental communication
  - Accommodations
  - Providing feedback
  - Grading

## All Students

- Both teachers are responsible for delivering instruction to all students. This approach benefits a broad spectrum of students from gifted and talented to at-risk learners.

## One Work Space

- Both educators are responsible for implementing instruction in the same classroom.

# Benefits of Co-Teaching

## For Teachers:

- Easier to monitor students' behavior
- Build relationships and opportunities for professional and/or personal growth
- More support during instructional activities
- More support to provide students' accommodations
- Receive feedback from each other
- Provide more flexible grouping
- Cover content more effectively to support mastery learning

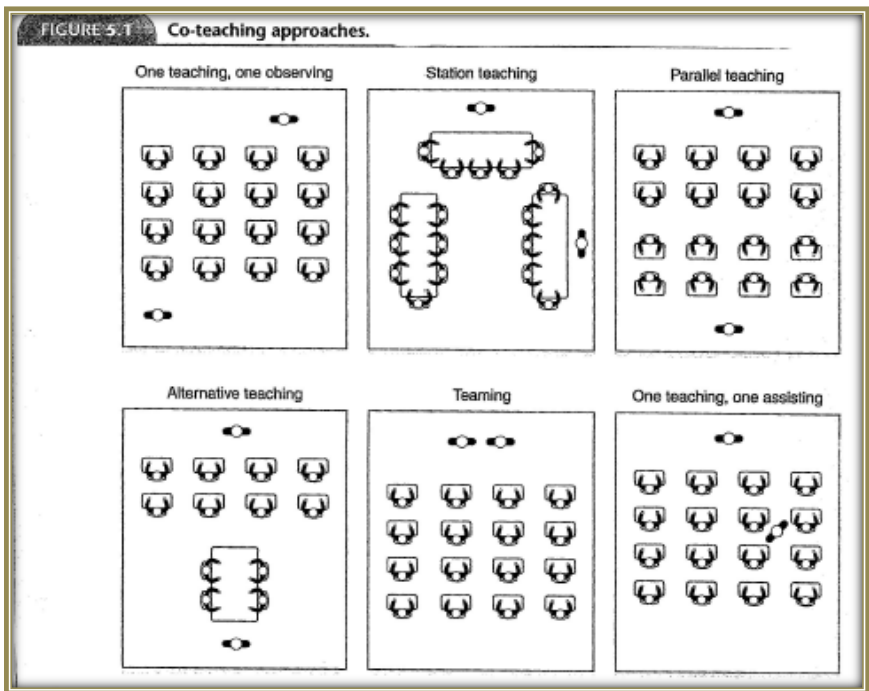
## For Students:

- Access to the general education curriculum
- More instructional support
- Learning from peers
- More opportunities for social interactions
- Increase respect and understanding for all students



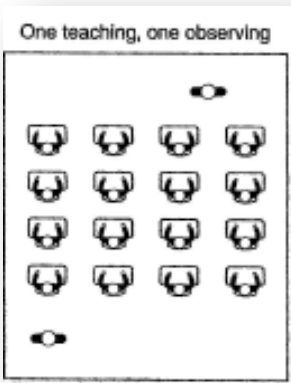
# Co-Teaching Models

There are several established models of co-teaching. Dr. Marilyn Friend and Dr. Lynne Cook developed six approaches to co-teaching that are widely used throughout the nation.



Friend, M. & Cook, L. (2010). *Interactions: Collaboration skills for school professionals* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). Boston: Pearson.

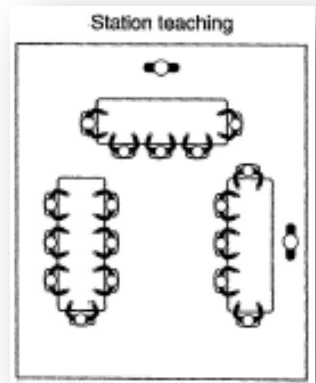
## One Teaching, One Observing



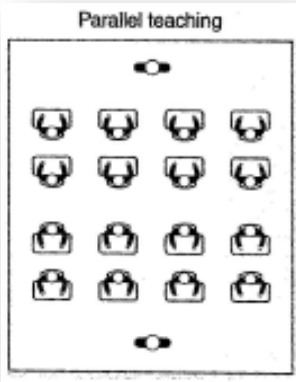
- Use: The purpose of one teaching, one observing is used in the event that data needs to be collected.
- Description: One teacher leads instruction while the other teacher gathers data, observes classroom behaviors, etc.

## Station Teaching

- Use: The purpose of station teaching is to decrease student teacher ratio, present targeted instructional content and/or cooperative learning.
- Description: Students are broken into three or more heterogeneous or homogeneous groups. Teachers can provide direct instruction at a station or monitor multiple stations. The small groups rotate around the stations.



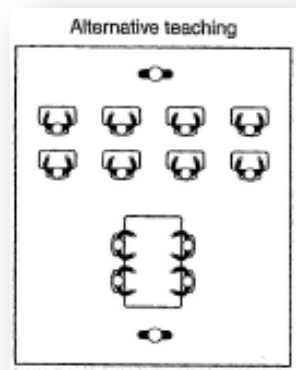
## Parallel Teaching



- Use: The purpose of parallel teaching is to decrease student teacher ratio and target students' instructional needs.
- Description: Students are divided into two homogeneous groups. Each group is led by a co-teacher. Each group receives the same content but through differentiated instruction.

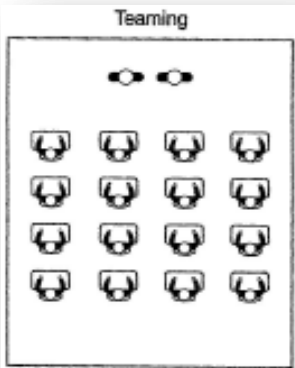
## Alternative Teaching

- Use: The purpose of alternative teaching is to re-teach the at-risk students while providing accelerated content to the remaining students.
- Description: Based on previous assessments, both teachers will decide which students are at-risk. One teacher works with the at-risk group while the other continues to provide accelerated instruction.





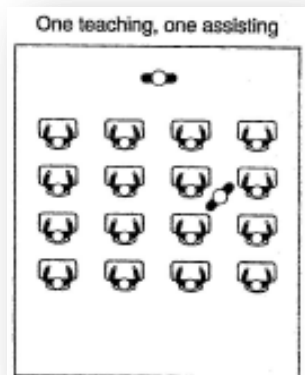
## Teaming



- Use: The purpose of teaming is to share the role of lead teacher in delivering instruction and providing student support.
- Description: While team teaching, co-teachers should act as “one brain in two bodies” (Friend, 2008, p. 75). For example, both teachers may facilitate a discussion while performing different roles such as writing on the board emphasizing key points.

## One Teaching, One Assisting

- Use: The purpose of one teaching, one assisting is to deliver instruction and monitor student progress.
- Description: As one teacher leads the whole class, the other teacher provides supports, answers questions, monitors student behavior, etc.



# Getting to Know Each Other

---

To create a successful co-teaching classroom, it is important to learn about your co-teaching partner. It is essential to get to know each other personally, as well as professionally. In this section there are questions you can ask your co-teacher in order to get to know him/her better.



Prior to the beginning of the school year, you and your co-teacher should have an open discussion.

To get to know your co-teacher **personally**, here are suggested conversation starters:

- What are your personal attributes?
- What are some challenges you have faced?
- What are your hobbies?
- Do you have any pets?
- How would you describe your family?
- What are your pet peeves?
- What three words would you use to describe your personality?
- How would you describe yourself? How would others describe you?
- Why did you become a teacher?

To get to know your co-teacher **professionally**, here are suggested conversation starters:

- What is your teaching philosophy?
- How do you learn best?
- What is your teaching style?
- How can we facilitate a positive learning environment?
- What can we do so that students and parents perceive us both as classroom teachers?
- What communication method would you prefer (e-mail, telephone, text message)?
- What time is best to contact you?
- How would you like to be approached when a problem arises?

# Classroom Environment

---

In co-teaching, the classroom environment is important. It should be a safe, inviting, and comfortable setting for students and teachers. In order to establish a positive environment, routines must be established, student mobility must be considered, transitions between activities must be well planned, and student and teacher work spaces should be clearly defined. Effective classroom management supports the classroom environment by consistently providing positive behavioral supports and expectations.



# Setting up the Classroom Environment

## Equal Space(s) for Both Teachers

- Both teachers should decide if they would like a shared or separate workspace.
- Both teachers should decide the location of their workspace(s) in the classroom.

## Location of Materials

- Both teachers should decide where student work, instructional material, and teaching resources will be located.
- Both teachers should decide where homework and notifications will be turned in.

## Arrangement of Students' Desks

- Both teachers should decide how the students' desks should be arranged.
- The teachers should take into consideration the instructional content, teaching styles, and co-teaching models.

## Centers

- Both teachers should decide on the locations of the centers and what types of centers will be included in the classroom (i.e. math, reading, writing, science, spelling, and computer).

# Establishing, Implementing, and Maintaining Classroom Management

## Organization of Student Information

- Both teachers should agree on a system for keeping records of student information and monitoring student progress.
  - Data notebooks
  - File folders
  - Journals
  - Portfolios

## Planning and Implementing Daily Routines

- Both teachers need to agree on routines prior to school opening and establish these routines with the students during the first week of school.
  - Morning routine
  - Walking in the hallway
  - Bathroom breaks
  - Student jobs
  - Transitions between classes, subjects, and activities
  - Dismissal routine

## Rules that Facilitate Classroom Management and Routines

- Both teachers should collaborate regarding their expectations for their classroom rules during pre-service week. These expectations should address the following components:
  - Needs to be student centered by including the students in the development and implementation of the rules
  - Must be written in positive simple terms using developmentally appropriate terminology
  - Establish 3-5 rules
  - Needs to be posted so they are visible at all times
  - Both teachers are responsible for implementing rules
  - Parents, students, and faculty should be aware of the expectations



## Methods of Classroom Discipline

- Both teachers need to discuss their philosophy on discipline and develop a standard discipline plan. Classroom discipline needs to be implemented consistently. Teachers need to be aware of students' behaviors and maintain constant communication.
- **Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (PBIS):**  
*The purpose of PBIS is to reinforce positive behavior with rewards. Once a reward is earned, it should not be taken away because the student will focus on the negative behavior rather than the positive behavior that earned the reward.*

Demonstrate Outstanding Character
Role Model
Show Pride
Ready to Learn
Think About It
Reflect
Call Parents

- Rainbow ladder: Students move their clips among the colors on the chart depending on their behavior
- Table points: Each table of students can earn points by displaying appropriate behavior
- Tickets or Dollars: Students will be given tickets/dollars for demonstrating appropriate behavior which can be used to buy prizes
- Class points: Teachers will give the class points if all students portray proper behavior, a point could be represented by a marble, tally, paper clip, etc.

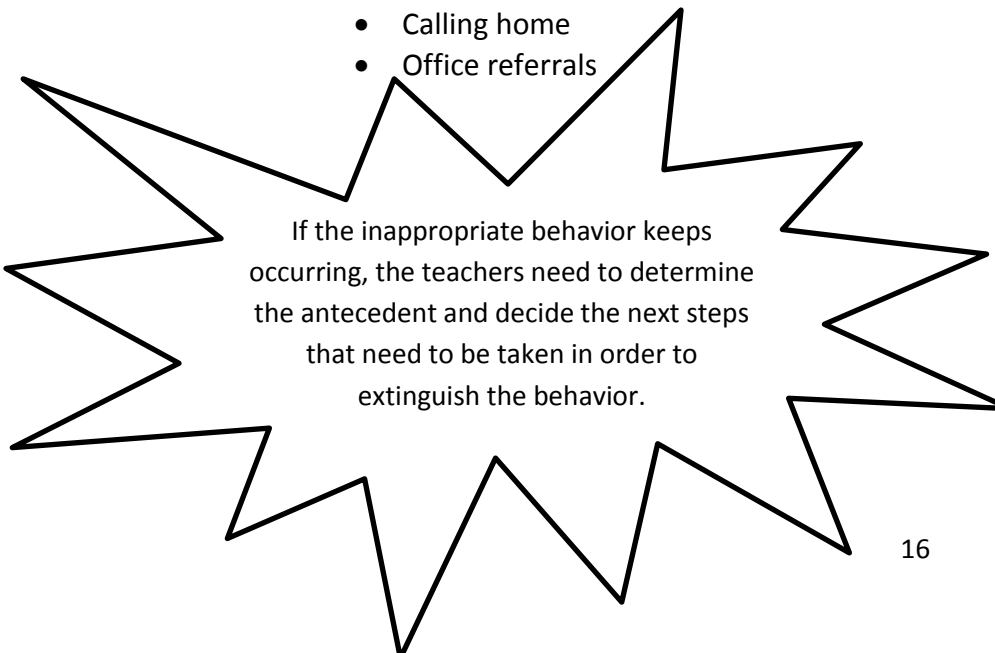
Before implementation, students and teachers should decide on the reward together.



○ **Negative Consequences**

*A consequence is an action that takes place as a result of a positive or negative behavior. A negative consequence is a result of an inappropriate behavior. When determining a consequence, the teachers need to make sure it is relevant to the behavior. Ultimately, the consequence should extinguish the behavior.*

- It is important that both teachers agree on the consequences and are consistent with implementation
- Both teachers should address the problem together and immediately
- The following are examples of negative consequences listed in order by severity:
  - Taking away the distraction
  - Moving the clips down on the rainbow ladder
  - Personally reflecting on behavior in an oral or written form
  - Writing an apology letter
  - Staying in for recess
  - Calling home
  - Office referrals

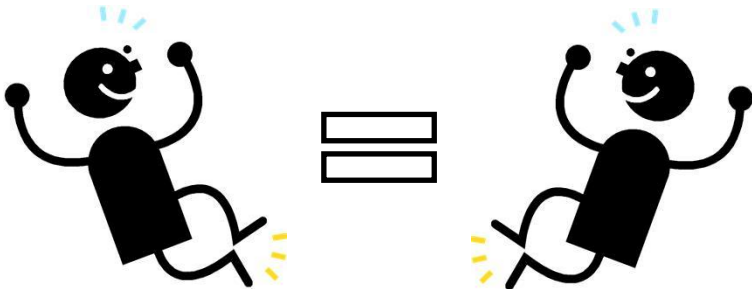


If the inappropriate behavior keeps occurring, the teachers need to determine the antecedent and decide the next steps that need to be taken in order to extinguish the behavior.

# Parity

---

Both teachers should be viewed as equals among the school community. Parity will be accomplished once both teachers share roles and responsibilities within the classroom. Both must be recognized as the classroom teachers. It is important for parity to be established so all students' needs will be met comfortably.



## Examples of Parity

### Teachers' names

- In order for both teachers to be viewed as equals, both names should be displayed on the following:
  - On the board
  - On report cards
  - Around the classroom
  - Outside the classroom
  - In all parent communication

### Sharing the amount of work

- In order for both teacher to share equal roles and responsibilities, the following work should be distributed evenly:
  - Planning
  - Preparing
  - Teaching
  - Grading
  - Reflecting
  - Completing an IEP
  - Communicating with administration
  - Communicating with parents

# Planning

---

Planning is an ongoing process throughout the school year. Prior to the school year is a great time to find a common planning time that will work for both teachers. Once the planning time is established, this time should be shared with the staff so that they recognize and acknowledge that this time should not be interrupted. After each teaching session, both teachers need to reflect about the lesson and assess student learning.



## Prior to the school year

Both teachers need to discuss planning in terms of the following:

- Time of day allocated for planning
- Duration of planning period
- Frequency of planning
- Where planning takes place
- Method used for communicating
- Familiarizing yourselves with the curriculum
- Determining the planning style (i.e.; plan books, flip charts, lists, etc.)
- Developing emergency substitute plans

## During the planning period

Things to consider include the following:

- Determining the co-teaching model
- Teaching roles
- Assessing student learning
- Preparing materials
- Providing input on the lesson content and means of differentiation
- Accepting suggestions
- Agreeing to disagree

## After teaching

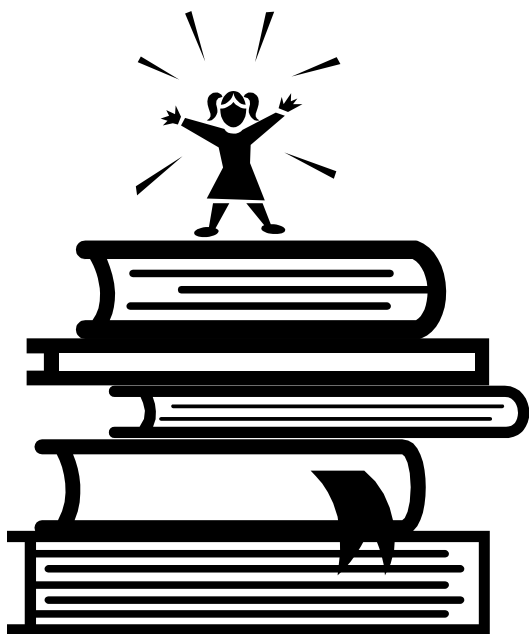
Things to consider include the following:

- Grading (teachers can divide the grading responsibilities or grade the assignment together)
- Reflecting
  - What worked? What didn't work?
  - Evaluate groups (which students are accelerated, on-level, or at-risk?)
  - When and how will you teach the at-risk students?
  - How will you challenge the accelerated students?

# Best Practices

---

Best practices are helpful hints to think about while developing and implementing lesson plans. These hints help facilitate student learning. Best practices help make the co-teaching process fluid.



In order to maintain an effective co-teaching classroom, it is important to include the following best practices:

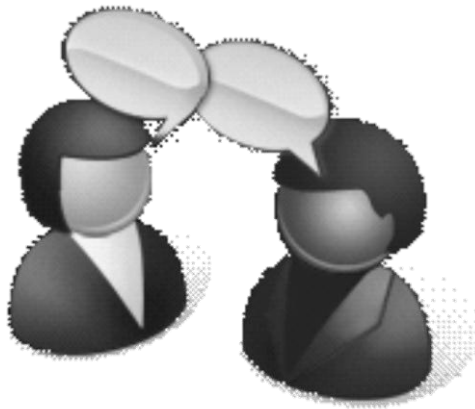
- Share responsibility of all students
- Be aware of the students strengths and needs
- Monitor and modify teaching to meet the needs of all students (Universal Design for Learning)
- Evaluate student grouping across the curriculum to meet each students' needs
- Use appropriate humor
- Use critical thinking skills
- Employ equitable practices
- Implement heterogeneous grouping
- Encourage student discourse
- Use technology

**BE A LIFELONG  
LEARNER!**

# Reflecting

---

It is important to reflect on your teaching so you can grow as a professional. Professional growth is an integral part to being a lifelong learner. Professional growth encourages implementing instructional practices that support student achievement and success.





On a scale from 1-3, please rate the following on your co-teaching abilities by circling the number that best describes your co-teaching experience.

- 1- Seldom
- 2- Sometimes
- 3- Frequently

1   2   3	Do you use a variety of co-teaching models?
1   2   3	Did you take the time to get to know your co-teacher on a personal level?
1   2   3	Did you take the time to get to know your co-teacher on a professional level?
1   2   3	Do you and your co-teacher have equal workspaces?
1   2   3	Did you both contribute to the classroom layout?
1   2   3	Did you and your co-teacher collaborate regarding the rules and routines?
1   2   3	Are you and your co-teacher consistently implementing positive behavior supports and consequences?
1   2   3	Are you and your co-teacher seen as equals in the school community?
1   2   3	Do you and your co-teacher plan together?

1   2   3	Are the planning responsibilities shared equally?
1   2   3	Are you both responsible for instructing all the students (with and without disabilities)?
1   2   3	Are you and your co-teacher implementing best practices by using the Universal Design for Learning (UDL)?