Co-Teaching but Not Getting the Results You’d Hoped For?

These Could Be the Reasons Why

Marilyn Friend, Ph.D.
marilynfriend@marilynfriend.com

Questions for the Conversation

- What is the role of school leaders in creating and sustaining co-teaching?
- Which co-teacher responsibilities are shared? Which are unique to each teacher? What does this imply for planning, teaching, and assessing?
- How do co-teachers effectively address their students' diverse instructional needs, including IEP goals?
- Which students (with and without disabilities) should be in a co-taught class?
- What are tactics for addressing the classroom and school logistical challenges of co-teaching?
- When might co-teaching be the wrong option for students with disabilities?
NOT GETTING RESULTS?

The Importance of Strong Leadership

District Responsibilities

- District level collaboration as a priority
- Co-teaching as a district priority
- Clear expectations regarding professional responsibilities and workload
- Proactive leadership, including principal accountability
- Adequate resources (e.g., funds for professional development and start-up summer planning)

Key Principal Responsibilities in Co-Teaching

- Explicit plan for implementation, with anticipation of adjustments as part of program development
- Clearly communication with all staff members about priorities and expectations
- Early identification of volunteer partners, eventually moving to co-teaching as a condition of employment in the school
- Establishment of partnerships that last for multiple years
- Proactive problem solving when issues arise
- Accountability system in place for teachers
SOLUTIONS

- If you're a district leader
- If you're a site leader
- If you're a teacher or other co-teaching professional

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Co-Teachers’ Unique and Shared Responsibilities

GET Responsibilities

- Knowledge of and skill for delivering grade level curriculum
- Classroom management, including discipline
- Knowledge of typical student characteristics and needs
- Pacing of instruction
SET Responsibilities

- Knowledge of and skills to delivery specially designed instruction
- Understanding of unique individual student needs
- Completion of all special education-related paperwork and procedures
- Mastery model of instruction

Co-Teacher Shared Responsibilities

- Sense of responsibility for all learners
- Macro instructional decisions
- On-the-spot discipline and management
- Student instruction (various groupings and purposes)
- Formative and summative assessment
- Other negotiated tasks

SOLUTIONS

- List of responsibilities and discussion of who does what
- Assessment of amount of teacher talk, location in class, furniture, access to technology
- Both teachers teaching
- Clarification with students of the "what" and the "how"
- Third-party mediation (e.g., instructional coach)
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Instruction in Co-Taught Classes

Types of SDI (Examples)

- Packages or comprehensive programs (e.g., Wilson reading)
- Instructional techniques or strategies (e.g., learning strategies; VAKT for instruction)
- Integrated practices (e.g., pauses during instruction; clear task analysis; telegraphic directions)
- Increased instructional intensity (e.g., more practice, more steps, more review)

SOLUTIONS

- A map of IEP goals and student needs onto the curriculum map/course
- Unit plans that incorporate IEP goals
- Daily lesson planning split so special educators focus on SDI
- Small group instruction is the most common instructional arrangement
- Role reciprocity
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Co-Teaching
Class Composition

Students with Disabilities

Other Students
Representative of the Overall Student Population
SOLUTIONS

- Schedule students with disabilities first or use scheduling software and check
- Reduce student grouping based on achievement
- Avoid “there are two of you in there” student assignment

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Co-Teaching Data

Classroom Data

- Exit or admit tickets
- Standard classroom work samples (e.g., homework, assignments, tests)
- Error analysis of student work
- Electronic data (e.g., Kahoot, EdPuzzle)
- Observational data on student attention, behavior, social skills
- Specific IEP goal monitoring
Data on Google Forms

Data on Google Sheets

School Data

- Attendance data
- Common assessments (e.g., unit tests, screening and progress monitoring measures)
- Summative high stakes data for subgroups, including gap analysis
- Co-taught v. comparable solo-taught classes
- Parent perception data
District Data

- IDEA LRE data (disaggregated by appropriate subgroups and age groups)
- IDEA graduation/dropout data (disaggregated by appropriate subgroups)
- Disability category data and disproportionality
- High stakes data (disaggregated by appropriate subgroups)

SOLUTIONS

- Keep clear classroom data records (data book or spreadsheet)
- Progress monitor as an ongoing process, not an event
- Present and discuss school data and use it to set annual goals that are student-specific and grade-specific
- Discuss district and school data at administrative meetings, with goal-setting for improvement

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Classroom and Systemic Logistics
A Contemporary Co-Teaching Planning Model

1. Periodic, intensive face-to-face macro planning
2. Ongoing electronic planning
3. On-the-spot fill-in planning strategies

Finding Planning Time (Examples)

- Summer planning for first grading period using Title, ESL, foundation, IDEA, professional development, or other funds
- Coverage: administrators, academic coaches, counselors, other professionals, reciprocal coverage by co-teachers
- Substitute teachers (cover for 4-5 partnerships in one day)
- Continuing education credit (CEUs) for after-school planning

Planning Protocol (1-Hour Example)

- GE teacher outlines upcoming curriculum, context for material to be addressed (12 min.)
- Student data review and discussion (10 min.)
- Teachers discuss points of difficulty in the material, areas that might require additional support/scaffolding/SDI (15 min.)
- Together teachers discuss patterns for their co-teaching and groupings, given planned material and student data (15 min.)
- Partnership discussion (8 min.)
Instructional Start-Up

- Teachers create/select an icon
- Teachers teach students a set of rules associated with the icon and reward students for following the rules
- When planning time is needed, teachers display the icon and use the time to touch base
SOLUTIONS

- Set realistic expectations for f2f planning time
- Commit to an electronic planning option
- Divide planning responsibilities based on roles and responsibilities

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Co-Teaching is Not a Panacea

When Is Co-Teaching the Appropriate Service Structure for Students with Disabilities?
SOLUTIONS

- Data as a basis for decisions and changes
- Clear, carefully discussed IEP team decision-making about if co-teaching is appropriate and, based on needs, how much and in what subject areas
- Decision based on student needs, not adult preferences and schedules
- If instruction in a separate setting, intensive data to demonstrate effectiveness

References


Stichter (2016). Actualizing characteristics of successful co-teaching for young adolescents through co-teaching. Middle School Journal, 48(2), 70-78.

