

## Co-Teaching Strategies & Examples

Strategy	Definition/Example
One Teach, One Observe	One teacher has primary responsibility while the other gathers specific observational information on students or the (instructing) teacher. The key to this strategy is to focus the observation - where the teacher doing the observation is observing specific behaviors. <u>Example:</u> One teacher can observe students for their understanding of directions while the other leads.
One Teach, One Assist	An extension of One Teach, One Observe. One teacher has primary instructional responsibility while the other assists students with their work, monitors behaviors, or corrects assignments. <u>Example:</u> While one teacher has the instructional lead, the person assisting can be the "voice" for the students when they don't understand or are having difficulties.
Station Teaching	The co-teaching pair divides the instructional content into parts - Each teacher instructs one of the groups, groups then rotate or spend a designated amount of time at each station - often an independent station will be used along with the teacher led stations. <u>Example:</u> One teacher might lead a station where the students play a money math game and the other teacher could have a mock store where the students purchase items and make change.
Parallel Teaching	Each teacher instructs half the students. The two teachers are addressing the same instructional material and presenting the material using the same teaching strategy. The greatest benefit to this approach is the reduction of student to teacher ratio. <u>Example:</u> Both teachers are leading a question and answer discussion on specific current events and the impact they have on our economy.
Supplemental Teaching	This strategy allows one teacher to work with students at their expected grade level, while the other teacher works with those students who need the information and/or materials retaught, extended or remediated. <u>Example:</u> One teacher may work with students who need reteaching of a concept while the other teacher works with the rest of the students on enrichment.
Alternative (Differentiated)	Alternative teaching strategies provide two different approaches to teaching the same information. The learning outcome is the same for all students however the avenue for getting there is different. <u>Example:</u> One instructor may lead a group in predicting prior to reading by looking at the cover of the book and the illustrations, etc. The other instructor accomplishes the same outcome but with his/her group, the students predict by connecting the items pulled out of the bag with the story.
Team Teaching	Well planned, team taught lessons, exhibit an invisible flow of instruction with no prescribed division of authority. Using a team teaching strategy, both teachers are actively involved in the lesson. From a students' perspective, there is no clearly defined leader - as both teachers share the instruction, are free to interject information, and available to assist students and answer questions. <u>Example:</u> Both instructors can share the reading of a story or text so that the students are hearing two voices.

*The strategies are not hierarchical - they can be used in any order and/or combined to best meet the needs of the students in the classroom.*

## Teacher Actions During Co-Teaching

*TQE Strategies (2005) along with Adaptations from Murawski & Dieker (2004)*

Co-Teaching is an Attitude... an attitude of sharing the classroom and students  
Co-Teachers must always be thinking - We're Both Teaching!

If one teacher is leading instruction...	The other can be doing this...
	<b>Observing for:</b> student understanding and/or questions (through body language facial expressions, etc.); specific types of questions asked by instructing teacher; specific student interactions and behaviors; teacher movement; specific teacher behaviors; specific student or group behaviors;
	<b>Charting:</b> where questions are directed within the classroom; gender of responders; on-task/off task behavior; teacher wait time; specific teacher behaviors or movements; specific student or group behaviors
	<b>Circulating:</b> checking for comprehension; using proximity control for behavior management; checking for comprehension; providing one-on-one support as needed
	Collecting and reviewing last night's homework
	Introducing a social or study skill
	Taking roll
	Reviewing directions; modeling first problem on the assignment
	Writing down instructions on board
	Repeating or clarifying any difficult concepts
	Passing out papers
	Giving instructions orally
	Facilitating a silent activity
	Introducing a new concept to whole group
	Asking clarifying questions

<b>If one teacher is...</b>	<b>The other can be doing this...</b>
Reading a test aloud to a group of students	Proctoring a test silently with a group of students
Explaining a new concept through discussion	Introducing a new concept through role play or modeling;
Provide enriching or extended activities on a concept already discussed in class	Re-teach or review and old concept with students who didn't understand it
Provide enriching or extended activities related to items on a test	Re-teach or review those concepts or questions that were missed on an exam with those students who missed those questions on the exam
Predicting what will happen next (in book or text) by brainstorming with a group of students using the overhead	Predicting what will happen next (in a book or text) by showing objects that have already been introduced in the story and using them to predict what happens next
Re-teaching or pre-teaching with a small group	Monitoring large group as they work on practice materials
Facilitating sustained silent reading	Reading aloud quietly with a small group
Lecturing	Modeling note taking on the board/overhead
Running last minute copies or errands	Reviewing homework; providing a study or test-taking strategy
Prepping half of the class for one side of a debate	Prepping the other half of the class for the opposing side of the debate
Checking for understanding (reviewing a chapter, etc.) by leading a discussion with half of the class	Checking of understanding (reviewing a chapter, etc.) by leading a discussion with half of the class
Facilitating a station or group	Facilitating a station or group

The main focus of *Co-Teaching* is to find ways to keep both teachers actively engaged with students and their learning.

## **Participants in the Triad**

### **Role of the Cooperating Teacher**

- Help the teacher candidate feel comfortable and welcome
- Share materials and ideas
- Observe and provide feedback...both the good and the not-so-good
- Mentor and guide the teacher candidate
- Model effective teaching strategies and professional behavior
- Be flexible...allow the teacher candidate to try some new ideas
- Communicate expectations
- Be understanding and patient

### **Role of the University Supervisor**

- Provide program information to the teacher and teacher candidate
- Observe and provide feedback on a regular basis
- Act as a confidant for both the teacher and teacher candidate
- Be an advocate for the teacher candidate
- Help the team build good communication
- Set clear expectations; be honest about a student's performance
- Handle the difficult situations that might come up
- Schedule three-way conferences at the beginning and end of the experience

### **Role of the Teacher Candidate**

- Come ready to learn; be enthusiastic and show initiative
- Ask questions...discuss professional issues
- Share ideas and work cooperatively; be flexible
- Help with all classroom responsibilities...record keeping, grading, etc.
- Plan interesting lessons and eventually teach everything
- Accept criticism and put suggestions for improvement into practice
- Keep a journal
- Be patient with yourself and your cooperating teacher
- Be a sponge...learn all you can from everyone in the building

## **Co-Teaching Myths/Realities**

**Myth #1 - Co-teaching means having two teacher candidates in a classroom.**

**REALITY:** Only one teacher candidate is in a classroom. The co-teaching occurs between the cooperating teacher and the teacher candidate.

**Myth #2 -Teacher candidates must be left on their own to sink or swim.**

**REALITY:** Teacher candidates in co-teaching settings are supported in their efforts to becoming a licensed professional. The cooperating teacher models and assists as the teacher candidate acquires the knowledge and skills of teaching. This is in sharp contrast to the sink or swim model that assumes the teacher candidate must learn how to become a teacher on their own.

**Myth #3 - Co-teaching inhibits a teacher candidate's ability to develop classroom management skills.**

**REALITY:** Rather than having to manage a classroom all alone, a teacher candidate has the support necessary to implement effective classroom management strategies. As the skills are gained, the teacher candidate takes the lead to make sure he/she can manage the classroom without support.

**Myth # 4 - Teacher candidates don't get enough solo teaching time with co-teaching.**

**REALITY:** Teacher candidates must have opportunities to teach all alone. The amount of time a candidate is left totally alone varies and is based on their skills in managing a classroom. It is important that the teacher candidate demonstrate that they can handle a classroom all by themselves.

**Myth # 5 - It takes too much time to co-plan.**

**REALITY:** It may take more time to co-plan in the early stages of co-teaching. In order to co-teach effectively, the cooperating teacher and teacher candidate must have shared planning time. However, the benefits of co-planning are huge. Teacher candidates get a much deeper understanding of the entire curriculum through co-planning and co-taught lessons lead to increased academic performance of P-12 students making the time spent in planning beneficial for all.

**Myth#6- Teacher Candidates will never have full responsibility of the classroom.**

**REALITY:** For a period of time, each teacher candidate will lead the planning, organization, delivery and assessment of instruction in a co-taught classroom. Candidates will also be responsible for directing other adults, including the cooperating teacher, thus learning the skills necessary for effectively managing the human resources in a classroom.

**Myth #7 - Co-teaching is not the "real world".** When a teacher candidate becomes certified they will be alone in the classroom.

**REALITY:** To accommodate large class sizes, students with special needs, English Language Learners, and the push in model of title one and special education, today's classrooms will often have special education teachers, paraprofessionals and volunteers working alongside the classroom teacher. It is rare to find a classroom where the assigned teacher is working solo. The need to collaborate with other adults in the classroom is a necessity in our schools.

**Myth #8 - Co-Teaching doesn't work at the secondary level.**

**REALITY:** Co-teaching strategies have been used successfully at all grade levels and in every content area. Co-teaching can be especially effective at the secondary level as teachers are dealing with larger class sizes and greater diversity of students.

**Myth #9 - Teacher candidates don't have to write lesson plans for co-teaching because they co-plan.**

**REALITY:** Co-planning takes place before formal lesson plans are written. Once a cooperating teacher and a teacher candidate co-plan, the candidate takes the information and writes up lesson plans, which will be reviewed by the cooperating teacher.

**Myth #10 - Co-teaching can only work if the teacher candidate and cooperating teacher have the same learning or teaching style.**

**REALITY:** No two people have the same style because we are uniquely different. Teacher Candidates entering the workplace must be able to work with a variety of learning and teaching styles. Through workshops, teacher candidates and cooperating teachers are made aware of many different types of learning and teaching styles, how they work, and how to work together with individuals who have different styles.

**Myth # 11 - The university supervisor should only observe a teacher candidate when they are teaching solo.**

**REALITY:** When a supervisor observes a teacher candidate co-teaching with a cooperating teacher, they focus the observation on what the candidate is doing. If the candidate is leading a small group, it may be helpful to move closer to that group to observe him/her. If the teacher candidate is teaming with his/her cooperating teacher, focus the observation on the candidate's teaching skills, ability to collaborate with the cooperating teacher, management skills, organization, etc.