Academy 2: Co-teaching Strategies

This academy explores the research behind co-teaching as a professional development strategy as well as an effective instructional practice for students. A variety of co-teaching strategies are explored and evaluated in light of their impact on student and professional learning.

Academy Outcomes

As a result of the activities and information shared at this Leadership Academy, participants will:

- Identify a set of co-teaching strategies and their research base
- Distinguish between exemplars and non-exemplars of practice
- Measure co-teaching skills and identify areas for improvement
- Examine how these models can be expanded to provide blended special- and general-education opportunities for students
- Analyze strategies for developing Co-teaching skills and practices among their general and special education staff

Agenda

We constructed this Leadership Academy to occur within a 3-hour timeframe with 15 minutes or so for breaks and other time adjustments. The times listed below are approximate but reflect the time these activities and lectureettes have previously taken. Facilitators should be flexible, read their audience, and work to achieve the overall purpose and outcomes.

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<th>TIME</th>
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<tr>
<td>15 min</td>
<td>Introductions and Greetings</td>
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<td>Activity 1: Co-teaching: 9 Approaches</td>
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<td>Lecturette 1: The Foundation of Co-teaching</td>
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<td>Activity 2: The Case for Co-teaching</td>
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<td>Break</td>
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<td>Lecturette 2: Exemplary Co-teaching</td>
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<td>Activity 3: Perfecting Co-teaching</td>
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Resources


Studies the effectiveness of co-teaching in a general education life skills class in providing inclusive instruction to students with and without disabilities. Case study of inclusive instruction; Context for general and special education collaboration; Planning ongoing accommodations.


Richard Rose, writing in this journal in his role as Research Section Editor (BJSE, Volume 29, Number 1), argued that teachers should learn to do research in collaboration with other professionals, as part of a drive to make teaching a ‘research-based profession’. In this article, Joan Forbes, Senior Lecturer in Educational Studies in the Faculty of Education at the University of Aberdeen, explores this idea in greater depth from her perspective as course leader for an MEd module on inter-agency collaboration. She proposes that recommendations for collaboration to support children with language and communication disorders do not attend to the difficulties involved between professionals from different backgrounds who use different discourses and draw upon different research evidence as a basis for practice. Her paper draws on ‘postmodern’ research approaches and Michael Foucault's views of ‘discourse’ to examine a variety of theoretical perspectives previously applied to collaboration. It argues for the value of further theoretical diversity and methodological plurality and introduces discourse analysis as a tool for helping to understand the notion of collaboration. At the end of her challenging and intriguing paper, Joan Forbes offers some suggestions concerning the value of ‘new’ questioning kinds of analysis.

The National Institute for Urban School Improvement

Because research has found that differentiation of instruction for gifted students does not typically occur within the general classroom, collaboration between gifted and general education teachers is critical in order to ensure appropriate services to students with high abilities. Gifted education teachers are now being called upon to provide services to their students in the regular education environment. This fundamental change in setting mirrors mandated changes in special education, wherein students with disabilities are increasingly served in the general education classroom. This article provides a new definition of collaboration within the context of gifted education and expands on the utilization of coteaching as a collaborative strategy. Five models of coteaching originally developed for meeting the needs of students with disabilities were adapted, and examples of their use with gifted students in the general education classroom are provided.


Part of a special issue on communication and collaboration. Advice for teachers on how to create and maintain co-teaching relationships at the high school level is provided. This advice relates to teachers knowing themselves, knowing their teaching partners, knowing their students, and knowing their classroom roles, responsibilities, and work.


Because co-teaching is the most widely used inclusion model, identification of the skills necessary for successful co-teaching is pertinent to teacher preparation in both early childhood education (ECE) and early childhood special education (ECSE). This pilot study considers one aspect of co-teaching; how the co-teachers related to one another. Specifically it explores associations between co-teachers’ perceptions of similarity (in philosophical beliefs, personal characteristics and traits, and professional style) with one another and two quality outcomes. The outcomes are (a) quality of the preschool environment, as measured by the Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale (ECERS), and (b) child engagement. With disability status controlled for, there was a significant relationship between the co-teacher relationship and one of the program quality measures; quality of the environment. The findings are discussed in terms of implications for teacher preparation.

Collaboration between special and general education teachers has received increased attention over the past decade as part of the effort to create inclusive classrooms and to blur the boundaries between programs and students. Yet collaboration can have multiple meanings. This special issue presents data related to collaborative practices derived from three projects funded under a U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs research priority, Beacons of Excellence. Research projects funded under this priority were to identify schools achieving exemplary results with students with disabilities, as well as with their peers. Researchers from the separate projects whose results are presented in this issue studied schools in very different contexts using different methodologies. Researchers identified characteristics of their schools and then came together to identify features common across all schools that appeared to be dominant forces in creating the exemplary schools. Collaborative practices were among a handful of such features that emerged across projects. Collaboration in these exemplary schools included both specific teaching practices as well as a climate and culture that supported a community of professionals working together to improve teaching and achievement for all students. Findings from these projects provide important insights into how schools are defining and implementing collaboration.


This article describes a promising form of professional collaboration: coteaching between a content area teacher and a special education teacher. In an investigation of a schoolwide coteaching model in an urban middle school that places students with disabilities in heterogeneous classrooms, researchers interviewed key school leaders and made detailed observations of coteaching. The study found that although content teachers conduct more of the instruction and special education teachers provide more individualized assistance, both use a full range of instructional roles. Essential to the success of coteaching partnerships were collaborative school structures, equal status rules for teachers, a commitment to all students' learning, and strong content knowledge.


Part of a special issue on communication and collaboration. Some practical ideas for preparing to co-teach at the secondary level are provided. These ideas relate to talking to administrators and colleagues before initiation of the co-teaching process and considering the roles of the
principal and co-teachers in a co-teaching environment. In addition tips and strategies on planning, instruction, and assessment in the co-teaching process are presented.


Parent Perceptions of a Co-Taught Inclusive Classroom Abstract Parent perceptions of a co-taught inclusion classroom were examined. Parents of 42 students, 12 identified exceptional students and 30 general education students were surveyed. Responses were obtained from 67 percent of the parents. Findings suggest that these parents are in favor of an inclusive class setting. Increases in self-esteem, social skills and academic achievement were reported by parents. Most parents commented that the uniqueness of the co-teaching model was the most significant benefit for their children as it offered diverse opportunities for learning. Based on these findings, the authors recommend a continued investigation of this model as it relates to inclusion programs and preservice teacher training.


Proposes four alternative models for co-taught classrooms that rely on flexible teacher schedules and the use of paraprofessionals. Benefits of cooperative teaching; Need for new instructional models; Traditional co-teaching; Collaboration scheduling.


We examined co-teaching in secondary classrooms by interviewing and observing special education teachers in co-taught and special education classrooms. Using qualitative methods and a grounded theory (constant-comparative) method of data analysis, we identified salient, recurrent patterns that suggested a description of co-teaching definitions, role, and instructional actions and then compared this description to roles and actions in special education classrooms. We found that special educators take on various roles when co-teaching that are different from the roles that they reportedly assume when they are teaching in special education classrooms; the differences between these roles are influenced by personal definitions of co-teaching and perceived pressures from the classroom, administration, and professional community. During co-taught classes, special educators may simply provide support for students in the general education classroom, teach the same content in a separate classroom, teach a separate part of the content in the same classroom, or teach as a team with the general educator. In co-teaching situations, teachers engaged in actions that helped
students get through assignments and instruction given to the entire class. In special education classrooms, however, special educators engaged in different strategic and explicit forms of these actions.