Co-Teaching:
Classroom Partnerships
for Student Success

Resources for the Conversation
Wyoming Department of Education
Seventh Annual Leadership Symposium
June 23, 2014

Marilyn Friend, Ph.D.
Marilyn Friend, Inc.
415 Pisgah Church Road, Box 355
Greensboro, NC 27455
Phone: 336.286.7050
E-mail: marilynfriend@marilynfriend.com

❖ Introduction

Welcome to this professional development session on co-teaching! Whether you are new to this exciting and effective way to provide specialized services or a co-teaching veteran, in this workshop you should discover ways to create strong co-teaching partnerships or to refine your practice, taking it to the next level.

Here are the objectives for today's workshop and the related key topics we'll address:

1. How do we build (or renew) our partnership?

- The vocabulary of co-teaching
- Co-teaching applications: professional roles of co-teachers
- Paraprofessionals in the context of co-teaching
- Self-awareness and self-understanding
- Novices and veterans
- Co-teaching cycles
- Data on co-teaching effectiveness

2. How do we create instructional intensity through co-teaching?

- Description of six co-teaching approaches
- Variations and elaborations on co-teaching approaches
- Strategies for grouping students for co-teaching
- Examples of lessons and evidence-based instructional strategies that are more easily implemented or enhanced through co-teaching

3. What is needed to make co-teaching sustainable?

- Common planning time
- Schedules for co-teachers
- Co-teaching class composition
- District level support for co-teaching
- Principal/school support for co-teaching

4. What are common co-teaching issues, dilemmas, and challenges?

- Partnership problems (reluctant partners; dominating partners, absent partners)
- Parent questions and concerns
- Getting started or renewing our practice
- Your additional questions and concerns

Understanding and
Building the Partnership

Questions for This Workshop Segment

1. What is co-teaching?
2. What are variations on co-teaching?
3. What's the difference: co-teaching, inclusion, team teaching, paraprofessional support?
4. Why is co-teaching becoming so popular?
5. What is my contribution to our partnership?
6. How could we blend your contribution and my contribution?
7. What data indicate that co-teaching is effective?

❖ Co-Teaching Defined

As is true of many concepts in the field of education, co-teaching has been defined in a number of ways. Some individuals consider any arrangement with two adults assigned to a classroom to be co-teaching, even when one of the individuals is a paraprofessional or parent volunteer. A more accurate and useful definition of co-teaching includes these elements:

- *Co-teaching is a service delivery option.*

  Co-teaching exists as a means for providing the specialized instruction to which students with disabilities, those who are English language learners, or who have other special needs are entitled while ensuring access to general curriculum in the least restrictive environment with the provision of supplementary aids and services.

- *Two or more professionals with equivalent licensure and employment status are the participants in co-teaching.*

  Co-teaching is based on parity. When paraprofessionals or other adults assist in classrooms, the contribution is valuable, but it is appropriately considered support rather than co-teaching.

- *Co-teachers share instructional responsibility and accountability for a single group of students for whom they both have ownership.*

  Both educators contribute to instruction as part of co-teaching. Perhaps the most significant re-conceptualization critical for co-teaching is the notion of a two-teacher classroom rather than a one-teacher classroom with "help" available from the other teacher.

- *Co-teaching occurs primarily in a shared classroom or workspace.*

  Although instructional reasons sometimes exist for physically separating students and teachers, co-teaching usually involves multiple activities occurring in one place.

- *Co-teachers' specific level of participation may vary based on their skills and the instructional needs of the student group.*

  Especially in middle and high school when special educators, ESL teachers, or other specialists are co-teaching in subjects in which they have had limited professional preparation, their skill and comfort for contributing to initial instruction may take time to develop. In such situations, care must be taken to by co-teachers to outline roles and responsibilities so that both professionals do have meaningful roles capitalizing on their strengths.

❖ Co-Teaching and Specially Designed Instruction

A central concept for co-teaching, but one that seems often to be overlooked, is that co-teaching is the vehicle through which students' specialized services are delivered. Too often, co-teachers comment that their emphasis is one of the following instructional components…and co-teaching must be much more than these or it cannot be justified:

- General support for learning (special educators and ESL teachers have far too many skills to be classroom helpers)

- A strategy for differentiating (all teachers should differentiate; co-teaching should add more value to the classroom than that)

- Accommodations for students with disabilities (again, general education teachers are expected to provide accommodations because they are designed to be implemented to support students in general education; by themselves, they are not a reason for a special educator to be a teaching partner)

Even more important is the fact that none of the above activities constitutes the delivery of the specialized instruction students are entitled to receive. For students with disabilities, it is specially designed instruction that is based on their assessed needs and the goals (and possibly, objectives) that have been prepared for them. For English language learners, it is the instruction that enables students to both be learning English as well as mastering the curriculum standards.

When students receive their services in separate settings, seldom is any question raised about specialized instruction. When students are educated with peers without special needs in general education settings, professionals must be clear on how the required services are being delivered.

Based on the students with whom you work, what are examples of specialized instruction needed (being careful to distinguish it from the items noted above)? How can this specialized instruction be embedded into the instruction that occurs (large group or small group) in a general education setting?

_____

_____

_____

❖ Related Terms and Concepts…NOT Co-Teaching

In the rapidly evolving world of special services and supports for students, terminology often becomes an issue. For clarification, these are some terms sometimes used in confusion with co-teaching:

- Collaboration

  Although generally it is preferred that co-teaching be collaborative, collaboration is far more than co-teaching. **Collaboration** refers to how individuals interact, not the activity they're doing. Thus, any activity—co-teaching, problem solving, consultation—may or may not be collaborative. Further, collaboration frequently occurs outside education, for example, in business settings and in health occupations.

- Inclusion

  Although co-teaching is integral to the inclusive practices in many schools, it is not a requirement for inclusion to occur. **Inclusion** refers to a broad belief system or philosophy embracing the notion that <u>all</u> students should be welcomed members of a learning community, that all students are part of their classrooms even if their abilities differ.

- Team teaching

  The term **team teaching** often is used to describe the situation in which two general education teachers combine classes and share instruction. In an elementary school, this might occur when two fourth grade teachers decide to open the retractable wall that divides their rooms and teach the entire group as one. In a secondary school, this might occur when an English teacher and a history teacher combine two classes to present an American studies course. Co-teaching is different from this type of team teaching in two important ways: First, in co-teaching the teacher-student ratio is drastically improved. Second, in co-teaching, two significantly different orientations toward teaching are blended. Finally, team teaching in the middle school literature often refers to a process for planning interdisciplinary instruction, but not sharing instructional delivery.

❖ A Conceptual Framework for Collaboration

DEFINITION

Collaboration is a style for interaction between co-equal parties voluntarily engaged in shared decision making as they work toward a common goal.

DEFINING CHARACTERISTICS

- Style/Approach

  As a style or an approach to interaction, collaboration can only exist when attached to a process or activity such as problem solving or planning.

- Voluntary

  Collaborative relationships are entered into freely and exist by choice.

- Parity

  In collaboration, each participant's contribution is equally valued and participants have equal power in decision making.

- Mutual problem/goal

  Collaboration occurs in response to a goal, problem, or need that is jointly shared by the participants. They must share at least one specific goal although they may individually hold many different goals.

- Shared responsibility

  Participants in a collaborative activity share responsibility for participating in the activity and in the decision making that it entails.

- Shared accountability

  Participants in a collaborative activity have equal accountability for the outcome of that activity.

- Shared resources

  Participants in a collaborative activity share material and human resources.

EMERGENT CHARACTERISTICS

Certain characteristics both contribute to and emerge from effective collaborative relationships. These include beliefs and values that support collaboration, mutual trust, mutual respect, and establishment of a sense of community.

From Friend, M., & Cook, L. (2013). *Interactions: Collaboration skills for school professionals (*7th edition). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson/Allyn and Bacon.

❖ Co-Teaching v. Inclusion

Co-teaching and inclusion sometimes are used as synonyms. They are not. Co-teaching is a service delivery option through which students receive services. Inclusion (or, preferably, inclusive practices) refers to a schoolwide belief system about all educators' responsibility and accountability for the education of all their students. Here are key elements of inclusive schooling.

- Every person who works in the school is committed to the goal of helping **all** students achieve their potential; inclusiveness is a school-level belief system.

- The principal is a strong and vocal advocate for all students, adamant that they access the general curriculum with a system of supports around them.

- Professionals and other staff routinely use respectful, person-first language.

- Emphasis is on abilities rather than disabilities or special needs such as language difference.

- General education and specialized services are seamless—their benefit to students is maximized and their cost is minimized.

- The specialized services that some students receive do not exist as separate entities (for example, "we have inclusion, resource, and self-contained programs; speech and ESL are pullout programs").

- Differentiation is considered the rule, not the exception.

- Instructional and assistive technology enhances access to the general curriculum.

- Parents are not just welcomed partners in the school, their participation and collaboration are actively sought.

- A variety of support services are available to students, including instruction in a separate setting—but only when appropriate because of a student's specific needs; often, it is the last choice and must be data driven.

- Inclusiveness is communicated in many ways—materials displayed, books and other media available, adult interactions with students and each other, schedules, room assignments, and so on.

- The term *inclusion* is rarely needed because it is such an integral part of the school culture.

❖ Co-Teaching versus Team Teaching

Although some professional literature and some school personnel treat co-teaching and team teaching as though they are synonymous, they describe two very different teaching arrangements. These are examples of team teaching:

- In an elementary school with accordion walls installed after the days when the school was designed for open concept schooling, two fifth grade teachers decide to slide open the wall so that they can share students during language arts and math instruction. They use flexible grouping and either teacher may work with students from either class.

- In a middle school, the 8th grade team meets weekly. They design interdisciplinary units of instruction around key themes, and they discuss the 110 students they share so that all are aware of strengths and concerns. The four teachers do not share instructional delivery.

- A high school offers a course titled *American Studies* in which two class sections, one history and one literature, are blended four days per week. The two teachers have as a goal teaching history through literature.

The following table summarizes why none of the above is the same as co-teaching.

Co-Teaching v. Team Teaching

Key Differences	Team Teaching	Co-Teaching
Student-teacher ratio	Ratio is constant at 25-30:1, whether the team includes two, three, or more teachers	Ratio compared to a single-teacher class is significantly reduced, for example, 15:1 instead of 30:1
Professional expertise	Teachers have similar expertise; for example in team taught interdisciplinary courses such as American studies (history taught through literature), the teachers are content experts in their respective fields	Teachers have significantly different but complementary expertise. General education teachers contribute content expertise; specialists contribute expertise on many dimensions of the process of learning, either generally or in a special area (e.g., math or language)

❖ Reflecting on Your Understanding of Co-Teaching

With your co-teaching partner(s) or other participants, take a few moments to pull together what you have learned thus far in this workshop. Here are some questions that you might want to select to focus your discussion:

1. Which of the concepts introduced thus far were explained in a way different from my original understanding? What is the possible impact of my changed understanding on classroom practice, school priorities, and/or district plans?

2. How are paraprofessionals assigned in my school? Which practices seem appropriate? Which might need to be called to others' attention, reviewed, and possibly revised?

3. Why is it important to distinguish co-teaching from inclusion? What strategies could I suggest to help others to make this distinction?

4. To what extent are the characteristics of co-teaching in place in our relationship, in our school, in our district? Which are in exemplary status and which need to be directly addressed?

Take Aways

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

❖ My Contributions to Our Co-Teaching Partnership

Whether co-teachers are novices or veterans in implementing this service delivery option and regardless of the specific application of co-teaching, it is important that they reflect on what they contribute to the partnership. This can help novices understand that co-teaching is not about the two educators being the same, but rather valuing what each contributes. Similarly, it can help veterans review how well they are taking advantage of each person's expertise.

Respond to the following questions regarding your contributions to co-teaching, jotting your responses in the chart below:

- What are the strengths you bring to a co-teaching partnership? Think about qualities you have as a person, your knowledge as an educator, and specialized skills you may have related to your specific area of expertise.

- What are the liabilities that you bring to a co-teaching partnership? Think about your personal characteristics, challenges you would face regardless of your professional role, and those within your discipline and across disciplines.

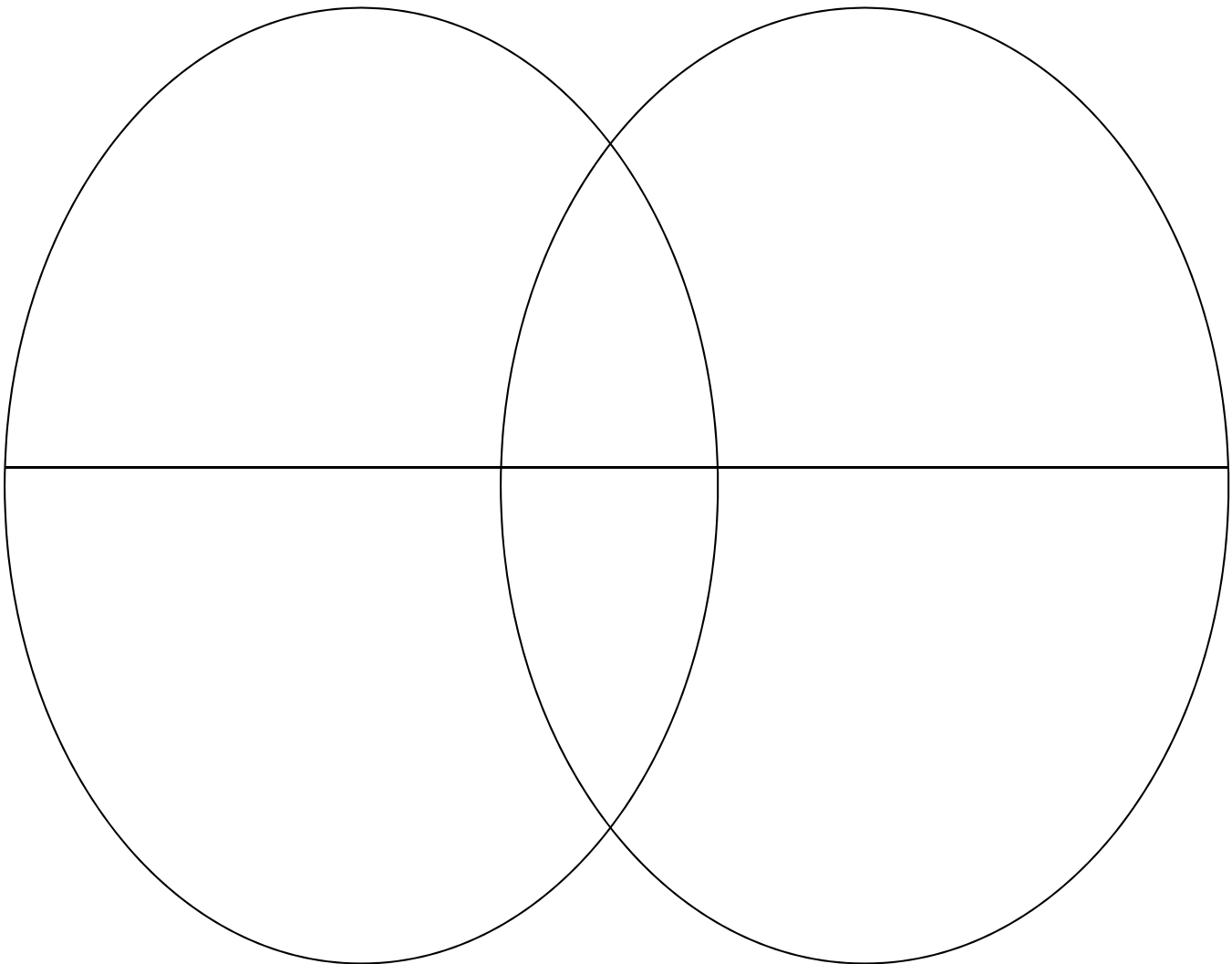| My Strengths for Co-Teaching	My Liabilities for Co-Teaching
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.
6.	6.

❖ Blending Expertise to Create Partnership

With your co-teaching partner (or complete this activity hypothetically with a participant near you), compare notes on what knowledge, skills, and characteristics you bring to a co-teaching partnership. Complete the Venn diagram below and then respond to the questions that follow.

General education   **Shared**   **Specialist**

❖ Checking for 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 partnership, especially if either of you perceive that parity is not in place. 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 posted; students know there are 2 teachers.
_____	_____	_____	2.	Both teachers' names are on report cards.
_____	_____	_____	3.	Both teachers' handwriting is on student assignments.
_____	_____	_____	4.	Both teachers have space for personal belongings.
_____	_____	_____	5.	Both teachers have similar furniture (i.e. disks, chairs).
_____	_____	_____	6.	Both teachers take a lead role in the classroom.
_____	_____	_____	7.	Both teachers talk during instruction.
_____	_____	_____	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 the students.

❖ Why All the Buzz about Co-Teaching?

A number of factors are influencing the continued growth of co-teaching as an option for educating students with disabilities or gift/talents, as well as those who are English language learners. Three particularly relevant sets of factors include the following:

- *Federal law and policy and the state law and policy that must adhere to federal mandates.* Examples:

   o Federal law has set high standards for academic outcomes for all students. Many professionals have acknowledged that the only way to meet these standards is to ensure that all students have access to the same curriculum.

   o When teachers partner, especially in middle and high school, issues related to highly qualified status of teachers are resolved (in most locales).

   o When students with disabilities are taught in a separate setting, the intensity of their collective needs often results in the delivery of the standard curriculum not being accomplished.

   o Students who come and go from classrooms often miss significant segments of instruction. No mechanism typically exists for helping them to learn what they missed.

   o Learning that occurs in a separate setting often is fragmented--students often do not transfer what is learned in one setting to another.

   o When professionals work with each other, they often share their knowledge and skills. As a result, all of them become more effective educators

- *Research and evaluation studies demonstrating the potential of co-teaching to positively affect student outcomes*. Examples:

   o The published body of experimental or quasi-experimental research on co-teaching is extraordinarily small. This unfortunate situation is the result of many complexities related to conducting co-teaching research. Issues include these: (a) identifying overall comparable student class groups in settings with and without co-teaching; (b) making sure that the students with special needs embedded within the co-taught and solo-taught classes are likewise comparable; (c) addressing comparable subject matter in the co-taught and solo-

taught classes; (d) ensuring that the teachers involved have comparable skill; and (e) confirming the fidelity of implementation of co-teaching (that is, are co-teaching approaches being used appropriately). Some authors find positive results (despite these limitations, usually in program evaluation studies (e.g., Hang & Rabren, 2009). Others find a lack of strong research to support co-teaching (e.g., Solis, Vaughn, Swanson, & McCulley, 2012).

o   Many schools and districts are gathering data to support the effectiveness of co-teaching (e.g., Walsh, 2012). For example, in middle schools, the achievement data for students in a solo-taught class will be compared to the achievement data of a group of students taught by the same general education teacher, but with a co-teacher. Of course, it is important that both class groups represent the diversity of students in the school. When this is the case, co-taught classes often equal or outperform solo-taught sections, even though the former include more students with identified special needs. Yet other teachers simple measure the progress of their students across the school year, examining academic growth from one year to the next or reviewing the percent of student passing high stakes or end-of-course exams.

- *The worldwide trend toward inclusiveness and social justice.* Examples:

  o   Students in co-taught classrooms often have better opportunities to learn social, behavioral, and cultural mores through informal interactions with peers and professionals.

  o   Students who are ELLs often struggle with social isolation; services in a separate setting may exacerbate this issue.

  o   The diversity among learners today often suggests that many students benefit from the services that specialists can offer within the context of the general education classroom.

  o   The various points of view co-teachers bring to a classroom enable instruction to be richer, deeper, and tailored to each student's needs.

  o   The U.N. Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which addresses inclusiveness as a lifelong right that should exist throughout the world in all pursuits.

❖ Co-Teaching Research Summary

In today's schools, educators are expected to use evidence-based practices. A logical question, then, is this: What does research suggest about the effectiveness of co-teaching? The answer is that it depends. Research on co-teaching is limited but growing. Many of the reported studies are case studies or anecdotal accounts of co-teaching program development and implementation. It is also difficult to interpret co-teaching research because researchers often do not specify exactly what is meant by co-teaching, for how long the co-teaching program was in existence, the amount of time that was spent daily in each co-taught classroom, the number of classes in which co-teaching occurred, and the details related to other important variables (e.g., subject matter, nature of the special needs of the students who were co-taught, teacher experience). The studies that have appeared generally provide a mixed picture of the impact of co-teaching at the elementary, middle school, and high school levels. Overall, the answer to the question about co-teaching effectiveness seems to be a matter of the quality of the practices implemented and the ways in which the practices are measured. Here is a sample of the available research:

- Hang and Rabren (2009) studied 45 co-teachers and 58 students with disabilities. All participants were new to co-teaching during the 2004-2005 school year. The researchers gathered data through surveys, classroom observations, and a review of relevant records. They found that students with disabilities in co-taught classes significantly increased in achievement on standardized tests from the year prior to co-teaching and that these students' achievement was not significantly different from the overall achievement of their grade level. They also found that student absence was higher in co-taught classes than in previous years as were discipline referrals. Teachers universally perceived that weekly common planning time was essential for co-teaching success.

- Wilson and Michaels (2006) surveyed 346 students in secondary schools (127 students with disabilities; 219 typical learners) regarding their perceptions of co-teaching. The students reported that they favored co-teaching, would participate in another co-taught if given the opportunity, and received better grades in co-taught classes compared to other classes. The students reported that more help was available in the co-taught class, multiple instructional approaches were employed, multiple teaching styles and teacher perspectives were offered, and that more skill development was possible. Although many students saw no drawbacks to co-teaching, some noted that they could not get away with anything in such classes, that standards were higher than in other classes, and that the multiple teacher perspectives could be confusing. Students without disabilities stated that the co-taught class provided higher levels of abstraction, concept development, and literacy skill development than other classes, dispelling the notion that co-taught classes constitute "watered down" curriculum.

- Scruggs, Mastropieri, and McDuffie (2007) reviewed 32 qualitative studies of co-teaching and used integrative techniques to examine patterns in the data. They found that co-teachers generally believed their practices were beneficial to students,

and they noted that typical learners increased their understanding of and cooperation with their classmates with disabilities and that students with disabilities received increased attention in the general education setting. Educators noted, though, they needed a wide array of supports to make co-teaching effective, including common planning time, administrative support, and professional development. They also indicated that co-teaching should only be assigned to volunteers, not forced on those who do not want to participate. Unfortunately, these authors found that special educators most often assumed the role of being a classroom assistant, an approach to co-teaching that generally is not recommended.

- Pardini (2006) reported on the experiences in the St. Paul, MN Public Schools in moving services for students who are English language learners from separate settings to mainstream classes. With the largest populations of Somali and Hmong in the United States and a rapidly increasing Hispanic population, the district was offering ELL services in nearly every school in the district. The results of their decision to employ co-teaching are evident in the achievement data for this student group. During 2003-2005, the time period covered by the report, the gap in reading achievement between other students and ELLs fell from 13 percent to 6 percent on high stakes testing; the gap in math fell from 6.7 percent to 2.7 percent. The results achieved by the district are among the best in the country for this student group.

- Walsh (2012) summarized data from Maryland school districts gathered over a 20-year span of co-teaching implementation and from one district over the past 6 years. The co-teaching was undertaken as a means of ensuring access to the general curriculum. He reported that students with disabilities who received their services through co-teaching had improved outcomes with an accelerated rate of achievement on state-mandated reading and math tests. The data from one county school district is used to demonstrate the efficacy of co-teaching as an instructional vehicle for students with disabilities.

These studies and the others that are similar illustrate the point made at the beginning of this section: The results of research on co-teaching remain difficult to interpret. Over the next several years, what is needed is a systematic effort to explore a wide variety of crucial factors that may affect both the quality and impact of co-teaching programs.

Making It Work
in the Classroom

Questions for This Workshop Segment

1. What are six fundamental co-teaching approaches?
2. What are variations on co-teaching approaches?
3. What are some samples of co-taught lessons?
4. How should students be grouped within co-teaching approaches?
5. What are evidence-based instructional practices fostered through co-teaching?

❖ Summary of Co-Teaching Approaches

There are six basic co-teaching approaches, and these sometimes are used for an entire lesson, sometimes are blended during a single lesson, or sometimes are the basis for unique variations. As you watch the video, rank each of the co-teaching approaches in terms of recommended frequency of use: high (H), medium (M), or low (L).

_____ **One Teach, One Observe.** This co-teaching approach entails one teacher leading instruction while the other teacher gathers data regarding students' academic progress, behavior or social skills, or responsiveness to teacher directions. Data thus gathered should form the basis for instructional decision-making.

_____ **Station Teaching.** In this co-teaching approach, teachers divide content and students. Each teacher then teaches the content to one group and subsequently repeats the instruction for the other group. If appropriate, a third "station" could give students an opportunity to work independently.

_____ **Parallel Teaching.** In parallel teaching, the teachers are both teaching the same information, but they divide the class group and do so simultaneously. The distinction between this approach and station teaching is that in parallel teaching, the teachers work only with part of the students; they do not interact with all the students as is the case with station teaching.

_____ **Alternative Teaching:** In alternative teaching, one teacher takes responsibility for the large group while the other works with a smaller group. The purpose for grouping the students may vary, as may the educator who takes the small group and the students comprising the small group.

_____ **Teaming:** In teaming, both teachers are delivering the same instruction at the same time. Some teachers refer to this as having "one brain in two bodies." Others call it "tag team teaching." Most co-teachers consider this approach the most complex but satisfying way to co-teach, but it is the approach that is most dependent on teachers' styles.

_____ **One Teach, One Assist.** In one teach, one assist, one teacher holds primary responsibility for teaching while the other professional circulates through the room providing unobtrusive assistance to students as needed.

❖ One Teach, One Observe

Brief Description

One teacher is leading the entire group of students while the other teacher, using some type of formal data collection instrument or chart, gathers data about one student, several students, or the entire class, depending on the purpose of the observation.

Opportunities and Advantages

- One teach, one observe takes advantage of two teachers in the classroom during times when only one teacher is needed for large-group instruction.

- It permits gathering formative assessment data multiple times during any single lesson so that adjustments can be made immediately.

- This approach is applicable to academic behavior, classroom behavior, peer interactions, and other data and thus goes beyond the limits of the evaluation of products students produce.

- If teachers know each other and are comfortable in the co-taught class, they may decide to gather data related to their own teaching behaviors (e.g., one teacher writes down the questions the other teacher asks students, and then they reverse the process).

Potential Dilemmas or Problems

- There is a risk that the specialist too often will be assigned to data collection while the other educator teaches; this may lead students to believe the specialist is not a teacher.

- Although valuable, gathering data during instruction is in lieu of grouping students and providing intense, individualized lessons.

- Data should be used—otherwise there is no purpose in this approach.

Notes on One Teach, One Observe

_____

_____

_____

_____

❖ Station Teaching

Brief Description

The content for the lesson is divided into three parts as are the students in class and the time available for instruction. Students rotate through the three groups. Two groups involve teacher-led or -facilitated instruction. The third station comprises an independent activity.

Opportunities and Advantages

- Instructional intensity is increased because students are working in small groups.

- If there are more adults in the classroom (e.g., a student intern, a paraprofessional), even more groups can be formed so that instruction is tailored to an even greater extent. Alternatively, just two groups (each with a teacher) can be formed if an independent group is not appropriate given student needs.

- Many variations of student groupings are possible, depending on the instructional goal…students with similar needs, heterogeneous groups, and so on.

- Both teachers are active participants in instruction.

Potential Dilemmas or Problems

- Each segment of instruction must take approximately the same amount of time, and teachers need to be aware of time constraints.

- The instructional content cannot be sequential; the stations must be able to be completed in any order.

- Noise can be an issue unless care is taken to keep student and teacher voices low.

Notes on Station Teaching

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

❖ Parallel Teaching

Brief Description

The group of students is divided in half. Each teacher has an assigned group and delivers the instruction to his/her respective group. This approach has three variations: First, the material being covered is identical and the goal for the arrangement is to increase student participation and engagement. Second, this approach can be used to teach perspective by having the two groups discuss different points of view related to a topic. Third, this approach can be used to tier instruction based on skill levels, interest, type of materials used, product produced, or other instructional elements.

Opportunities and Advantages

- Parallel teaching truly establishes a teaching partnership with both partners contributing to student learning.

- Strong potential exists to increase the instructional intensity of the classroom by increasing students' opportunities to respond (OTR).

- This approach provides built-in opportunities for high-quality differentiation.

Potential Dilemmas or Problems

- Teachers and students need to lower their voices or the classroom noise level may become a problem.

- Teachers need to strategically position themselves (e.g., back-to-back) so that their voices don't carry to the other group and distract students.

- When tiering, care must be taken to avoid creating a "high" and "low" group—stigma is likely to result.

- Both teachers must be comfortable teaching the planned material.

Notes on Parallel Teaching

_____

_____

_____

_____

❖ Alternative Teaching

Brief Description

One teacher is working with most students. The other teacher has a small group pulled to the side and is providing either similar instruction or targeted instruction. This co-teaching arrangement may last the entire co-teaching time period, or it may be an approach used only for a few minutes of a class session.

Opportunities and Advantages

- Alternative teaching truly establishes a teaching partnership with both partners contributing to student learning.

- This approach allows for a level of differentiation, the delivery of language support, or the provision of specially designed instruction in a way sometimes not possible through the other co-teaching approaches.

- The small group has a variety of purposes, including these: re-teaching or remediation, enrichment or extension, pre-teaching, instructional make-up time for students who have been absent, assessment of student learning, and management of student behavior (that is, the student with the behavior problem is grouped with several students who are models in order to prevent a behavior incident).

Potential Dilemmas or Problems

- A fairly high risk exists of using the small group primarily for remediation; stigma may result, especially for older students.

- Sometimes, it is assumed that the specialist should lead the small group. This also may lead to stigma; each teacher should sometimes have the small group.

- This approach cannot result in students missing core instruction and so sometimes must be implement prior to the start of instruction or at the end of the co-teaching session.

Notes on Alternative Teaching

_____

_____

_____

_____

❖ Teaming

Brief Description

Both teachers lead the instruction and carry out equivalent activities and assume equivalent roles in the classroom.

Opportunities and Advantages

- There often is a synergy and resulting higher energy when teachers effectively use this approach.

- Teachers often can plan activities using teaming that students find very engaging (e.g., debating a topic).

- Often, teaming is a mechanism for embedding within content instruction the strategies and techniques that struggling learners need.

- Teaming models collaboration for students.

- Teaming clearly indicates to students that the co-teachers have parity.

Potential Dilemmas or Problems

- Although teaming can be entertaining, some instructional intensity is lost because it is generally large-group instruction.

- Teaming is not recommended unless teachers have some co-teaching experience and can have honest and constructive conversations with each other because of the potential for mis-communicating or "stepping on toes" that can occur in this approach.

- There is a risk of high levels of teacher talk; this risk should be monitored because a possible result is falling behind in terms of curriculum pacing.

Notes on Teaming

_____

_____

_____

_____

❖ One Teach, One Assist

Brief Description

One teacher is leading the entire group of students while the other teacher stands to the side or back of the room, monitoring student learning, or quietly circulating around the room answering individual student questions, redirecting students who are off-task, and otherwise supporting student learning.

Opportunities and Advantages

- This approach can be helpful when a new set of co-teachers is becoming acquainted with each other's teaching styles.

- One teach, one assist functions as a form of informal observation when students are learning a math procedure or carrying out on an experiment or lab.

- High school students have reported that they prefer whispered assistance as an alternative to raising their hands and asking a question that might make them appear less competent than peers.

Potential Dilemmas or Problems

- Research suggests that this is the most often used…and least effective…co-teaching approach.

- A teacher assisting individual students during instruction may distract them from the lesson, and it may also distract students seated around that student.

- Many intermediate and middle school students do not want to be singled out by having a teacher come to their desks during large-group instruction.

- A high risk exists of fostering dependence among the learners in a classroom if this approach is used frequently.

- This approach often suggests to students that the staffing is one teacher and one assistant.

Notes on One Teach, One Assist

_____

_____

❖ How Do Co-Teachers Decide Which Approaches to Use?

Many factors go into teachers' decisions about which co-teaching approaches to use. Among the factors to consider are these:

- Who are the students?

  - If students tend to be mature and do not have serious behavior problems, nearly any co-teaching approach is likely to be effective.

  - If students have difficulty working independently, approaches that do not require independent activities should be used, especially until the needed work behaviors can be taught.

  - If several students are highly distractible, teachers need to take care that the approaches implemented accommodate that need. They might place such students in different groups or limit the number of groups being used.

  - For some students, what is key is establishing co-teaching routines that students can easily predict and follow.

- Who are the teachers?

  - If teachers are new to co-teaching, then approaches that emphasize concurrent instructional roles should be prioritized (e.g., station teaching, parallel teaching, alternative teaching).

  - At the beginning of the school year, teachers may wish to gather student data by using one teach, one observe.

  - If teachers are experiencing difficulty in their relationship, it might be best to avoid teaming, which requires flexibility and familiarity. Conversely, if teachers are quite comfortable with each other, nearly any approach can be effective.

- What curriculum competencies are we addressing/what are our teaching priorities?

  - Creative co-teachers use all the approaches across curricular areas by carefully strategizing student groupings, order of instruction, and the blending of teacher-led and student-led instruction.

- o If in an advanced subject area in which the specialist does not have deep understanding, new core instruction likely will require either

- What are the practicalities of our co-teaching situation?

  - o If the classroom for your co-teaching is spacious, you will have more opportunities to experiment with various grouping options and are likely to be able to engage students in activities that let them move around the classroom. Thus, approaches that emphasize small groups are easily arranged.

  - o If the classroom for your co-teaching is crowded, you are like to use fewer groups and may have teachers move instead of students. It is important to emphasize, though, that a small classroom space should not become a reason to default to all large-group instruction using one teach, one assist.

  - o If you have little common planning time, consider gradually adding to your co-teaching repertoire. For example, one month focus on using station teaching. The next month focus on parallel teaching. The following month try to mix those two approaches. Continue in this way to gradually become familiar and comfortable with all the approaches and variations of them.

  - o Another strategy when planning time is limited is to find patterns in instruction and create applicable patterns for co-teaching. For example, if you introduce a new unit the first two days generally are spent primarily on vocabulary, decide on a co-teaching arrangement for teaching vocabulary and adhere to this approach for a grading quarter or semester (e.g., using parallel teaching with both teachers introducing words to students).

All the co-teaching approaches are implemented at all grade levels and across all subject areas. No single formula can be used to select an approach. Further, because co-teachers often blend approaches or use more than one approach during a single lesson, it is best to think about the four elements just described and then to reach consensus on how to best match co-teaching approaches to help students reach their learning potential.

❖ Co-Teaching and the Common Core State Standards

Nearly every state and most U.S. territories have adopted the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), and school districts are at various stages of implementing them. The intent of these standards is to articulate the knowledge and skills that all students should acquire during their foundational education so that they are well-prepared for college and career, able to compete with graduates from around the world.

Co-teachers are finding that implementing the CCSS in co-taught classrooms presents both opportunities and a few challenges. That is, they quickly discover that having two teachers in the classroom enables the implementation of highly engaging and individually tailored student learning opportunities. At the same time, they sometimes struggle to ensure that their diverse learners successfully reach the standards, especially when a brisk learning pace is set.

Here are several ways to maximize the opportunities of CCSS and co-teaching and to minimize the challenges:

- ✓ The co-teaching approaches can contribute significantly to increasing student engagement. By focusing on using small groups, teachers can design lessons with increased student activities and projects.

- ✓ Small groups also foster student discussion. Using a combination of teacher-facilitated and student-led groups helps professionals to arrange a learning environment in which student talk more and teachers talk less.

- ✓ Co-teaching permits educators to group students in many ways. In some cases, students could be grouped by skill level. In others, they may be grouped heterogeneously. IN yet others, they may be grouped based on their interests. Using all of these (and other) grouping strategies enables teachers to enrich student learning while being responsive to their needs.

- ✓ Some students need extended direct and explicit instruction, and they also may need more practice, especially on foundational skills. Co-teaching makes this possible. For example, a pre-teaching group (alternative teaching) could be used to prepare students with disabilities or those learning English for the upcoming inquiry-based lesson. As students move from group to group in station teaching, teachers could decide to have some students repeat one station that has particularly essential material covered (for example, core academic vocabulary).

- ✓ In math, as students are learning more than one way to arrive at a solution, using parallel teaching students can learn one way and then partner to teach each other, increasing student engagement and strengthening their learning.

- ✓ The data requirements of CCSS are much more readily completed with two teachers in the classroom instead of one.

❖ The Routines of Co-Taught Classes

Co-taught classes need the same routines that all classes need in order to ensure that instruction is effective, safe, and efficient. However, co-teachers generally need to consider several additional routines. Here are examples:

Students entering the classroom

Students entering a classroom for co-teaching need to learn your expectations. Teachers should teach appropriate routines at the beginning of the year. For example, it could be that students learn that when the term *station teaching* is written on the board, it means they should look for their names posted around the room and sit at the grouping of desks in that area. What other entry strategies might you need for co-teaching?

Students arranging desks for groups

Students typically need to be taught and rewarded for quickly moving classroom furniture so that co-teaching can occur. For younger students, it might be helpful to mark the floor with removable tape so students learn how to position their desks (and how to put them back). For older students, instructions and then the use of a stopwatch and an appropriate reward may be all that is necessary.

Students moving from group to group

In most classrooms it is preferably to have students move from group to group because these brief transition periods comprise a break in learning and can re-energize students. However, students should learn how quickly you expect them to move to a new group as well as how to efficiently put materials away, get materials out, and so on.

End of the instructional period

Do you expect students to move furniture at the end of the co-teaching time or class period? To put materials in a certain place?   To add an entry to their daily learning journals? As with other co-teaching routines, those for the end of the co-teaching time should be practiced and rewarded.

❖ Topics for Co-Teachers to Discuss

1. Instructional content and expectations for students.

2. Instructional format, including who will do which part of the instructional delivery

3. Planning, including time to do it and who does which part.

4. Parity, or how it will be clear that both educators have the same status in the classroom.

5. Space, related to both students and teachers.

6. Noise and each educator's tolerance for it.

7. Instructional routines.

8. Organizational routines.

9. The definition of "help."

10. Discipline procedures for the classroom.

11. Safety matters (e.g., for students with hearing impairments).

12. Feedback, including when and how to discuss issues with each other.

13. Student evaluation, including grading.

14. Teaching chores such as grading, duplicating, assignment preparation, and so on.

15. Responsibilities and procedures for substitutes.

16. Confidentiality.

17. Pet peeves.

18. Other _____
    _____
    _____

Creating Sustainable
Co-Teaching Programs

Questions for This Workshop Segment

1. What is a reasonable expectation for common planning time?
2. What does a specialist's schedule look like when co-teaching is a service option?
3. Who should be in a co-taught class?
4. How do districts support co-teaching programs?
5. What are the responsibilities of principals and other site administrators for co-teaching?

❖ A Three-Part Co-Planning Model

Planning is a critical co-teaching topic, but it needs a fresh look. First, realize that time is a problem in *every* field, not just education. Next, a logical question is this: How are other professions addressing the time squeeze? Most importantly, which of the ideas being used in other disciplines might work in education?

The result of this problem solving process is a new way of thinking about co-teaching planning time. It is a three-part model, drawn from other professions, with these components:

1. Periodic face-to-face planning

Face-to-face planning is important, but it should be periodic, directed toward data interpretations, and focused on an analysis of past and future instruction. When principals move from master scheduling planning time and instead find a means to provide coverage for co-teachers for at least an hour once every four weeks for *macro planning*, Planning seems much more feasible.

2. Electronic planning

Co-teachers should use electronic planning as a complement to their face-to-face planning. However, this does not mean sending each other random e-mails that often end up lost or inadvertently deleted. Nor does it mean counting on text messaging as a key planning tool. So many electronic collaboration platforms exist that they have become an essential co-teaching planning mechanism. Such resources are included at the back of these materials.

3. On-the-spot planning

Even when face-to-face and electronic planning have been effectively used to prepare for co-teaching, plans sometimes go awry. Teachers get behind in terms of pacing, a special program leads to a shortened schedule, or one of the educators has been absent for two days for professional development. In these any many other cases, teachers need just a few minutes to touch base. If they have a prescribed procedure for students to follow while they briefly meet, they are able to get back on track while avoiding a loss of instructional time for students.

❖ Co-Teaching Planning Time Strategies

Nearly every educator would like to have more time…to prepare lessons, to discuss students and their needs, to complete grading, to organize their classrooms, and on and on. If you think about it, though, the same dilemma exists in nearly every profession. Planning in the 21st century entails using creativity to find periodic, high quality face-to-face planning time using strategies such as these:

1. Use other adults to help cover classes--including principals, assistant principals, counselors, social workers, department chairpersons, volunteers, paraprofessionals, psychologists, and supervisors. Of course, be sure to follow local policies on who can supervise groups of students.

2. Find funds for substitute teachers--some sources include grants from your state or local foundations, parent-teacher organizations, and disability advocacy groups.

3. Find "volunteer" substitutes--retired teachers, members of social or civic organizations, teacher trainees from local universities.

4. When school-based staff development sessions are scheduled, arrange for them to begin late or conclude early with the saved time being used for collaboration.

5. On district professional development days, arrange for co-teachers to be exempt from part of the planned activities so that they may use the time to plan.

6. Experiment with a late arrival or early dismissal day. This time can occur once per week, once per month, or once per grading period. Typically, the school day is lengthened and the additional minutes are "banked" to provide the release. The time thus created must be used in working with colleagues. It is not additional individual preparation time nor is it time to be spent on large-group, formal meetings.

7. Stay late after school once per month, but make it enjoyable by bringing snacks, flowers, music or other pleasant "atmosphere" items. If you bring walking shoes, you can accomplish both exercise and collaboration!

8. Treat collaboration as the equivalent of school committee responsibilities, especially if you are operating a pilot program. Time that others in school spend in committee meetings is spent working collaboratively.

9. Plan after school, but work with administrators to arrange to receive continuing education credit for the time spent.

10. For special educators, reserve time in the daily schedule that is not obligated to specific responsibilities. Use this time flexibly with lunch, planning, and other time to meet with teachers.

11. Request release from particular duties in order to make up for the extra time that planning for co-teaching takes.

❖ Sixty-Minute Planning Protocol

GE teacher reviews upcoming curriculum for discussion at the meeting

MEETING

TIME ALLOTTED	FOCUS
12 minutes	The general education teacher outlines upcoming curriculum and content for material that will be addressed within the context of the class.
10 minutes	Student data discussion: Both teachers need to look at the data of the classroom(s). This will help you see what direction to plan, which students understand the information, and which students need more help.
15 minutes	Both teachers need to discuss points of difficulty. What are the barriers you are facing with the students? How can you overcome these barriers?
15 minutes	Both teachers need to discuss patterns for their co-teaching. Look at the six co-teaching approaches, look at the patterns in your class of when you review, have assessments, etc., and decide when and where the six approaches fit the best.
8 minutes	This is the time for partnership discussions. Are there any concerns co-teaching concerns, what housekeeping items needs to be discussed and worked/talked through before the next class?

POST-MEETING

SE teacher or the other specialist prepares any specially designed instruction, accommodations or modifications that are student-specific as well as contributing to general strategies for differentiation.

❖ Asynchronous Electronic Planning

The primary planning approach for co-teachers should rely on electronic collaboration. Widely use across other professions, this approach to co-planning solves several issues:

- It removes the problem of master scheduling frequent common planning time for co-teaching partners. This is especially important when a school has many teaching teams.

- It removes the problem of teachers trying to find co-planning time before or after school when one cannot come to school early and the other cannot stay late.

- It divides planning so that the general educator does the core lesson while the special educator plans for accommodations and specially designed instruction.

- It provides flexibility for teachers—they plan based on their own schedules and preferences.

- It keeps planning time available for other required professional tasks.

Basics of Electronic Co-Planning

- The purpose of this planning is to ensure that lessons are available, that they reflect students' needs, and that service delivery is documented.

- Planning through e-mail is not considered adequate. It is too linear, it tends to get lost or mixed in with other messages, and it easily results in miscommunication.

- Text messaging might be acceptable for a quick question or comment, but it is too informal to be considered a vehicle for co-planning, especially when accountability is considered.

- Electronic planning should happen "in the cloud," that is, through a collaborative workspace that both teachers can access at any time.

- Some districts already have such time available for teachers; if so, electronic planning should be straightforward.

- Some co-teachers will have to establish their own electronic shared workspace.

- General educators should upload lesson plans at least 5 days prior to their planned date so that special educators have adequate time to address specially designed instruction.

- Lesson plans are usually the first information shared, but many instructional resources can be shared in this manner.

❖ On-the-Spot Planning

If co-teachers arrange for periodic, high quality common planning where they map out the upcoming curriculum, the challenges students may face, and ideas for addressing those challenges, they can ensure that they keep in touch by identifying strategies for planning on the fly between these more intense sessions. Here are three ways that co-teachers plan during the course of their typical days.

Instructional start-up strategy

Intended for all grade levels, this strategy is used for elementary teachers whenever the second teacher enters the room. For middle and high school teachers who co-teach for an entire class period, this strategy could be used at the beginning of class. If co-teaching occurs for half a block period, this strategy (like in elementary classes) is employed when the second teacher arrives. It works like this: Students are given an appropriate 4-5-minue assignment to complete individually or with a partner. Students are taught (and rewarded) that they should not interrupt the teachers except for an emergency. This tactic give co-teachers several minutes of time to touch base, make a revision in the lesson plan, or discuss a student issue.

Review and predict

This strategy, primarily used in elementary and middle schools, occurs when the second teacher enters the classroom. One of the teachers asks students to review what they have been learning and doing. Answers to this question bring the teacher who just entered "up to speed." The teachers then ask students about the instructional plans when both teachers are present. This prediction likewise informs the second teacher. Reviewing and predicting are considered effective instructional strategies, and they can be a means of ensuring both teachers know the plan for the day.

Fast talk

Especially in middle and high schools, co-teachers sometimes update their planning with a hurried conversation during a passing period. This strategy is appropriate if the more in-depth planning has occurred, but it should never constitute all the planning that occurs for co-teaching.

❖ Co-Planning Resources

Basic Solutions (They Work but are Less Flexible than Options Below)

Dropbox (dropbox.com). If your first goal is to simply share files, lesson plans, presentation slides, or other instructional resources, Dropbox might be the right choice. Once signed up for a free account, you can create a shared folder so that anything you place in it will trigger a notice to your teaching partner that new items have been added.

Evernote (evernote.com). Evernote is another option for simply sharing information such as lesson plans, web information, and so on; you also can label or tag your notes to make organizing them simple. With the free version, you can share any "notes" that you create but others cannot change them in a notebook. A premium version allows changes. This option is particularly attractive if you and your teaching partner are already Evernote users.

On-line Planbook (https://planbook.com/). This versatile on-line lesson planning option enables co-teachers to share an account and create and annotate lesson plans. There is a section for adding notes, and you can upload attachments. Note that this option costs $12/year.

Google shared calendar. If you already use Google options for e-mail and group collaboration, you also could create a Google calendar dedicated to co-teaching, inserting lesson plans into it. That calendar can then easily be shared with your co-teaching partner (specific directions are given on the site's help page), who can then edit the calendar and share those results with you.

Wiki Sites

*Wikispaces Classroom (*http://www.wikispaces.com/*).* This site allows teachers to easily set up free wikis that allow for any purpose, including co-teaching. This company sells wiki space to school districts and others, but on its home page you will see how to access a free wiki if you are a teacher.

PBWorks (http://pbworks.com/content/edu-classroom-teachers).   PBWorks is a company that provides wikis to school districts and universities. Teachers can obtain basic free wiki space at this page of the company's website.

Google Groups/Google Drive (groups.google.com OR drive.google.com). These options (the former is to be phased out) are Google's wiki options. You can follow the simple directions to set up your shared space in just a few minutes. Note that for all Google options you must have a Gmail account. However, you also can use other Google tools within you wiki, including the word processing program, spreadsheet, and calendar.

Social Learning Platforms (SLPs)

Edmodo (http://www.edmodo.com). Created in 2008, Edmodo boasts more than 15 million teacher and student users worldwide. In addition to carrying out their own planning, co-teachers can blog with educators from around the world.

Schoology (https://www.schoology.com/home.php). This SLP has many features similar to Edmodo. It also enables you to directly import items from Google docs, and it has a unique organizable lesson plan feature.

❖ References, Readings, and Resources

Conderman, G. (2011). Methods for addressing conflict in co-taught classrooms. *Intervention in School and Clinic, 46*, 221-229.

Conderman, G. J., Bresnahan, M. V., & Pedersen, T. (2009). *Purposeful co-teaching: Real cases and effective strategies.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

Dove, M., & Honigsfeld, A. (2010). ESL co-teaching and collaboration: Opportunities to develop teacher leadership and enhance student learning. *TESOL Journal, 1*(1), 3-22.

Eisenman, L. T., Pleet, A. M., Wandry, D., & McGinley, V. (2011). Voices of special education teachers in an inclusive high school: Redefining responsibilities. *Remedial and Special Education, 32,* 91-104.

Friend, M. (2014). *Co-Teach! A handbook for creating and sustaining effective classroom partnerships in inclusive schools* (2nd edition). Greensboro, NC: Marilyn Friend, Inc.

Friend, M., Burrello, L., & Burrello, J. (2004). *Power of Two* [DVD]. Bloomington, IN: Elephant Rock Productions.

Friend, M., & Bursuck, W. (2012). *Including students with special needs: A practical guide for classroom teachers* (6th edition). Columbus, PH: Merrill/Pearson.

Friend, M., & Cook, L. (2013). *Interactions: Collaboration skills for school professionals* (7th edition). Boston: Pearson/Allyn and Bacon.

Friend, M., Cook, L., Hurley-Chamberlain, D., & Shamberger, C. (2010). Co-teaching: An Illustration of the complexity of collaboration in special education. *Journal of Educational & Psychological Consultation*, *20*, 9-27.

Honigsfeld, A., & Dove, M. G. (2010). *Collaboration and co-teaching: Strategies for English learners.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

King-Sears, M. E., & Bowman-Kruhm, M. (2010). Attending to specialized reading instruction for adolescents with mild disabilities. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, *42*(4), 30-40.

Walsh, J. M. (2012). Co-teaching as a school system strategy for continuous improvement. *Preventing School Failure, 56*(1), 29-36.

Solis, M., Vaughn, S., Swanson, E., & McCulley, L. (2012). Collaborative models of instruction: The empirical foundations of inclusion and co-teaching. *Psychology in the Schools, 4*), 498-510.

Tannock, M. T. (2009). Tangible and intangible elements of collaborative teaching. *Intervention in School and Clinic, 44*, 173-178.

Vannest, K. J., & Hagan-Burke, S. (2010). Teacher time use in special education. *Remedial and Special Education, 31*, 126-142.

Walsh, J. M. (2012). Co-teaching as a school system strategy for continuous improvement. *Preventing School Failure, 56*(1), 29-36.