

Co-Teaching

Meeting Children's Needs Through Collaboration



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What is Co-Teaching?

Co-teaching is defined as two teachers working together with groups of students; sharing the planning, organization, delivery, and assessment of instruction, as well as the physical space.

The co-teaching relationship brings together two people with wonderfully rich expertise and experiences.



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One Teach, One Support Model

With this model one teacher has the primary responsibility for planning and teaching, while the other teacher may move around the classroom helping individual students and observing particular behaviors.



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Parallel Teaching Model

In parallel teaching, the teacher and a student teacher plan jointly but split the classroom in half to teach the same information at the same time. For example, both teachers could be explaining the same math problem-solving lesson in two different parts of the room.



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Alternative Teaching

In alternative teaching, one teacher manages most of the class while the other teacher works with a small group inside or outside of the classroom. The small group does not have to integrate with the current lesson. For example, a teacher could take an individual student out to catch him/her up on a missed assignment. A teacher could work with an individual or a small group for assessment purposes or to teach social skills. A small group of students could work together for remedial or extended challenge work.



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Station Teaching

Both teachers divide the instructional content, and each takes responsibility for planning and teaching part of it. In station teaching, the classroom is divided into various teaching centers. The teacher and student teacher are at particular stations; the other stations are run independently by the students or by a teacher's aide.



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Team Teaching

Both teachers are responsible for planning, and they share the instruction of all students. The lessons are taught by both teachers who actively engage in conversation, not lecture, to encourage discussion by students. Both teachers are actively involved in the management of the lesson and discipline.



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Finding Time to be a Team

Figuring out a time to plan and actually be a team can be hard. We have found google documents to be a life saver. Texts are also extremely helpful, and you can never underestimate the importance of a post it note. We find time to talk every morning before our day even starts, and utilize every second of our planning times. Before the school year even started we were meeting to discuss the needs of our upcoming class, our own strengths, and how we can utilize them to best meet the needs of our students. Having lunch together or even going to happy hour can give you some time to talk, plan, and work together.

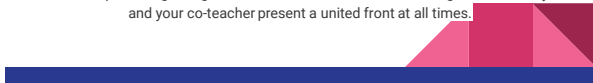


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The Importance of Communication

When you are both in charge of a class communication is key! This is where the post it's come in handy! From how a child's day is going, to calls or texts from parents it all has to be communicated.

Another important part of communication is to clearly defined roles and responsibilities. This will hopefully prevent either partner from feeling the other has overstepped a boundary or shirked responsibilities. It is important to reach an agreement on scheduling, classroom procedures and behaviors, classwork and homework policies, grading, and school/home communication together so both you and your co-teacher present a united front at all times.



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The Importance of Collaboration

Mutual respect is critical to the co-teaching relationship. The two of you will have to share ideas openly and do much of your work facing students together, so respecting each other is extremely important. Sometimes disagreements will happen, and that is to be expected; but finding a way to respectfully hear each other, build on each others strengths, and work through this is the key to being successful.

Co-teaching teams that feel that they were not successful many times state that it is due to the fact that they didn't feel as though they were listened to.



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Be Flexible

Co-teaching allows you to gain another person's perspective on everything from how instruction might be improved to how students might be best assessed. Discussions and shared ideas on what resources to use, how best to meet the needs of a student, and so much more. Sometimes this means one person has to put aside his or her favorite tried-and-true strategy and be willing to try something different.



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Find the Lighter Side

Don't take yourself too seriously! Trying new things requires failure. Revisiting or correcting something later in the day (or the next day) doesn't mean you failed earlier. It means you've learned something since. This is the kind of ongoing learning we want to model for our students.

Hand in hand with co-teaching and possible failure is the importance of finding the humor in everything. A little bit of humor goes a long way. Laugh with your co-teacher. Allow students to see both of you laughing with each other and with them when something is surprising, silly, or just doesn't go the way you planned.



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Taking the Pressure off

Your co-teacher becomes your back up, the person you rely on, the shoulder you lean on, and your trusted friend. They become that person you can problem solve with and bounce ideas off of. When each of you teach to your strengths the children benefit by learning from the expert in the classroom. When you are having a bad day or need back up, the children benefit by having someone else with a fresh look at things to take over.

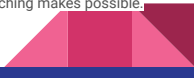


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Benefits for the Children in our Classroom

The children in our classroom truly see us as a united team. They know that they are going to get the same answer no matter which one of us they talk to. They know that even though one of us may be teaching the lesson, the other is there to support and assist. The children get the benefit of small groups, as well as having two engaged and loving adults planning for and intentionally carrying out their learning processes.

Students at all academic levels benefit from alternative assignments and greater teacher attention in small-group activities that co-teaching makes possible.



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References

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<https://www.cultofpedagogy.com/co-teaching-push-in/>



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