# Co-Teaching Training Series

# Module 1

## CO-TEACHING FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

Georgia Learning Resources System

Georgia Department of Education

Richard Woods, Georgia's School Superintendent
*"Educating Georgia's Future"*

# Credits

The Co-Teaching Series was created through the collaborative efforts of the Georgia Learning Resources System and the Georgia Department of Education. Historical elements are included from the original modules created in collaboration with Georgia State University and their partners.

The Georgia Department of Education would also like to thank the other state agencies that provided open access to their resources. These states include but are not limited to Maryland, Texas, and Virginia.

Co-teaching is more than a model. It's a partnership to provide substantially different instruction and outcomes for students with two teachers in the room. It is recommended that co-teaching teams participate in this professional learning together. Our hope is that it will impact your district and schools co-teaching practices and improve student outcomes for all students not just students with disabilities.

These modules can be utilized as independent learning units or as Professional Learning modules. Best practice is that they be completed in a facilitated session with co-teaching teams working and learning together.

# IDEA Federal Fund Disclaimer

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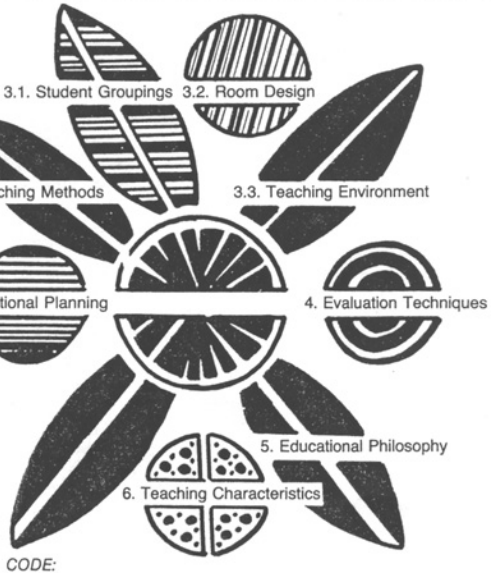
*The Teaching Style Inventory*

**Rita Dunn and Kenneth Dunn**

The following instrument may be used to reveal each faculty member's actual teaching style at the time it is administered, and should serve as the first step toward the eventual matching of teachers and students.




*CODE:*

| | |
|---|---|
| *Never:* | 0 times per year |
| *Rarely:* | up to 6 times per year |
| *Occasionally:* | 2 to 4 times per month |
| *Frequently:* | 2 to 3 times per week |
| *Always:* | 4 or 5 times per week or more |

**TEACHING STYLE INVENTORY:**
**An Instrument To Identify the Way in Which a Teacher Actually Functions so as to Form Groupings on the Basis of Complementary Student and Teacher Styles**

Question 1: *Instructional Planning*

Directions:
Circle the number that best describes how often you use each of the following planning techniques.

| | Never | Rarely | Occasionally | Frequently | Always |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| a) Diagnosis and prescription for each student | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| b) Whole class lessons | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| c) Contracts, learning activity packages, or instructional packages | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| d) Creative activities with student options | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| e) Programmed materials or drill assignments | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| f) Small-group assignments | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| g) Task cards or games | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| h) Objectives | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| i) Peer tutoring or team learning | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| j) Role playing or simulations | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| k) Brainstorming or circles of knowledge | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Question 2: *Teaching Methods*

Directions:
Circle the number that best describes how often you use each of the following teaching methods.

| | Never | Rarely | Occasionally | Frequently | Always |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| a) Lecture (whole class) | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| b) Teacher demonstration | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| c) Small groups (3-8) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| d) Media (films, tapes, etc.) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| e) Class discussion (question-answer) | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| f) Individualized (diagnosis and prescription for each student) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Question 3: *Teaching Environment*

3.1: *Student Groupings*

Directions:
Circle the number that best describes how often you use each of the following types of groupings.

| | Never | Rarely | Occasionally | Frequently | Always |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| a) Several small groups (3-8 students) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| b) Pairs (2 students) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| c) Independent study assignments (student works alone) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| d) One-to-one interactions with teacher | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| e) Two or more of the above groupings at one time | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| f) One large group (entire class) | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

Question 3.2: *Room Design*

Directions:
Circle the number that best describes how often you use each of the following classroom designs.

| | Never | Rarely | Occasionally | Frequently | Always |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| a) Rows of desks | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| b) Small groups of 3-8 students | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| c) Learning stations or interest centers | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| d) A variety of areas | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| e) Individual and small-group (2-4) alcoves, dens, "offices" | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| f) Three or more of the above arrangements at the same time | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Question 3.3: *Teaching Environment*

Directions:
Circle the number that best describes your present instructional environment.

| | Never | Rarely | Occasionally | Frequently | Always |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| a) Varied instructional areas are provided in the classroom for different, simultaneous activities | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| b) Nutritional intake is available for all students as needed | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| c) Instructional areas are designed for different groups that need to talk and interact | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| d) Varied time schedules are in use for individuals | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| e) Students are permitted to choose where they will sit and/or work | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| f) Many multisensory resources are available in the classroom for use by individuals and groups | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| g) Alternative arrangements are made for mobile, active, or overly talkative students | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Question 4: *Evaluation Techniques*

Directions:

Circle the number that best describes how often you use each of the following evaluation techniques. I use:

| | Never | Rarely | Occasionally | Frequently | Always |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| a) Observation by moving from group to group and among individuals | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| b) Teacher-made tests | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| c) Student self-assessment tests | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| d) Performance tests (demonstrations rather than written responses) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| e) Criterion-referenced achievement tests* based on student self-selected, individual objectives | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| f) Criterion-referenced achievement tests* based on small-group objectives | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| g) Standardized achievement tests based on grade-level objectives | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| h) Criterion-referenced achievement tests* based on the individual student's potential | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Question 5: *Teaching Characteristics and Classroom Management***

Directions:

Circle the number that best describes you as a teacher. I tend to be:

| | Not At All | Not Very | Somewhat | Very | Extremely |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| a) Concerned with how students learn (learning style) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| b) Prescriptive (with student options) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| c) Demanding—with high expectations based on individual ability | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| d) Evaluative of students as they work | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| e) Concerned with how much students learn (grade level standards) | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| f) Concerned with what students learn (grade level curriculum) | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| g) Lesson plan oriented | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| h) Authoritative to reach group objectives | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

Question 6: *Educational Philosophy*

Directions:

Circle the number that best describes your attitude toward each of the following approaches and concepts.

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Undecided | Support | Strongly Support |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| a) Open education | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| b) Diagnostic-prescriptive teaching | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| c) Multiage groupings | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| d) Matched teaching and learning styles | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| e) Alternative education | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| f) Student-centered curriculum | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| g) Behavioral or performance objectives | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| h) Humanistic education | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| i) Independent study | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| j) Individualized instruction | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| k) Traditional education | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| l) Whole-group achievement | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| m) Grade-level standards | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| n) Teacher-dominated instruction | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

*Criterion-Referenced Achievement Tests: The questions on these tests are based directly on the objectives assigned to or selected by the students.

**When teachers respond that they are "concerned with how students learn," the inference is that they permit options in the learning environment because of their awareness of individual differences. An observer should be able to see students working alone, with a peer or two, or with the teacher; sitting on chairs or on carpeting; using self-selected resources of a multisensory nature (if available); mobile (if necessary and without disturbing others), etc.

When a teacher indicates that he or she tends to be "prescriptive" but permits some student options, observers should be able to locate written objectives that include selected choices.

"Evaluative" suggests that observers will be able to see the teacher moving among the students while checking their progress and questioning them.

"Concerned with . . . grade level curriculum" suggests that observers will see objectives, lessons, and/or assignments that tend to respond to a suggested or required grade level curriculum.

"Authoritative to reach group objectives" suggests that observers will see the identical objectives, lessons, and/or assignments for every student in the same class.

## SCORING KEY

Questions 1 through 6 are weighted according to the relative importance of each item. Simply multiply the weight assigned to the technique by the number selected for the frequency.

Example:

1 a) Diagnosis and prescription for each student—3—Occasionally

| Item | Weight | | Frequency | Score |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a | 5 | × | 3 | 15 |

Complete each item and the total for each question. Then chart the totals on the Teaching Style Profile.

### WEIGHT KEY

5. Highly Individualized
4. Somewhat Individualized
3. Transitional
2. Somewhat Traditional
1. Traditional

1. Instructional Planning

| Item | Weight × Frequency = Score |
|---|---|
| a | 5 |
| b | 1 |
| c | 5 |
| d | 3 |
| e | 4 |
| f | 3 |
| g | 3 |
| h | 4 |
| i | 3 |
| j | 3 |
| k | 3 |
| l | 5 |

1: Total Score: ____

2. Teaching Methods

| Item | Weight × Frequency = Score |
|---|---|
| a | 1 |
| b | 2 |
| c | 3 |
| d | 3 |
| e | 2 |
| f | 5 |

2: Total Score ____

3.1 Student Groupings

| Item | Weight × Frequency = Score |
|---|---|
| a | 3 |
| b | 3 |
| c | 5 |
| d | 2 |
| e | 4 |
| f | 1 |

3.1: Total Score: ____

3.2 Room Design

| Item | Weight × Frequency = Score |
|---|---|
| a | 1 |
| b | 3 |
| c | 4 |
| d | 5 |
| e | 4 |
| f | 5 |

3.2: Total Score ____

3.3 Learning Environment

| Item | Weight × Frequency = Score |
|---|---|
| a | 5 |
| b | 4 |
| c | 4 |
| d | 5 |
| e | 4 |
| f | 4 |
| g | 4 |

3.3: Total Score: ____

4. Evaluation Techniques

| Item | Weight × Frequency = Score |
|---|---|
| a | 4 |
| b | 2 |
| c | 4 |
| d | 4 |
| e | 5 |
| f | 4 |
| g | 1 |
| h | 4 |

4: Total Score: ____

5 Teaching Characteristics

| Item | Weight × Frequency = Score |
|---|---|
| a | 4 |
| b | 5 |
| c | 4 |
| d | 3 |
| e | 1 |
| f | 1 |
| g | 1 |
| h | 1 |

5: Total Score: ____

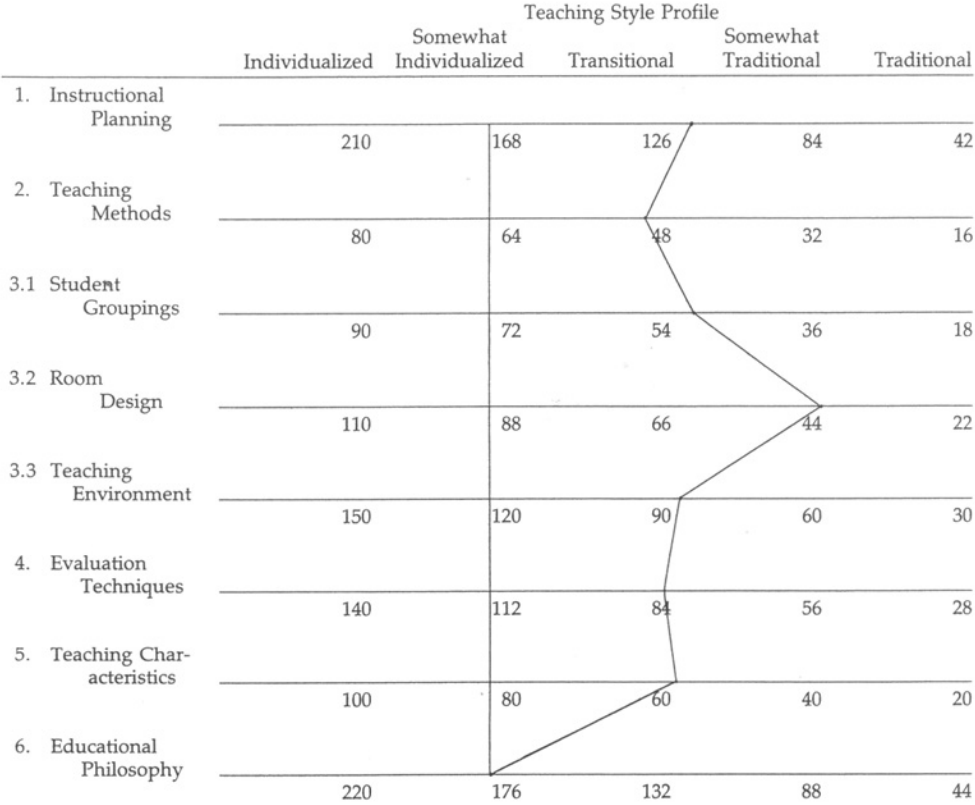
6. Educational Philosophy

| Item | Weight × Frequency = Score |
|---|---|
| a | 4 |
| b | 5 |
| c | 3 |
| d | 5 |
| e | 4 |
| f | 3 |
| g | 4 |
| h | 3 |
| i | 4 |
| j | 5 |
| k | 1 |
| l | 1 |
| m | 1 |
| n | 1 |

6: Total Score: ____

*Profile 1*

Note the "Total Score" that you obtained for each of the previous categories and make a dot on the corresponding line closest to the appropriate score.

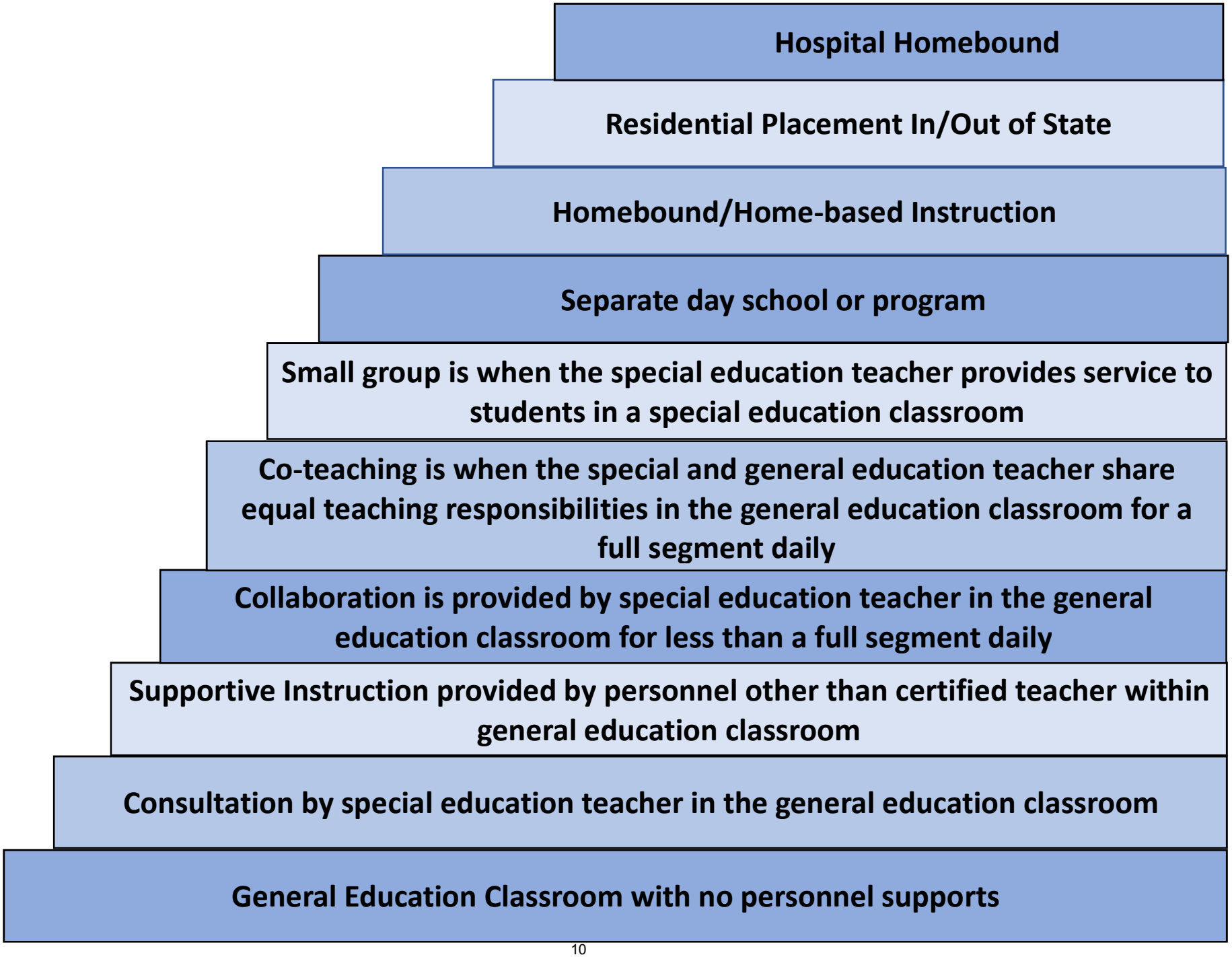



After you have placed a dot on each line indicating the total score you obtained for each category, link each dot in succession. This chart will provide you with a graphic representation, or profile, of your present teaching style.

After completing your Teaching Style Profile, draw a perpendicular line from top to bottom through your *Philosophy* score, as shown in Profile 1—a typical profile.

## LRE: CONTINUUM OF PLACEMENTS
## FROM LEAST, TO MOST, RESTRICTIVE

| | |
|---|---|
| **GENERAL EDUCATION** | **Student with disability is served in the general education class with no personnel support.** |
| **CONSULTATION** | **Student with disability receives at least 1 segment per month of direct service from the special education teacher in the general or special education classroom.** |
| **SUPPORTIVE INSTRUCTION** | **Student with disability receives service from personnel other than a certified teacher in the general education classroom. (i.e. para, interpreter, or job coach)** |
| **COLLABORATION (LESS THAN A FULL SEGMENT DAILY)** | **A special education teacher provides service to students with disabilities and shares teaching responsibilities with two general education teachers within an instructional segment in the general education classroom.** |
| **CO-TEACHING (A FULL SEGMENT DAILY)** | **The special education teacher and the general education teacher provide service to students with disabilities and share equal teaching responsibilities for all students in the general education classroom.** |
| **SPECIAL EDUCATION** | **The special education teacher provides service to the students with disabilities in a special education classroom.** |


Hospital Homebound
Residential Placement In/Out of State
Homebound/Home-based Instruction
Separate day school or program
Small group is when the special education teacher provides service to students in a special education classroom
Co-teaching is when the special and general education teacher share equal teaching responsibilities in the general education classroom for a full segment daily
Collaboration is provided by special education teacher in the general education classroom for less than a full segment daily
Supportive Instruction provided by personnel other than certified teacher within general education classroom
Consultation by special education teacher in the general education classroom
General Education Classroom with no personnel supports

# Co-Teaching Models

| T<br>(Term) | I<br>(Information) | P<br>(Picture) |
|---|---|---|
| **One Teach, One Observe** | **Allows one teacher to provide instruction while the other collects data on the students' academic, behavioral, or social skills. This observational data can be used to inform instruction and document student progress. This model allows the teachers to have valuable data to analyze in determining future lessons and teaching strategies.** | |
| **Station Teaching** | **Allows teachers to work with small groups. Teachers begin by dividing the content into three or more segments. Two groups are teacher-led and the third/fourth groups works independently. During the lesson, the students rotate through the "stations" until they complete all three sections of the content. This approach is beneficial because it allows teachers to create small group activities that are responsive to individual needs.** | |
| **Parallel Teaching** | **Provides opportunities for teachers to maximize participation and minimize behavior problems. When teachers use this approach, they divide the class in half and lead instruction with both groups. In this approach, teachers form groups to maximize learning. Student grouping should be flexible and based on students' needs in relation to expectation(s) being taught. Students benefit from working in smaller groups and receiving instruction from only one of the teachers.** | |
| **Alternative Teaching** | **Allows teachers to target the unique needs of a specific group of students by using student data to create an alternative lesson. Typically for remediation or acceleration. At a non-critical time of instruction, one teacher manages the large group while the other teacher delivers an alternate lesson. This can be used for pre-viewing or re-viewing materials. The same students don't need to be pulled every time. Use data to determine the alternative group** | |
| **Team Teaching** | **Both teachers share the responsibility of leading instruction. While their roles may shift throughout the lesson, the key characteristic is that "both teachers are fully engaged in the delivery of the core instruction" (Friend, 2008).** | |
| **One Teach One Assist** | **One teacher is in the lead role while the other functions as a support in the classroom. The teacher in the supportive role monitors student work, addresses behavior issues, manages materials, and assists with student questions. Teachers must use caution when using this approach to avoid a learning environment in which the general educator provides all instruction and the special educator serves as an assistant. According to Friend (2008, p. 17), "professionals should be actively involved in all aspects of the instructional process... they should not be functioning like paraprofessionals."** | |

Graphics and Descriptions from Texas Co-Teaching Guidelines~ Texas Education Agency / Education Service Center, Region 20

# Co-Teaching Variations

Optimally, co-teaching teams use variations of the co-teaching model based on student, teacher, and content needs. Each member of the co-teaching team should take the opportunity to fulfill various roles. This helps reinforce to students the idea that both partners are "teachers" and gives both teachers an opportunity to use their expertise and to share in the joys as well as the challenges of the classroom. Common variations of co-teaching are described below.

| Variation | Description | Planning Time | Example |
|---|---|---|---|
| **One Teaching, One Observing** (Whole group) | One teacher teaches the lesson and the other observes students to gain an understanding of their academic and social functioning. | Low | A general educator teaches a whole-group lesson on writing complete sentences. The special ed teacher collects data related to a single student or small groups of students. The data are used to compare targeted student behavior to the behavior of others during the lesson being taught. In future lessons, the partners may reverse roles when specific behaviors need to be observed. |
| **One Teaching, One Assisting** (Whole group) | One teacher provides instruction and the other supports the instructional process. | Low | A general educator teaches a whole-group lesson on the causes of the Civil War. The special ed teacher walks around the classroom to assist students by answering individual questions or to redirect students who are not following the instruction. In future lessons, the partners may reverse roles. |
| **Station Teaching** (Small group) | Small groups of students rotate to various stations for instruction, review, and/or practice. | Medium | A teacher works with a small group of students on prewriting, while other students are working with the other teacher on research skills. Another group of students are using the classroom computer to research a topic. Over the course of the week, all students work at each task/station. |
| **Parallel Teaching** (Small group) | Students are divided into mixed-ability groups, and each co-teaching partner teaches the same material to one of the groups. | Medium | The class is divided in half, and each teacher works with a group on creating a timeline of important events in history. At the end of the session, each group shares its timeline and reviews important concepts. |
| **Teaming or Interactive Teaching** (Whole group) | Teachers alternate roles of presenting, reviewing, and monitoring instruction. | High | Both teachers teach a whole-group lesson on fractions. The specialist introduces the concept and provides initial instruction. The general educator directs the guided practice and evaluation. In future lessons, the partners may reverse roles. |
| **Alternative Teaching** (Big group/small group) | One person teaches, re-teaches, or enriches a skill or concept for a small group, while the other monitors or teaches the remaining class members. | High | The special education teacher works with a small group of students on an enrichment project, while the general educator teaches the remainder of the students. In future lessons, the partners may reverse roles. |

Adapted from *Interactions: Collaboration Skills for School Professionals, 7th ed.*, by M. Friend & L. Cook, 2014, Boston, MA: Pearson Education.

# Co-Teaching: Moving Beyond One Teaching, One Assisting

## By Tina Spencer, M.S.

***February/March 2012***

Co-teaching is a model of delivering special education services in general education classes to students with disabilities. Within this model, two or more professionals are expected to deliver instruction together to a diverse group of students in the same classroom. As increasing numbers of special educators and general educators co-teach, teachers are looking for the best approaches to teaching content to all students. Friend and Cook (2007) found the following co-teaching approaches to be used most often in schools:

- One teaching, one observing,
- Station teaching,
- Parallel teaching,
- Alternative teaching,
- Teaming,
- One teaching, one assisting.

According to Friend and Cook (2007), one teaching, one observing, "sometimes becomes the sole or primary co-teaching approach in many classrooms, particularly when planning time is scarce" (p. 128). Wendy Murawski, an associate professor at California State University, is often requested by school districts to provide professional development in the areas of inclusive education, collaboration, and co-teaching. Murawski (2009) discussed possible reasons for special educators taking on a less active, more supportive role of assisting general educators in co-taught classes, noting that both general and special educators contend that they received "no training, no time for planning, no shared knowledge of content or students, and no true understanding of the goal or rationale for this professional marriage" (p. 21).

As a result, in many instances, general educators continue their role of leading all the instruction while special educators complain that they are treated as assistants in the classroom (Murawski, 2009).

***The Challenge***

Friend (2008) identified the *one teaching, one assisting* approach to co-teaching as the teaching variation with "the greatest potential to be over-used and abused" (p. 79). Even though no single approach is thought to be the best, co-teaching partners must move beyond *one teaching, one assisting* in order to create the powerful instructional partnership that is needed to effectively support students with disabilities and others at risk for academic failure.

***One Solution***: A commitment from administrators to build common planning time into master schedules, as well as a commitment from teaching partners to honor and use that time in a structured planning process, may be strong first steps in moving beyond the *one teaching, one assisting* approach. The article ***The Planning Meeting Process: An Excerpt From the Considerations Packet, Co-Planning for Student Success*** provides the steps of such a planning process, suggestions for finding common planning time, and guidelines for implementing all six co-teaching approaches. This is in keeping with Friend and Cook's (2007) recommendation that to keep "…co-teaching relations and instructional arrangements fresh and effective, teachers should consider trying several of the approaches, regularly changing their co-teaching methods …" (p.120).

***One Example***: Ms. Myers, the special education teacher, is partnering with Ms. Bennett, the general education teacher. Their principal, Ms. Walker, has agreed to give both teachers a common planning time. She has provided them with copies of the **Co-*Teaching* and *Co-Planning for Student Success*** T/TAC W&M Considerations Packets and has asked them to use suggestions from these packets to plan and teach lessons in their co-taught class. Ms. Myers spends the first two weeks supporting Ms. Bennett in the *one teaching, one assisting* form of co-teaching while becoming familiar with the students and Ms. Bennett's teaching style. During this time, she helps refocus students as Ms. Bennett teaches the content. After two weeks of assisting students and making classroom observations, Ms. Myers has a good sense of how Ms. Bennett delivers the content and what strategies students use to learn that content. While planning together, Ms. Myers

and Ms. Bennett discuss all the accommodations needed by the students with individualized education programs (IEPs) and 504 plans. The two teachers also talk about the other variations of co-teaching they have reviewed in the packets and how best to use them when planning lessons.

Specifically, together, the two teachers problem-solve how best to move beyond *one teaching, one assisting*. They have decided that Ms. Myers will take the lead with several of the opening and closing activities while Ms. Bennett will continue to teach all new content. Both teachers will share the lead when helping students with practice assignments. Also, several types of assessments have been created throughout the unit by Ms. Myers and Ms. Bennett. They will share the responsibility for using these assessments to check for understanding of the content.

Ms. Myers is ready to take a more active role with classroom instruction. Her co-teacher is looking forward to having a partner who equally shares the teaching responsibilities. They discuss *station teaching* as a way for students to practice content in small groups, as the groups rotate among the various stations featuring different practice activities.

To utilize another form of co-teaching, Ms. Bennett will frontload vocabulary words by working with a small group of struggling students, while Ms. Myers introduces the warm-up activity to most of the class. This approach of *alternative teaching* will give Ms. Myers a chance to lead most of the class, while Ms. Bennett works with the smaller group of students. Both educators are excited about moving beyond *one teaching, one assisting* as they share the roles and responsibilities for jointly planning and delivering the content.

***Moving Beyond One Teaching, One Assisting***: As educators, we must ensure that students with disabilities have access to the general education curriculum. Co-teaching is one service delivery option that gives students with disabilities that access. To maximize the impact of this service option, both teachers must take an active role in providing instruction and commit to teaching students using a variety of teaching approaches. The following tips are provided to assist co-teaching partners in moving beyond *one teaching, one assisting*.

- Stay focused during common planning time by using an agenda and a lesson plan template. Write everything down!

- Become knowledgeable about the six co-teaching approaches and commit to using them appropriately. Follow Friend's (2008) guidelines for using various co-teaching approaches when planning content units:

    1. One teaching, one observing: Occasional
    2. Station teaching: Frequent
    3. Parallel teaching: Frequent
    4. Alternative teaching: Occasional
    5. Team teaching: Occasional
    6. One teaching, one assisting: Seldom

At the end of the unit, reflect on your planning and teaching practices. Discuss how the content was taught to students. As a team, were you able to move beyond *one teaching, one assisting*? To ensure delivering content in a variety of ways, commit to using three or more co-teaching variations for future units.

**References**

Friend, M. (2008). *Co-teach! A handbook for creating and sustaining effective classroom partnerships in inclusive schools*. Greensboro, NC: Marilyn Friend, Inc.

Friend, M., & Cook, L. (2007). *Interactions: Collaboration skills for school professionals* (5th ed.) Boston, MA: Pearson Education.

Murawski, W. (2009). *Collaborative teaching in secondary schools: Making the co-teaching marriage work!* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

# 6 Steps to Successful Co-Teaching

## Helping Special and Regular Education Teachers Work Together

By Natalie Marston, elementary special educator, Charles County, Maryland

**Found In**: teaching strategies

Are you wondering how you can co-teach effectively and make it a successful year for both teachers and students?

As co-teachers - a regular and a special education teacher - you will plan lessons and teach a subject together to a class of special and regular education students. Your co-teaching will support academic diversity in the regular classroom and provide all students with access to the county and state curriculum.

Co-teaching can be a wonderful experience when planning and communication are in place beginning day one. Here are six steps I've found very helpful when preparing for a co-teaching experience.

### 1. Establish rapport.

The first step that you (the regular classroom teacher and the special education teacher) need to take is to establish a relationship -- even before the students enter the building. Get to know each other on a personal level. After all you will be together the entire year. What things do you have in common? Are you married? Children? Hobbies? Where did you grow up?

When the two of you have a comfortable relationship and rapport with each other, the children feel more comfortable in the classroom. Students can sense tension as well as harmony within the learning environment. A positive relationship will help minimize misunderstandings and motivate you to resolve problems before they escalate.

### 2. Identify your teaching styles and use them to create a cohesive classroom.

Are you a hands-on teacher who loves doing experiments and using manipulatives, never to open a textbook? While your co-teacher needs to use the textbooks first and then supplement with experiments and manipulatives?

How do you manage behaviors? What are your discipline styles?

Instructional and discipline styles are just two factors you need to examine so that you can combine the best of both of your styles to create a cohesive classroom. You need to find a balance that makes everyone comfortable.

When you plan lessons together, you can use your two styles to complement one another and thus enhance the lessons and the delivery of instruction. You create a cohesive classroom with consistent expectations when both of you are on the same page with instruction and discipline styles.

## 3. Discuss strengths and weaknesses.

How can you utilize each instructor's strengths and weaknesses? A good way to do this is to have each of you make a list of strengths, weaknesses, likes, and dislikes. Then take the lists and compare them and highlight the strengths that are dominant for one teacher and allow that person to be the lead teacher in those areas. By using these strengths, you can differentiate your instruction to meet the needs of a larger group more frequently within the classroom as well as allowing for individualized instruction.

## 4. Discuss Individualized Education Plans and regular education goals.

To create Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), the special educator needs to involve the regular educator in the special education process. Students in special education belong to both educators, so the general educator must be informed about the IEP for each child. Otherwise, the two of you cannot effectively execute the plans. It's difficult to educate a child if you are unaware of his or her special needs. It is important to discuss the modifications and accommodations as well as the goals and objectives to ensure student success in the classroom. The special and regular education teacher can then work together in meeting the student's goals and ensuring adequate progress.

In the same way, the regular education teacher should discuss with the special education teacher his or her goals for the regular students, as the regular education students belong to the special education teacher as well. Both educators should be addressing the goals, objectives, and mandatory curriculum for that grade level.

## 5. Formulate a plan of action and act as a unified team.

You have to make decisions constantly throughout the year, so if you formulate a plan of action in the beginning of the year, disruptions will be minimal.

Consider the following items in your plan of action:

- Scheduling
- Expected classroom behaviors
- Classroom procedures, such as class work and homework policies, turning in work
- Consequences of not following rules and procedures
- Grading
- Communication between home and school

Talk about what you will tolerate as well as how you will respond to actions that are not acceptable. Be consistent when dealing with parents, and meet as a team for conferences with

them. Determine your roles in advance so that you do not contradict each other or foster misunderstandings during the meeting.

## 6. Take risks and grow.

A wonderful aspect of co-teaching is that it allows you to take risks, learn from each other, and grow as professionals.

Co-teaching provides a safety net when you take risks in your instruction. When you try something new and it doesn't work, you have another teacher in the room who can step in with another technique or lesson that works, or point out the area of difficulty, or assist in redirecting the lesson. When you are the only teacher in the room and a lesson bombs, you often have to stop and move on and then analyze later why the lesson fell apart -- without the assistance of someone else in the room observing the lesson.

## Enjoy!

Co-teaching is an experience that is as good as you allow it to be. You have the opportunity to work with another educator daily. Make the most of it. Enjoy!

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**About the Author**

*Natalie Marston is a special educator at Eva Turner Elementary School in the Charles County Public Schools in Charles County, Maryland. A special educator for nine years, Marston is currently serving as her school's special education team leader (four teachers and seven assistants) and chairperson of the school's reading committee.*

**Copy Me Pages**

# S.H.A.R.E.

## *Sharing Hopes, Attitudes, Responsibilities, and Expectations*

**Directions**: Take a few minutes to individually complete this worksheet. Be honest in your responses. After completing it individually, share the responses with your co-teaching partner by taking turns reading the responses. Do not use this time to comment on your partner's responses – merely read. After reading through the responses, take a moment or two to jot down any thoughts you have regarding what your partner has said. Then, come back together and begin to share reactions to the responses. Your goal is to either (a) Agree, (b) Compromise, or (c) Agree to Disagree.

1. Right now, the main **hope** I have regarding this co-teaching situation is:

   _____

   _____

2. My **attitude**/philosophy regarding teaching students with disabilities in a general education classroom is:

   _____

   _____

3. I would like to have the following **responsibilities** in a co-taught classroom:

   _____

   _____

4. I would like my co-teacher to have the following **responsibilities**:

   _____

   _____

Also published in: Murawski, W.W., & Dieker, L.A. (2004). Tips and strategies for co-teaching at the secondary level. *Teaching Exceptional Children, 36*(5), 52-58.

5. I have the following **expectations** in a classroom:

   (a) regarding discipline -

   _____

   (b) regarding classwork -

   _____

   (c) regarding materials -

   _____

   (d) regarding homework -

   _____

   (e) regarding planning -

   _____

   (f) regarding modifications for individual students -

   _____

   (g) regarding grading -

   _____

   (h) regarding noise level -

   _____

   (i) regarding cooperative learning -

   _____

   (j) regarding giving/receiving feedback -

   _____

   (k) **other important expectations I have-**

   _____

Also published in: Murawski, W.W., & Dieker, L.A. (2004). Tips and strategies for co-teaching at the secondary level. *Teaching Exceptional Children, 36*(5), 52-58.

# Step 3: Discussing Strengths and Weaknesses

| My Traits | My Needs | My Pet Peeves |
|---|---|---|
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| | | |
| **My Co-Teacher's Traits** | **My Co-Teacher's Needs** | **My Co-Teacher's Pet Peeves** |
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GaDOE
Richard Woods
Georgia's School Superintendent
"Educating Georgia's Future"
gadoe.org

# Teaching Styles Inventory Lists

Richard Woods
Georgia's School Superintendent
"Educating Georgia's Future"
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| My Teaching Strengths | My Teaching Weaknesses |
|---|---|
| | |
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| | |

**Class Learning Plan**

**General Ed. Teacher_____ Special Ed. Teacher_____ Date _____**

**Time/Period _____ Class _____**

| Student | Learning STRENGTHS from Psychological and PLOP | Learning WEAKNESSES from Psychological and PLOP | Weaknesses identified thru State/System assessments | IEP Goal/ Objective & frequency of monitoring | Recommended Accommodations/ Assistive Technology | Recommended Instructional strategies |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
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# Class Learning Plan

**General Ed. Teacher Mrs. Smith Special Ed. Teacher Mrs. Peel Date 2014-15 School Year**
**Time/Period 8:00 - 3:00 Class 5th grade all subjects**

| Student | Learning issues from Psych./Eligibility Report, PLOP | Weak-nesses identified thru CRCT/GHSGT | IEP Goal Area / Summary of Objectives | Accommodations | Recommended strategies |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Alexa | Testing Weaknesses: Comprehension- knowledge, Long-term retrieval, short-term memory.<br>Academics affected: Reading sight words, fluency, understanding sequence, and recognizing cause and effect. Math X & Div. facts, multi-digit X, recognizing operations in word problems. Writing affected by poor spelling and use of adj. and adv. In sentences. | Lang. Arts – 786<br>Math – 835<br>Reading – 818<br>Science - 826<br>SS - 774 | Increase sight words from 586 to 650/1000.<br>Increase grade level fluency from 40 to 60 wcpm.<br>Increase grade level comprehension to 50% accuracy and instructional level to 67% accuracy.<br>Write with correct capitalization in 10 sent.<br>Write simple and complex sentences.<br>Multiplication facts 100%<br>Division Facts 84%<br>Answer math problems 38% | Some shortened assignments.<br>Assignments chunked into smaller pieces.<br>Extra time to complete assignments.<br>Frequent breaks.<br>Directions, questions and answer choices read to him for testing.<br>Small group testing. | Auditory processing is strength so auditory presentation improves comprehension.<br>Small group reading instruction on his instructional level.<br>Repeated directions with clarification. |
| Johanna | Testing: knowledge, quantitative reasoning, and working memory, thinking.<br>Academic – Reading comprehension: recalling facts and details understanding sequence, recognizing cause and effect, and summarizing<br>Math: multiplication and division of multi-digit #, adding fractions, adding mixed numbers.<br>Writing: Using complex sentences, main idea and logical flow and capitalization/punctuation | Reading – 804<br>ELA – 789<br>Math – 825<br>Science – 792<br>SS – 786 | Division facts 100%<br>Answer Math problems 63%<br>Write with correct cap & punct.<br>Write using complex sentences.<br>Increase reading fluency 103 to 120 wcpm.<br>Answer grade level comprehension questions with 50% acc.<br>Answer instructional level passages with 83% acc. | Study buddy<br>Seated by student role model<br>Extra time to complete work.<br>Shorten assignments to accommodate attn.<br>Chunk assignments into smaller parts.<br>Frequent breaks during assignments longer than 20 questions in length.<br>Small group testing. | Visual spatial is a strength.<br>Use a timer for work time.<br>Use clear, concise instructions.<br>Frequent reassurance/encouragement.<br>Review instructions on new assignments for understanding.<br>Increase reinforcement with signs of frustration.<br>Questions read on assignments and testing to clarify understanding. |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Cindy** | **Long term retrieval, understanding concepts and relationships between concepts.<br>Reading Fluency and Comprehension,<br>Math Reasoning and math mult./div. facts<br>Written Expression: use of complex sentences, main idea with details and logical flow.<br>Quiet/Difficulty talking in front of a group of peers and teachers.<br>Difficulty focusing and staying on task** | **ELA – 789<br>Reading 781<br>Science – 794<br>SS – 769<br>Math – 330 (passed)** | **Increase grade level fluency to 85 WCPM<br>Increase grade level rdg comp to 50% acc.<br>Increase Instructional level rdg comp to 67% acc.<br>Mult/ div facts to 100%<br>50% accuracy on answering math problems.<br>Write 2 paragraphs with main idea and 4 or more details on topic.<br>Will answer question in whole group setting.** | **Study guides sent home 1 week prior to testing.<br>Shortened assignments.<br>Allow additional time.<br>Assessments over 25 questions read aloud.<br>Small group setting for long testing.<br>Read all except reading comprehension tests.<br>Read directions, questions and answer choices on tests.** | **Strength in nonverbal and memory.<br>Encouragement to engage.<br>Model appropriate responses in social situations.<br>Teach explicit social skills.<br>Chunk instructions and assignments.<br>Provide visual modeling.<br>Use repetition.<br>Small group reading instruction.** |
| **Ben** | **Written expression.<br>Difficulty with r sound in conversational speech only.<br>Reading fluency and reading comprehension specifically explicit and inferential questions.<br>Math facts for division and multiplication.<br>Answering math problems.<br>Writing with complex sentences and logical flow. Slow at writing.<br>Making friends, turn taking in peer activities.<br>Complains about writing assignments<br>Difficulty transitioning from preferred to non-preferred activity.<br>Easily distracted** | **ELA – 816<br>Math 851<br>Reading 850<br>Science 853<br>SS 809** | **Take turns in activity 80% without arguing.<br>Complete writing without complaint 80%<br>Transition without complaint 80%<br>Complete independent activity without redirection 80%<br>Increase grade level fluency to 117 WCPM<br>Answer comprehension questions with 60% accuracy on grade level text.<br>Mult/ Division facts with 50% acc.<br>60% accuracy on math problems** | **Allow breaks from noisy environments and assemblies.<br>Seat at bottom of bleacher due to fear of heights.<br>Reminders to use the restroom.<br>Seated near teacher<br>Posted schedule<br>Dictate lengthy answers on tests.<br>Test in small group to minimize distractions.<br>Word processor for writing over a paragraph.<br>Word banks with numbers for him to write number instead of word/phrase.** | **Strengths in nonverbal/ spatial abilities, Good memory, likes creating projects.<br>Small group reading instruction in separate class.<br>Highly structured classroom with established routines.<br>Notify him of changes in routine ahead of time.<br>Redirect to keep him on task.<br>Direct instruction of content with reinforcement.<br>Appropriate Speech model when needed in classroom.<br>Tangible reinforcers for appropriate behavior.<br>Established reward system.** |
| **Nan** | **ADHD<br>Comprehension knowledge, processing speed,<br>Long-term retrieval.<br>Basic reading: Decoding and sight words, 2nd-3rd grade level, 28 WCPM grade level fluency.<br>Reading comprehension: 15% on grade level, 33% on instructional level.<br>Math reasoning: mult/div. facts and answering math problems.<br>Writing paragraphs with correct punctuation/capitalization and indentation.** | **ELA 811<br>Math 839<br>Reading 821<br>Science 800<br>SS 801** | **Increase grade level fluency to 60 wcpm<br>Increase grade level comp to 50%<br>Increase instructional level comp to 67%<br>Learn all 1000 sight words<br>Write with correct punct/capit/indenting.<br>Mult/divis/facts<br>Answer math problems 60%** | **Extra time to complete assignments.<br>Tests read aloud<br>Frequent breaks for longer assignments and tests.<br>Tested in small group.** | **Strengths in auditory processing, listening comprehension and short term memory.<br>Read directions to her and repeat and clarify as needed.<br>Small group instruction.<br>Chunk assignments into smaller parts.<br>Specialized reading instruction in small group in a separate setting.** |

# Unpacking a Standard

**Standard:**

**Compile a list of accommodations that students will need to access the standard:**

**Unit – Big ideas:**

**Unit Essential Question:**

**Lesson EQ:**

SWD & IEP Goals

SWD & IEP Goals

SWD & IEP Goals

SWD & IEP Goals

# Step 5: Formulate a plan of action and act as a unified team.

## Collaborative Teaching Responsibilities

| ***Who will be responsible for:*** | **Classroom Teacher** | **Special Educator** | **Other** | **Shared** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Identifying goals and objectives for the course? | | | | |
| Designing IEP objectives for the special education students? | | | | |
| Planning instructional activities to achieve the goals? | | | | |
| Selecting and organizing instructional materials? | | | | |
| Teaching specific class content? | | | | |
| Teaching study skills and learning strategies? | | | | |
| Collecting data on student performance? | | | | |
| Establishing and implementing grading procedures? | | | | |
| Establishing and implementing a classroom management plan? | | | | |
| Maintaining home contact? | | | | |
| Modifying curriculum and materials as necessary? | | | | |
| Designing tests, homework assignments, etc.? | | | | |
| Providing individual assistance to students? | | | | |
| Taking care of daily routines (e.g. attendance, lunch counts)? | | | | |
| Directing paraeducators, parent volunteers, and or other support personnel? | | | | |
| Communicating to all appropriate parties regarding the special education students? | | | | |

| Co-Teaching Self Reflection | | |
|---|---|---|
| Reflection | General Education Teacher | Special Education Teacher |
| Remembering:<br>what did we do? | | |
| Understanding: Why was it important? | | |
| Applying:<br>Where could we use this again? | | |
| Analyzing:<br>Do we see any patterns in what we did? | | |
| Evaluating:<br>How well did we do? What are the student outcomes (look at data) | | |
| Creating:<br>What should we do next? | | |

Name(s):_____

**PARITY PLANNING TOOL**
**Co-PLANNING Action Plan**

| PLANNING ELEMENTS | GUIDING QUESTIONS | WHAT WILL THIS LOOK LIKE? |
|---|---|---|
| **TIME AND PLACE** | • When? (Day(s) of the week/time)<br>• Where?<br>• How will we use out time effectively and efficiently? | |
| **DOCUMENTING** | • How will we document our decisions and lessons for us all to see and use?<br>• What lesson planning template or format will we use? | |
| **PURPOSE** | • How will we articulate the learning targets or focus for a lesson?<br>• How will we relate the standards/ learning targets/focus to the real world so that students understand the purpose of the lesson?<br>• How will we post the learning targets in our classroom so that both students and adults understand the purpose of lessons? | |
| **LEARNING ACTIVITIES** | • How will we decide on the learning activities and teaching strategies to use?<br>• How will we plan for grouping and movement of students to meet all students' needs? | |
| **INDIVIDUAL STUDENTS** | • How will we plan to keep the individual learning styles and multiple intelligences of our student in mind?<br>• How will we differentiate to meet individual needs? | |
| **RESOURCES** | • How will we share and use our resources during planning? (Materials, technology, supplies) | |
| **LOGISTICS** | • How will we set up our classroom so that we each have our own place for our belongings?<br>• How will we plan on how to collaboratively set up for a lesson? (Equipment, materials, tables, etc.)<br>• How will we plan on the cleanup of a lesson and transition? | |

Name(s):_____

## Co-TEACHING Action Plan

| PLANNING ELEMENTS | GUIDING QUESTIONS | WHAT WILL THIS LOOK LIKE? |
|---|---|---|
| **PARITY IN THE CLASSROOM** | • How do you determine where each teacher will be and what he or she'll be doing during the instruction?<br>• How will you show that you are all teaching all students in the classroom equally? | |
| **HELP** | • How will you determine how you will help students during the lesson? | |
| **INSTRUCTIONAL ROUTINES** | • Which teaching routines will you share as a team? | |
| **CONTENT** | • In what ways will we vary the presentation of the content to meet learner needs and still meet our grade level expectations and standards? | |
| **PROCESS** | • How will we vary the process (practice) of new learning given the unique learning styles/needs of our students and keep them engaged in the learning? | |
| **PRODUCT** | • How will we vary the way students show what they know, can do, and understand to meet their individual needs? | |
| **TECHNOLOGY** | • How will we share roles using instructional technology?<br>• How will we include student use of technology so that students have access to assistive technology without stigmatizing them? | |
| **TEACHING STYLES** | • What strengths does each of us bring to the partnership?<br>• How will we use our own teaching styles in ways to benefit all of our students? | |

Name(s):_____

## Co-MANAGING Action Plan

| PLANNING ELEMENTS | GUIDING QUESTIONS | WHAT WILL THIS LOOK LIKE? |
|---|---|---|
| **CLASSROOM CLIMATE** | • How will you establish and maintain a positive classroom climate?<br>• How will you monitor the climate? How will you plan for climate adjustments? | |
| **ROUTINES** | • What classroom routines and procedures will you follow consistently? Roles?<br>• How will you communicate these routines and procedures to all students?<br>• How will you communicate behavior expectations to students and their parents?<br>• How will you monitor behavior intervention plans? Data collection tools/procedures? | |
| **CONSEQUENCES** | • How will you manage student behavior while promoting a positive learning environment?<br>• How will you collaboratively decide the various consequences for student behaviors and how you will follow through with students?<br>• How will you communicate behavior consequences to parents? | |
| **FEEDBACK** | • How will you provide constructive feedback to students about their behavior?<br>• How will you monitor and share students' progress in managing their behavior in the classroom? | |

Name(s):_____

## Co-ASSESSING Action Plan

| PLANNING ELEMENTS | GUIDING QUESTIONS | WHAT MIGHT THIS LOOK LIKE? |
|---|---|---|
| **SYSTEM ASSESSMENTS** | • How will your team administrator district-required assessments? How often?<br>• How will you know which accommodations and modifications can be made for certain students?<br>• How will you prepare students for test-taking procedures before test day? | |
| **DAILY ASSESSMENTS** | • How will you share the roles and responsibilities of daily formative assessments and checking for understanding probes?<br>• How will you collaboratively analyze daily formative assessments and adjust instruction as necessary?<br>• What will your team do when students do not do well on daily assessments? | |
| **FEEDBACK TO STUDENTS** | • How will you divide the responsibility of giving feedback to students about their daily work? | |
| **FEEDBACK TO PARENTS** | • How will your team communicate to parents about their child's daily work and achievement? | |
| **DOCUMENTING AND ANALYZING DATA** | • How will your team keep track of student assessment data?<br>• How will students keep track of their progress?<br>• How will you collaboratively analyze daily and periodic assessment results?<br>• How will you adjust instruction based on assessment results? | |
| **GRADING** | • How might your grading procedures encourage students to continually improve?<br>• How will you determine the criteria for grading?<br>• How will you divide the roles and responsibilities for grading the students? | |

# Co-Teaching Reflection Tool

**PURPOSE: This tool is designed to assist co-teaching teams by facilitating reflection upon their co-teaching implementation in order to enhance or refine existing practices.**

**Directions-Part 1**

In each of the category areas, each teacher should individually check the rating of **initiating**, **developing** or **sustaining** that best describes their **co-teaching team's** current status of collaborative implementation of co-teaching approaches. The categories included are planning, instructional environment, physical environment, discipline and school environment.

**Initiating**: Two teachers have been assigned to the same classroom and have begun to develop a co-teaching partnership and establish responsibilities to be shared.

**Developing**: Co-Teachers are sharing many responsibilities, modifying their thinking and implementing evidence-based co-teaching practices in an observable way.

**Sustaining**: Co-Teachers consistently share responsibilities and collaboratively implement evidence-based co-teaching practices through seamless planning, delivery and assessment of instruction.

1 This document was developed and produced by the Maryland State Department of Education, Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services (June 2011) with funds from the [**U.S. Department of Education, Grant # H323A070000-09**].

# Co-Teaching Reflection Tool

| | Initiating ☐ | Developing ☐ | Sustaining ☐ |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Planning** for Instruction and Assessment | • One teacher addresses the planning and adaptations necessary for students' specific needs including Universal Design for Learning | • One teacher plans for instruction, assessment, behavior and integration of technology | • Both teachers equally share in the lesson development appropriate to the approach of co-teaching utilized |
| | • One teacher plans content delivery | • One teacher adapts plans for students with disabilities instruction, assessment and behavior using Universal Design for Learning | • Identification/alignment to and use of State Curriculum (SC) and/or Core Learning Goals (CLG) |
| | • Each teacher understands the outcome of the lesson and separately monitors student progress | • Teachers plan to jointly deliver the lesson | • Incorporation of modifications, accommodations, Universal Design for Learning and differentiation to address diverse learning needs |
| | • Special education teacher plans for IEP implementation | • One teacher monitors student progress and adjusts instruction accordingly | • Planning for implementation of instruction and assessment aligned to the SC and individualized goals to be addressed for all students |
| | | | • Selection of appropriate instructional and assessment delivery, based on students' needs and content, including the integration of technology |
| | | | • Incorporation of classroom management procedures |
| | | | • Both teachers monitor student progress and adjust instruction accordingly |
| | • Teachers maintain separate gradebooks | • Teachers begin to develop a consistent grading policy | • Both teachers agree upon a consistent policy for grading and homework |

2 This document was developed and produced by the Maryland State Department of Education, Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services (June 2011) with funds from the [**U.S. Department of Education, Grant # H323A070000-09**].

# Co-Teaching Reflection Tool

| | Initiating ☐ | Developing ☐ | Sustaining ☐ |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Instructional Environment** | • Students are learning and engaged by only one teacher | • Students learn and engage more with one teacher than another | • All students learn and engage with both teachers |
| | • Special educator only provides assistance to the students identified with disabilities and collects and analyzes data in isolation | • One teacher leads instruction while the other teacher only interjects, circulates and provides student support as needed | • Teachers share equal status in instruction, assessment and classroom management, including data collection and analysis |
| | • One teacher's name is included on all written materials | • One teacher primarily communicates with students, parents, other teachers and administrators, regarding instruction, assessment and classroom management | • Teachers share responsibilities such as: communicating with students, parents, other teachers, and administrators, regarding instruction, assessment and classroom management |
| | | • One teacher's name is noted on the majority of information with occasional inclusion of the other teacher's name when it relates to specific students | • Both teachers' names are listed on items such as the door, rosters, report cards, and written communication to parents |
| | • Special educator develops assessments for students identified with disabilities and provides grades to the general educator. | • One teacher develops assessments and collects and analyzes data | • Teachers share responsibility for integrating technology into instructional delivery and assessment |
| | | • One teacher implements agreed upon policy for grading and homework | • Both teachers utilize a consistent policy for grading and homework |

3 This document was developed and produced by the Maryland State Department of Education, Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services (June 2011) with funds from the [**U.S. Department of Education, Grant # H323A070000-09**].

# Co-Teaching Reflection Tool

| | Initiating ☐ | Developing ☐ | Sustaining ☐ |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Physical Environment** | • Resources and materials are viewed as property of one teacher or the other<br>• One teacher has no assigned area in the learning environment<br>• No flexibility in use of space for co-teaching approaches and the encouragement of student movement for interactions | • Access to all materials in the work environment may be limited<br>• Work space is shared but is somewhat limited<br>• Space restricts selection of co-teaching approaches and appropriate student movement for interactions | • Both teachers have shared access to all resources and materials<br>• Both teachers have appropriate and reasonable work space in the learning environment<br>• Space allows for grouping and student movement for interactions in the implementation of the various co-teaching approaches |

4 This document was developed and produced by the Maryland State Department of Education, Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services (June 2011) with funds from the [**U.S. Department of Education, Grant # H323A070000-09**].

# Co-Teaching Reflection Tool

| | Initiating ☐ | Developing ☐ | Sustaining ☐ |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Discipline** | • One teacher is responsible for establishing and communicating expectations<br>• Each teacher disciplines a specified group of students<br>• One teacher is solely responsible for implementing Behavior Intervention Plans<br>• Students respond to one teacher only in regard to instruction and discipline<br>• Teachers independently decide upon behavior practices to use within the classroom | • Some shared responsibility for establishing and communicating expectations<br>• The majority of discipline is handled by one teacher<br>• One teacher has primary responsibility to implement Behavior Intervention Plans<br>• Students respond primarily to one teacher in regard to instruction and discipline<br>• Teachers use some of the behavior practices within an existing school-wide approach | • Both teachers share responsibility for establishing and communicating expectations for all students<br>• Both teachers ensure all students adhere to classroom expectations<br>• Both teachers share responsibility to implement Behavior Intervention Plans<br>• Students respond to both teachers equally in regard to instruction and discipline<br>• Teachers use behavior practices consistent with any existing school-wide approach(es) |

5 This document was developed and produced by the Maryland State Department of Education, Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services (June 2011) with funds from the [**U.S. Department of Education, Grant # H323A070000-09**].

# Co-Teaching Reflection Tool

| | Initiating ☐ | Developing ☐ | Sustaining ☐ |
|---|---|---|---|
| **School Environment** | • Minimal or no time for job embedded co-planning and co-teaching | • The schedule provides limited time for job embedded co-planning and co-teaching | • The schedule provides time for job-embedded co-planning and co-teaching |
| | • Few resources are provided including: scheduling, space, appropriate student grouping, instructional materials, and technology | • Limited resources are provided including: scheduling, space, appropriate student grouping, instructional materials and technology | • Needed resources are provided including: scheduling, space, appropriate student grouping, instructional materials and technology |
| | • Teachers work in isolation to address barriers or problems | • The environment provides some support for collaboration and problem-solving by staff | • The environment supports collaboration and problem-solving by staff |
| | • The school community does not embrace collaboration and co-teaching as an integral part of instruction and assessment | • Some members of the school community embrace collaboration and co-teaching as an integral part of instruction and assessment | • The school culture embraces collaboration and co-teaching as an integral part of instruction and assessment |
| | • Minimal or no professional development, including job-embedded professional development specific to co-teaching is provided | • Limited professional development specific to co-teaching including job-embedded professional development is provided | • High quality professional development specific to co-teaching is provided based upon teacher and student needs including job-embedded professional development |
| | • Feedback provided to co-teachers reflects limited or no understanding of the co-teaching framework and focuses more on one teacher than another | • Some feedback is provided to support enhancement of co-teaching and collaborative practices which reflects partial understanding of the co-teaching framework, but may focus more on one teacher than another | • Feedback and coaching is provided to support enhancement of co-teaching and collaborative practices as reflected in the co-teaching framework |

6 This document was developed and produced by the Maryland State Department of Education, Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services (June 2011) with funds from the [**U.S. Department of Education, Grant # H323A070000-09**].

Council for Exceptional Children

# Parity, Parity, Parity

How do you and your co-teaching partner convey to students that your teaching relationship is truly collaborative, that it is a partnership based on parity? The following checklist might help you to think through ideas about how you, your teaching partner, and students can observe parity (or its absence). NOTE: Do keep in mind that which of the following parity signals pertain to your situation depends on many factors.

| Already do | Should do | Not applicable | |
|---|---|---|---|
| _____ | _____ | _____ | 1. Both teachers' names are on the board or posted in the classroom. |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | 2. Both teachers' names are on schedules and report cards. |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | 3. Both teachers' handwriting is on student assignments (that is, the specialist at least occasionally grades a set of papers). |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | 4. Both teachers have space for personal belongings. |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | 5. Both teachers have similar furniture (i.e. desks, chairs). |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | 6. Both teachers sometimes take a lead role in the classroom. |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | 7. Teacher talk during instruction is approximately equal. |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | 8. Both teachers give directions or permission without checking with the other teacher. |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | 9. Both teachers work with all students |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | 10. Both teachers are considered teachers by students. |

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Teacher(s)_____ Time Span_____Beg/Middle/End Date_____
(Circle one)

# Co-teaching Academy Walkthrough Form

| Indicator | Look fors… | Observed | Not Observed | Evidence (What did it look like?) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Parity and Roles**<br><br>**(Positive Learning Environment, Assessment Uses, Professionalism, Communication)** | ○ Clearly defined actively engaged INSTRUCTIONAL role for each teacher throughout lesson | ☐ Opening<br>☐ Lesson<br>☐ SWP<br>☐ Closing | ☐ Opening<br>☐ Lesson<br>☐ SWP<br>☐ Closing | |
| | ○ Roles provide instruction that match the learning target or provide specially designed instruction to students | | | |
| | ○ Teachers demonstrate Self-Efficacy and Proficiency in their role | | | |
| | ○ Both teachers interact with all students. | | | |
| | ○ Both teachers implement accommodations and supplemental instruction as needed. | | | |
| | ○ Students seek feedback from both teachers equally | | | |
| **Co-Planning**<br><br>**(Professional Knowledge, Instructional Planning, Instructional Strategies, Differentiated Instruction, Assessment Strategies)** | ○ Documented evidence of advance co-planning in Lesson Plans (Use of Individual Learning Plan or similar) | | | |
| | ○ Evidence of co-Planning in lesson implementation with seamless delivery | | | |
| | ○ Accommodations are planned/provided according to the IEP and are appropriate to the lesson activity/goal. (Specialized Instruction) | | | |

Created by: GLRS

Teacher(s)_____ Time Span_____ Beg/Middle/End Date_____
(Circle one)

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Instruction**<br><br>**(Professional Knowledge, Instructional Planning, Instructional Strategies, Differentiated Instruction, Assessment Strategies)** | ○ Instructional Directions are clear. | | | |
| | ○ The language of the Learning Targets (EQs)/Standards are clear | ☐ Displayed<br>☐ Stated<br>☐ Lived<br>☐ Worthy | ☐ Displayed<br>☐ Stated<br>☐ Lived<br>☐ Worthy | |
| | ○ Strategies/supports are used to assist struggling students.<br>(Specially Designed Instruction (IEP), Accommodations/Modifications, Scaffolding) | | | ☐ Data collection notebook available |
| | ○ Purposeful grouping for instruction | | | |
| | ○ Positive Learning Environment | | | |
| | ○ Behavior Supports provided | | | |
| | ○ EFFECTIVE use of Researched based instructional methods (Differentiation, Explicit Instruction, Cooperative Groups, Modeling, ) | | | |
| | ○ Active engagement in learning evident | | | _____ On task students<br>_____ Off task students |
| | ○ Students set and monitor their own progress towards the learning target/goal | | | |
| **Assessing Progress**<br><br>**(Assessment strategies, Assessment Uses)** | ○ Daily formative assessments are used | ☐ Opening<br>☐ Lesson<br>☐ SWP<br>☐ Closing | ☐ Opening<br>☐ Lesson<br>☐ SWP<br>☐ Closing | |
| | ○ Teachers assess the learning of each student to drive instruction | ☐ Opening<br>☐ Lesson<br>☐ SWP<br>☐ Closing | ☐ Opening<br>☐ Lesson<br>☐ SWP<br>☐ Closing | |
| | ○ Feedback is constructive and intended for improvement and is delivered in a timely manner | | | |
| | ○ All students are appropriately challenged in regard to the range of proximal development and the learning target (with appropriate amount of struggle) | | | |

Created by: GLRS

School:_____ Date: _____



Members present: _____

| Focus Area 1: **Parity in the Co-Taught Classroom** | |
|---|---|
| Desired Outcome | Co-Teachers will have equal ownership of all instruction in the classroom as indicated by equal participation in all lessons with specific and active roles in all parts of the lesson of co-taught classrooms. Additionally, co-teachers will equally share the instructional environment and responsibilities for teaching all students of the classrooms. |
| Intervention | Co-Taught lesson plans will include specific and active instructional roles in all parts of the lesson for both teachers. Classroom environment, materials and interactions with students show equal ownership by both teachers. |
| Core Components | Lessons will indicate equal and specific roles of teachers for all 4 parts of the lesson: Opener, Mini-Lesson, Student Work Period, and Closing.<br>Physical environment indicates parity.<br>Student, Parent, and Teacher Perception Surveys indicate parity in teacher roles. |
| What level/ percentage of implementation is expected at this checkpoint? | 80% of teachers will have equal and specific instructional roles in the lesson according to Walk through data.<br>100% of classrooms will show physical signs of shared ownership (parity).<br>95% of student, parent, and teacher perception surveys will indicate parity and equal ownership of the classroom and students. |
| Results according to data | **WALKTHROUGH RESULTS**<br>____ % of co-teachers had a clearly defined, actively engaged instructional roles throughout the lesson.<br>**SURVEY RESULTS**<br>____% of Co-Teachers agree/somewhat agree that they "equally share the responsibility and workload while working with ALL students." (Question 2 on Co-Teacher Perceptions survey)<br>____% of students agree/somewhat agree that "both teachers are there to help ALL students" in the co-taught class. (Question 2 on Student Perceptions Survey)<br>____% of parents agree/somewhat agree that "both teachers help" their child in the co-taught class. (Question 2 on Parent Perceptions Survey) |

School:_____ Date: _____



| | |
|---|---|
| Next Steps (Include resources, time allotment and persons responsible) | |

School:_____ Date: _____



| Focus Area 2: **Co-Planning with Efficiency and Effectiveness** | |
|---|---|
| Desired Outcome | Use of co-planning timelines and co-planning tools to create lessons that engage all students. Co-planned lesson incorporate Specially Designed Instruction as outlined in the IEP, Differentiation, and Explicit Instruction. Universal Design for Learning components that enhance the learning of all students will also be included. |
| Intervention | Documentation in lesson plans of co-planned lessons that indicate both teachers are a part of the planning process on a weekly basis. Implementation of co-planned lessons that match what is written and have both teachers engaged in the instruction of students. Co-planned lessons with specially designed instruction components, differentiation and explicit instruction that match the needs of all students. |
| Core Components | Lesson plan template that includes roles of both teachers in the opening, lesson, student work period, and the closing. Accommodations and scaffolds are planned with student needs in mind and are appropriate to the lesson format. Teachers have a timeline and format for sharing of lesson plans. Teachers use Individual Learning Plan document during planning activities to inform instruction and revise it as necessary. Implementation of differentiation and explicit instruction weekly. |
| What level/ percentage of implementation is expected at this checkpoint? | 90% of lessons have appropriate specially designed instruction including accommodations/modifications and strategies/scaffolds documented in an appropriate place on the lesson plan as documented by review of lesson plan documents.<br>100% of teachers use the Individual Learning Plan document or similar tool to summarize student needs from their IEPs/Psychological Reports for the Lesson Planning process as documented by review of lesson plan documents.<br>100% of teachers plan for differentiation and explicit instruction at least once a week as documented by review of weekly lesson plan documents. |
| Results according to data | ____% of lessons have appropriate specially designed instruction including accommodations/modifications and strategies/scaffolds documented in an appropriate place on the lesson plan as documented by review of lesson plan documents.<br>____% of teachers use the Individual Learning Plan document or similar tool to summarize student needs from their IEPs/Psychological Reports for the Lesson Planning process as documented by review of lesson plan documents. |

School:_____ Date: _____



| | |
|---|---|
| | ____% of teachers plan for differentiation and explicit instruction at least once a week as documented by review of weekly lesson plan documents. |
| Next Steps (Include resources, time allotment and persons responsible) | *(What will help maintain or increase the level of implementation of this intervention at this time? What resources are needed and who will be responsible for implementing each step? When and how will you evaluate the success of these steps?)* |

School:_____ Date: _____



| Focus Area 3: **Co-Instructing and Co-Assessing** | |
|---|---|
| Desired Outcome | Co-teachers divide instructional tasks throughout each part of the lesson creating parity. Co-teachers use formative assessment in each part of the lesson allowing them to know the level of mastery to the learning target of EACH student. Co-teachers will adjust instruction based on the formative assessments given. Co-teachers will plan for the implementation of Specially Designed Instruction and monitor its effectiveness weekly. |
| Intervention | Co-Teachers continue to divide roles equally throughout the instructional process. Co-teachers implement formative assessment in all parts of the lesson. Teachers react to formative assessment data by creating small group instruction that meets the instructional needs of students. Specially Designed Instruction according to the students IEP will evident in the lesson plan. Data collection on Specially Designed Instruction will be implemented weekly. |
| Core Components | Documentation in lesson plans of co-planned instruction indicating roles of each teacher throughout the lesson. Formative Assessment practices will occur in ¾ parts of the lesson - opening, lesson, student work period, and closing. Co-teachers will use differentiated small groups to provide feedback regarding progress on learning targets to each student. Co-teachers will use the highlighted Individual Learning Plan document to plan and monitor the inclusion of Specially Designed Instruction in the lesson plans on a weekly basis. |
| What level/ percentage of implementation is expected at this checkpoint? | 100 % of classrooms will use the formative assessment to assess the learning of EACH student to drive instruction.<br>70 % of classrooms will use purposeful grouping for instruction.<br>100% of Special Education Teachers will have a data collection notebook available in the co-taught classroom for data collection of SDI. |
| Results according to data | ____ % of classrooms will use the formative assessment to assess the learning of EACH student to drive instruction.<br>____ % of classrooms will use purposeful grouping for instruction.<br>____% of Special Education Teachers will have a data collection notebook available in the co-taught classroom for data collection of SDI. |
| Next Steps | *(What will help maintain or increase the level of implementation of this intervention at this time? What* |

School:_____ Date: _____



| | |
|---|---|
| (Include resources, time allotment and persons responsible) | *resources are needed and who will be responsible for implementing each step? When and how will you evaluate the success of these steps?)* |

School:_____ Date: _____



| Focus Area 4: **Selected High Impact Instructional Strategy**<br>*(What high impact instructional strategy will impact instructional quality and inevitably student achievement?)* | |
|---|---|
| Desired Outcome | *What do you hope to achieve instructionally?)* |
| Intervention | *(What instructional strategy will you <u>look for</u> specifically in order to achieve the outcome?)* |
| Core Components | *(What are the active ingredients or practice elements that indicate this intervention exist in your school?)* |
| What level/ percentage of implementation is expected at this checkpoint? | *(What level of implementation do you expect to see to show full implementation of this intervention?)* |
| Results according to data | *(What is the actual level of implementation based on your data – walkthrough or artifacts?)* |
| Next Steps (Include | *(What will help maintain or increase the level of implementation of this intervention at this time? What resources are needed and who will be responsible for implementing each step? When and how will you* |

| | |
|---|---|
| resources, time allotment and persons responsible) | *evaluate the success of these steps?)* |

Other Notes:

Georgia Department of Education
Richard Woods, Georgia's School Superintendent
"Educating Georgia's Future"

# Stages of Co-Teaching

TEAM:_____ SCHOOL:_____ DATE:_____

Co-Teaching as defined by Murawaski, 2003, is when two or more educators co-plan, co-instruct, and co-assess a group of students with diverse needs in the same general education classroom. Notice the emphasis on co-plan, co-instruct and co-assess. Quality teaching can only occur if teachers are constantly planning, instructing and assessing students. Friend and Cook, 2007 also discussed effective co-teaching components in *Interactions*. Below is a self-assessment and observation document to use as a guide to decide where you are as a co-teaching team and what indicators you need to focus on for improved outcomes to be effective co-teachers. Your goal is to move to Stage 3 for all indicators.

**For each Indicator, circle where you see the co-teaching team.** Then discuss with your co-teaching partner. Decide one area as a team you will focus on for improvement and set a goal.

Write the goal: _____

If using this form as a Co-Teaching walkthrough, circle what you observe.

| Indicator | Stage 1 | Stage 2 | Stage 3 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Co-Planning | There is little or no evidence of co-planning. It is observed that the special education teacher just walks in the room and assists on most days. | There is evidence of some co-planning, but not clearly defined roles and clear understanding of outcomes. It is observed the general education teacher is leading the lesson and classroom. | There is clear evidence that the team consistently co-plans together. It is hard to tell who the general education teacher is and who is the special education teacher. The classroom runs smoothly and is it very different because two teachers are in the room There are clear outcomes. Multiple groupings and co-teaching approaches observed |
| Instructional Roles | Both teachers share instructional roles and responsibilities | Both teachers share equally in instructional roles and responsibilities | Both teachers consistently share all instructional roles and responsibilities. It is difficult to tell which teacher general education and which teacher is special education. |

Georgia Department of Education
Richard Woods, Georgia's School Superintendent
"Educating Georgia's Future"

# Stages of Co-Teaching

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Instructional Knowledge and Content | Both teachers are aware of classroom procedures, routines, schedules and some content knowledge | Both teachers demonstrate a fluid knowledge of classroom procedures, routines and schedules. They work together to plan most concepts and lessons and demonstrate knowledge of the standards as well as IEP goals. | Both teachers consistently demonstrate a fluid knowledge of classroom procedures, routines and schedules. Both consistently demonstrate a high level of content knowledge of the standards and IEP goals. HLPs and EPBs are demonstrated by both teachers. |
| Flexible Grouping | Whole group is the predominate grouping structure. All are teacher led groups. | Whole group with some independent work groups is the predominate grouping structure. Some small groups are utilized. Most are teacher led. | It is evident that co-planning has occurred, and flexible grouping is varied. A variety of grouping is used effectively and fluidly throughout a lesson to include whole group, small group, independent groups and both teacher and student led groups. |
| Co-Teaching Models | Predominate Co-Teaching models are one teach/one observe or one teach/one assist with the special education teacher observing or assisting. | Predominate Co-Teaching models are limited with some station teaching and parallel teaching used along with one teach and one assist. | All six co-teaching models are effectively used based upon co-planning for the lesson. There is rarely one teach/one assist or one teach/one observe. If that model is used, it is clearly for a specific purpose to collect data. |
| Engagement | Little or no differentiation. Students are all doing the same activities with few or no accommodations. Little of no feedback is given to students. | Most students are accessing the general curriculum. There are appropriate accommodations with varied choice activities and differentiation. Students are engaged | All students are accessing the general curriculum through multiple means. There are appropriate accommodations with varied choice activities to meet all needs of |

# Stages of Co-Teaching

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | and focused. Universal Design for learning is observed. Student feedback is provided. | students. Instruction looks significantly different because two teachers are in the room. Universal design for learning is observed. High levels of engagement are observed. Frequent feedback to students is heard and observed. |

Co- Teaching Partner: _____ Co-Partner: _____

Observer: _____

Comments: _____

_____

_____

Published Online: October 12, 2011
Published in Print: October 13, 2011, as **Pairing Up**

# Pairing Up

**A Maryland initiative seeks to scale up co-teaching as a way to support students of all needs.**

**By Liana Heitin**

When it comes to good co-teaching, fluidity is the name of the game. Back to Story

In Katierose Dobrzykowski and Sara Dunaway's co-taught 3rd grade classroom, there are few awkward pauses, jerky transitions, or blank stares from students. Instead, there's constant motion, split-second decision-making, and an assembly of self-assured, active bodies. The teachers lead their students in a swift and graceful dance.

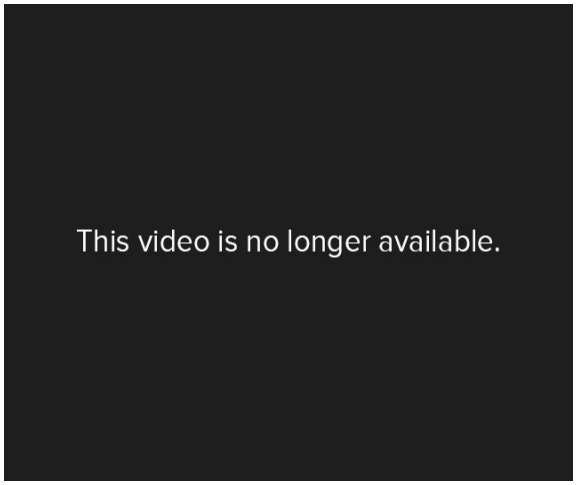
The teaching team at Norwood Elementary, in Baltimore, Md., begins an end-of-year division lesson with a homemade movie clip: A group of teachers are standing in the school supply closet, attempting to split a stash of pencils. How many pencils should each teacher get? Is it fair if one teacher gets five and another gets 40? The kids are enraptured, smiling at seeing their teachers on camera, shaking their heads "no" at the silly suggestion.

With a click of the remote, the projector is off and the kids turn their attention to the live action in front of them. Dunaway, the general education teacher, asks for a definition of "divide." Dobrzykowski, the special education teacher, writes the word on the board and steers some students toward the word wall, where the definition is posted. All students' eyes are tracking their teachers. Even the one boy sitting under a desk at the front of the room—because, as Dobrzykowski later explains, that's where she is most comfortable working—is engaged and involved in the lesson.

The teachers then glide into whole-group guided practice, during which they discretely place colored tiles on students' desks. Both to an observer and to students, it's unclear—and seemingly unimportant—what the colored tiles mean. But the teachers are assessing and signifying who needs to be re-taught prior skills, who should continue practicing the day's lesson with guidance, and who is ready for individual work. Students will break out into groups for the next activity—stations—based on the color they received.

The payoff of Dobrzykowski and Dunaway's partnership becomes truly apparent during stations. They do not take a typical approach, in which equal groups rotate through a defined set of activities on the buzzer. In their classroom,

**'Co-Teaching Is a Marriage'**




Baltimore County teachers Sara Dunaway and Dawn Peake talk about how co-teaching benefits their relationships with their students—and each other.

students move to the next station, to practice a higher skill set, only when they're ready.

Dobrzykowski sits at a table with those who received green tiles. Today green indicates the kids who are still struggling with prior skills, so she reviews the foundations of division with this group. When students show mastery—which takes just a few minutes for some kids and the majority of the period for others—they move over to Dunaway's station to practice the day's division lesson. After practice with Dunaway, students slide into desks at an individual practice station. Upon completing the individual work, students find their differentiated assessment, a clipboard, and a spot on the rug to take their post-lesson test. Once all of Dobrzykowski's students have graduated from re-teach, students who have finished their assessments circle back to her for an extension lesson.

Students travel between the five stations with whatever manipulatives they prefer to use: whiteboards, graphic organizers, or blocks, for example. Each station has a bucket of props and writing tools as well, so materials are always on hand. There isn't a moment of idle time.

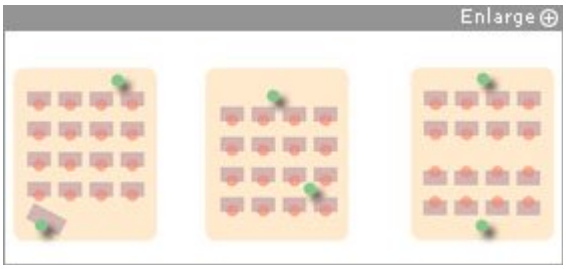
Every so often during the 45-minutes of stations, the two teachers exchange quick, serious whispers. As Dobrzykowski says later, "it wasn't going how we thought it would go"—an admission that would surprise most observers. But having worked together for three years now, says Dunaway, "we can do more on the fly."

At the end of the lesson, the class regroups to review what they have learned. Dobrzykowski leads the inquiry while Dunaway monitors behavior and punctuates the wrap-up with questions of her own. The students are on task until the minute they head out the door for lunch.

**Principal Support**

Co-teaching is a method of instruction in which a general educator and special educator teach together in one classroom. The idea is that the general educator serves as the content and curriculum expert, while the special educator is the learning-process expert, ensuring the content is accessible to students with and without disabilities.

**Co-teaching Approaches**




*Co-teaching: Concepts, Practices, and Logistics*, Marilyn Friend, Ph.D., August, 2006

Within a school, most educators agree, co-teaching works best when initiated from the top. According to Marilyn Friend, president of the **Council for Exceptional Children** and author of several books on co-teaching, "administrators absolutely make or break co-teaching at a school site across all school levels. They set the standards of practice; … they set the culture in terms of receptivity."

Principals also control perhaps the most important factor in a co-teaching scenario: scheduling. Co-teachers need common planning time, ideally during school hours, though some administrators offer stipends for teachers who plan together outside the school day. Patrice

Goldys, the principal at Norwood, says she creates a co-teaching schedule at the beginning of the year with input from the participating teachers. Throughout the year, the schedule takes "a whole lot of tweaking," she says, but the teachers are willing to adapt "because they know it's better for the kids."

In addition, administrators determine how students are divided into classes. There's some temptation to put the majority of a grade's low-performing students and troublemakers into a co-taught class, but that can create a perfect storm that impairs both teaching and learning. Friend recommends that co-taught classes be made up of no more than one-third students receiving special education services—a higher ratio than in most classes, since generally about 10 percent of all students fall into that category. And the rest of the class should "represent a heterogeneous mix," she says, "rather than all struggling students."

Having district-level support makes co-teaching easier as well. The central office can shift staffing allocations, train teachers and administrators, and fund technology to help co-teaching run smoothly.

**Maryland's 'Nested Boxes'**

In Maryland, a push for co-teaching is coming from even further up the ladder. In 2008, the Maryland State Department of Education launched an initiative to support its lowest-performing schools, as required by the federal No Child Left Behind law, and targeted special education as an area for improvement. Pointing to success in several Maryland districts, including Howard County Public Schools—where state officials say students with disabilities made significant academic progress in co-taught classes—the department upped its efforts to take co-teaching statewide. The state developed a framework for co-teaching, providing a common language and guidelines for all districts to use. The framework spelled out the roles and responsibilities for staff members at the district, school, and classroom levels.

Co-teachers Sara Dunaway, top, and Katierose Dobrzykowski administer differentiated learning stations during a math lesson on division.
—Nicole Frugé

Principals at 25 Maryland schools across seven districts agreed to participate in a co-teaching pilot program, funded in part by a federal State Improvement Grant. They each chose one special educator and one general educator to teach in a content area for at least a year, attend state and local-sponsored professional development and, ultimately, train their school-site colleagues about co-teaching. Under the same grant, administered by the federal Office of Special Education Programs, MSDE plans to expand its professional development website to house free co-teaching resources, including podcasts, video clips, and webinars.

Bob Glasscock, executive director of the Breakthrough Center, a state agency focused on school turnarounds that is helping coordinate the co-teaching initiative, explains that co-teaching arrangements are often "episodic" or inconsistent. But by integrating support from state, district, and school leaders, the state coordinators are hoping Maryland's initiative will be more sustainable. "What we didn't find in the literature and professional development was connecting all three levels," he says. "That's what's different about this."

Paul Dunford, MSDE's director of cross-divisional initiatives, adds, "Think of it as nested boxes. In that center box is the classroom teacher." The outside boxes each provide a layer of support, he explains.

MSDE officials are quick to point out, however, that the co-teaching initiative is not about compliance. The framework is not a list of requirements but rather suggested best practices, and professional development sessions are presented as an opportunity for district leaders to learn from one another. "What we're seeing now is schools replicating different ideas from different principals," says Dunford. "We didn't say, 'This is how to do it.'" The buy-in comes easier when the state is there to be supportive rather than punitive, state officials explain.

**An Equal Partnership**

That said, representatives from the state do go into classrooms to check in on how things are going. The observers want to see, for instance, that teachers are using a variety of co-teaching approaches. The Maryland framework is based on Friend's extensive research, which lays out six different co-teaching models. Friend says teachers need to be using at least three of the six models over time, and "one should be a high-intensity strategy," such as station teaching, as the Norwood team often uses, or parallel teaching, in which the teachers split the class into two equal groups. A co-taught class should look notably different than a class with only one instructor. "Because two times the same old thing is really the same old thing," Friend says.

The Breakthrough Center's Glasscock says that a common pitfall noticed during observations is that too many teams resort to "one teach, one assist"—or what he refers to as the "shark" method, in which one teacher leads instruction and the other hovers, providing quiet individual assistance.

While this method is appropriate every once in a while, Friend agrees it's used too often. "The goal is to get both people teaching—that's how you increase the intensity." One teach, one assist can also cause tension between instructors. In many cases, the special education teacher is dubbed the assistant, either because the general educator does not want to give up reign of the classroom or because the special educator is disinclined to step up.

Dobrzykowski and Dunaway at Norwood say they work hard to maintain an equal partnership, or what they refer to as their "marriage with children." From the beginning of the year, they present themselves as a team. Both of their names are on the classroom door and on report cards. They give a joint presentation at back-to-school night and conduct parent-teacher conferences together. "I made it really a point to say 'we,' not 'I,'" says Dunaway. "It's 'us, ours, our kids.' I didn't want her to feel like you're an aide or just some extra person I didn't want in here."

In addition to using their common planning time, the two teachers speak on the phone every night. They discuss student progress and go over the next day's lesson, or "visualize the fight," says Dunaway, "like in boxing." The planning has gotten easier over the years, but it's still time-consuming, they explain. Like in any marriage, "you have to trust each other," says Dunaway, "and both people have to put forth the work."

**Data Challenges**

Friend notes that there has been "little research that clearly establishes the efficacy of co-teaching." For one, co-teaching involves so many variables that it's one of the toughest instructional practices to collect reliable data on. In order for a study to have validity, says Friend, "there would have to be comparable classrooms with and without co-teaching with comparable students, comparable teachers, and comparable activities,"—a logistical impossibility in most large samples. The study would also have to show evidence that co-teaching was implemented with fidelity in each classroom, says Friend.

As of now, the Maryland initiative has been unable to definitively tie co-teaching to test scores or other student data. "Teaching partners are not staying the same, principals are not staying the same, and obviously the kids are changing," says Fran Sorin, chair of MSDE's co-teaching initiative. "So we don't have a constant." Further, while some Maryland principals and co-teachers have begun to train their school-site colleagues, others have not, making it hard to measure schools against each other.

Yet Friend stresses gathering data at the school and district level is both feasible and critical. Doing so "not only gives momentum internally but also demonstrates to others outside the effect that co-teaching can have," she explains. Schools and districts around the country are showing positive results for students with and without disabilities in co-taught classes, she says, but for the most part those data are never published.

With students at lunch, special educator Katierose Dobrzykowski, left, and general educator Sara Dunaway take a few minutes to debrief in the hallway after a co-taught math lesson.
—Nicole Frugé

At Norwood, after the first year of co-teaching in 2007, 95 percent of 3rd graders tested on or above grade level—up about 7 percent from the year before and 23 percent from 2005, according to Goldys, Norwood's principal. That class was the first one at Norwood to have more than 90 percent of students achieve proficiency in math.

However, over the next couple of years, the proportion of students who were proficient in math went back down. Last year, it hovered around 81 percent. Goldys attributes the decline to inconsistent funding for co-teaching and changes in enrollment, including increases in student mobility. She says she remains committed to expanding co-teaching to all grades.

Friend encourages schools to measure effectiveness with factors other than just standardized test scores, such as formative test data, discipline records, absences, and parent and student satisfaction surveys. Schools should also try to track "the intangibles, [such as] students as members of classroom and school communities, peer acceptance, [and] decreases in behavior problems," says Friend.

The Norwood team says their co-taught students are unquestionably more engaged, less likely to act out, and, as shown by their daily assessment records, more likely to master an objective during a co-taught than solo-taught lesson.

This fall, Dobrzykowski and Dunaway will face the challenge of inconsistency as well. Dobrzykowski will move down to kindergarten, and Dunaway, inspired by her co-teaching experience to work toward a special education certification, will loop to the 4th grade as the special educator. Yet their partnership will not come to an end entirely. Both will continue to lead staff development on co-teaching at their school—just the type of on-the-ground effort the Maryland department is counting on to sustain the co-teaching initiative. And while there's no guarantee they'll be able to recreate their classroom fluidity within new "marriages," both are committed to continuing co-teaching.

Very simply, "I get more out of it," says Dunaway. "The kids get more out of it."

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