

Widening the Circle

Celebrating Neurodiversity in Faith-based Schools

FOCUS

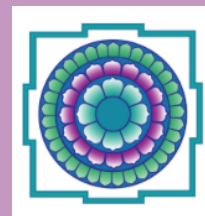
STRATEGY:

Co-Teaching

Co-teaching is the practice of pairing teachers together in a classroom to share the responsibilities of planning, instructing, and assessing students. In a co-teaching setting, the teachers are considered equally responsible and accountable for the classroom. Co-teaching is often implemented with general and special education teachers paired together as part of an initiative to create a more inclusive classroom.

Ferguson, Desjarlais, and Meyer (2000) describe some of the benefits of co-teaching in an inclusion classroom as the following:

- More opportunities for one-on-one interaction between students and teachers, leading to stronger relationships.
- Students still have opportunities for specialized instruction when needed.
- All students can benefit from the additional supports, resources, and diversity in the classroom.
- Stronger, more creative, lessons due to teachers sharing the planning process with each other.
- Teachers are able to support one another by complimenting each other's strengths and weaknesses, building camaraderie and dividing the work load in the classroom.



RESOURCES

Stein, E. (2016). *Elevating Co-Teaching Through UDL*. Wakefield, MA: CAST Professional Publishing.

Perry, A (2019) *The Co-Teacher's Playbook: What It Takes to Make Co-Teaching Work for Everyone*. Thousand Oaks, CA:Corwin Press



How do co-teachers work together?

A co-teaching partnership can be put into practice using a variety of methods. Co-teaching is typically implemented using one of the following six models (Cook & Cook, 2004):

One Teach, One Observe: In this model, one teacher instructs while the other observes students to identify issues and assess their performance. This method allows the observing teacher to provide feedback on which content and activities are most effective for students, allowing the co-teaching pair to continually improve their practice and best meet the needs of all students in their classroom.

One Teach, One Drift: This approach is similar to the ‘One Teaches, One Observes’ model, but while one teacher is instructing the classroom, the second teacher provides additional assistance and support to students as needed.

Station Teaching: With station teaching, the lesson is divided into segments as the teachers each instruct part of the lesson at independent stations or rotate between groups of students. This allows teachers to provide specialized support when delivering content in areas they may have more expertise in, or if their style better fits a certain part of a lesson.

Parallel Teaching: In the parallel teaching model, the teachers divide the class into two groups and they instruct each group with the same content simultaneously. In this arrangement, the smaller groups allow closer supervision and more opportunities for interaction between the students and teacher.

Alternate Teaching: In this method, one teacher handles a larger group, while the other teaches a small group who need specialized attention and additional supports.

Team Teaching: Team teaching requires the strongest partnership but can be one of the most fulfilling methods of co-teaching. With team teaching, the co-teachers share responsibility and deliver instruction at the same time as a “tag team”.



Be who you were created to be, and you
will set the world on fire.
-St. Catherine of Siena

Here are five tips for making your coteaching partnership the best it can be:

ESTABLISH TRUST

Both teachers in a co-teaching relationship need to be able to trust each other, even if they have different teaching philosophies or backgrounds. It helps for co-teachers to have a relationship outside of the classroom so there is a strong foundation to build on.

START STRONG WITH HOW YOU PRESENT YOURSELVES TO STUDENTS

Create a united front by using “we” instead of “I” and putting both teachers’ names on all class materials.

PLAN TOGETHER

Planning time is crucial to a successful co-teaching relationship. Expect to meet with your co-teacher for at least one hour per week to make sure you are on the same page about curriculum and student progress.

THINK ABOUT WHICH CO-TEACHING MODEL TO USE

There are several co-teaching models for planning and delivering instruction. In one, a lead teacher works with a supporting teacher. Alternately, both teachers may take on similar roles and responsibilities.

BE FLEXIBLE

Do your best to compromise and roll with the punches. Pay attention to what the students need and adjust as you go along.

