

Co-teaching Strategies to Promote Differentiation and Engagement

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Co-teaching Definition (Friend & Cook, 2006): Two (or more) educators share instructional responsibility and mutually agreed-upon goals for a single group of students. The teachers have mutual ownership, pooled resources, and joint accountability, though individual teacher's roles may vary.

"By co-teaching with others, teachers transcend the experience of isolation" (Tobin & Roth, 2005, p. 314).

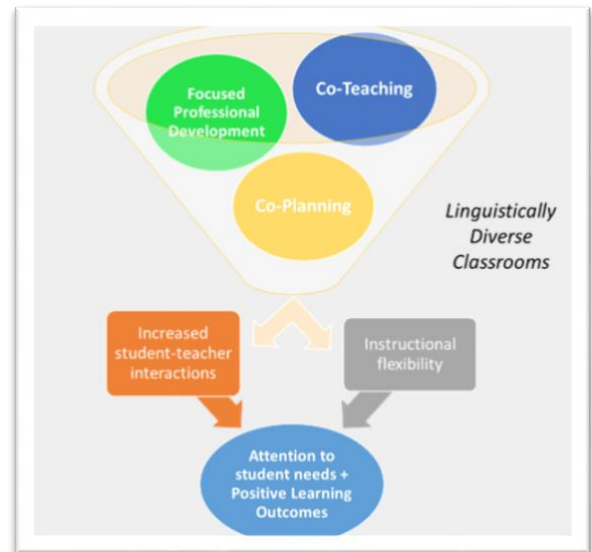
Who can participate in a co-teaching team?

- Teachers
- Student teachers & interns
- Tutors
- Para-professionals
- Specialists

There are many possible configurations. All you need is two or more caring adults committed to working together regularly to benefit a group of students.

How do students and teachers benefit from purposefully implementing co-teaching?

- Positive student outcomes (academic & social)
- Increased instructional flexibility
- Increased student-teacher interactions
- More positive working environments



Co-teaching requires building trust and comfort

"Part of the co-teaching dynamic is learning how to co-teach with someone else right? **Classrooms are like a bedroom—our private space**—even though they're public places for kids. At the end of the day, teachers become very protective of their own space. And I think this allows for practice in the area of engaging with another adult about best practices in the classroom with kids." ~LB, Elementary Principal~

Co-teaching requires and promotes innovation

"It's two people working in one classroom and **you have to be open to each other's ideas, thoughts, and opinions**. There's some things we have to go back and discuss because I thought one thing and you thought another... and **we discussed it together**." ~HA, K Co-teacher~

Co-teaching promotes reflective practice to support professional growth and student learning

"[T]here is a difference and it's because of that reflection piece that is happening between the adults in the room. Right? Because when you teach alone there's no one else to say how you did, or say 'Oh I heard you say this, and we talked about using this term instead....' **It is a safe space**, there isn't someone coming in evaluating you, **this is someone that you're working with**." ~L.B., Elementary Principal~

"It definitely **makes you look at your own instruction**, too. Because now you have to explain what you're doing, why you're doing it, and then you have to talk about your assessment of your group after every time: were your students getting it? What were they saying?" ~SG & AL, Gr. 4 Co-teachers~

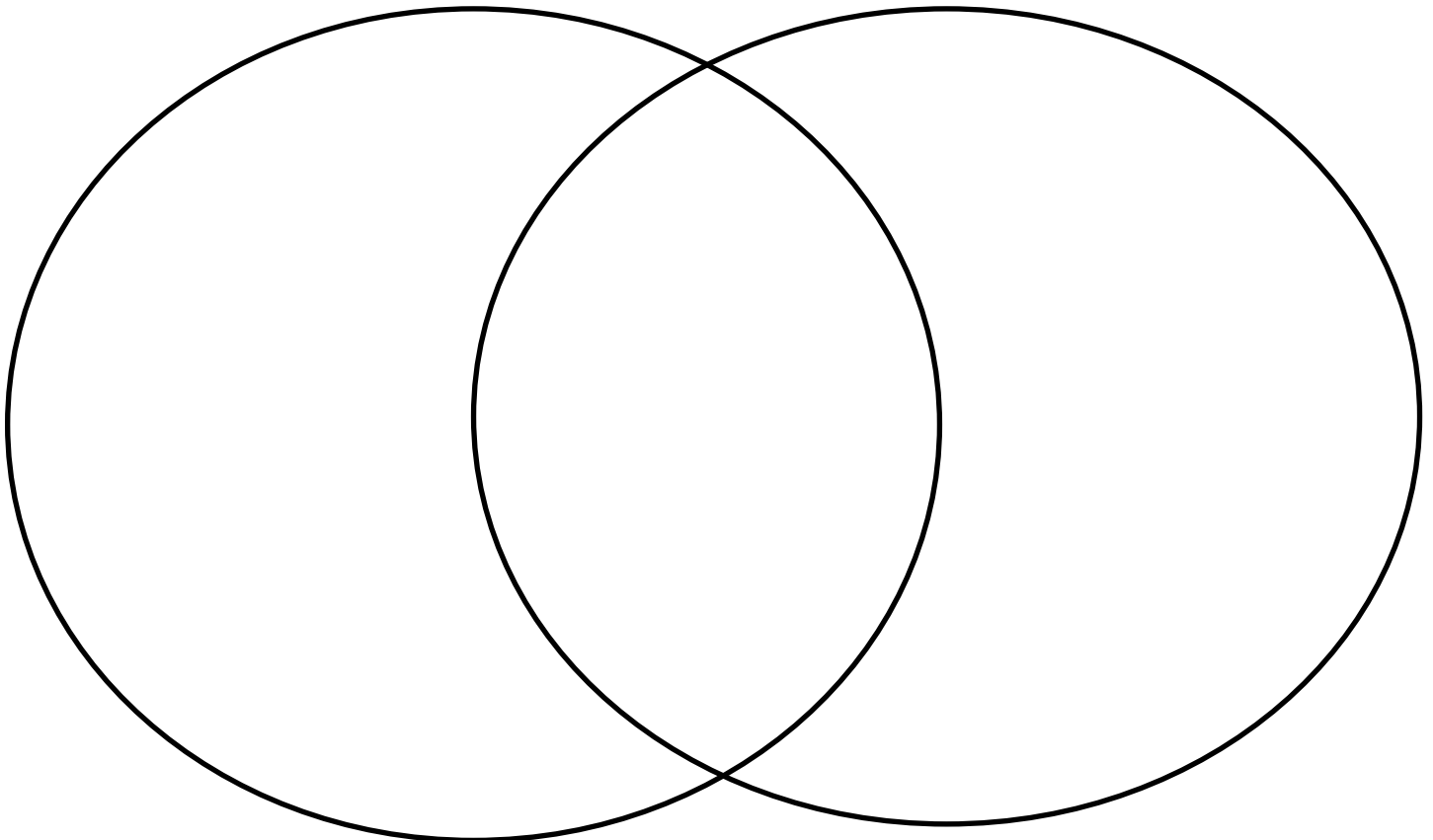
Sources: Friend, M., & Cook, L. (2006). *Interactions: Collaboration skills for school professionals* (5th Ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Tobin, K., & Roth, W. M. (2005). Implementing coteaching and cogenerative dialoguing in urban science education. *School Science and Mathematics*, 105(6), 313–322.

Helpful Resources for Learning More

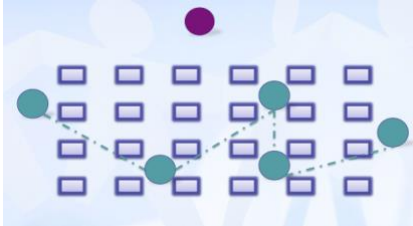
☞ Co-Teaching & Co-Planning ☜

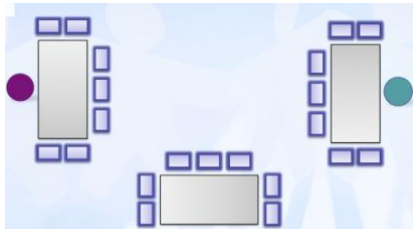
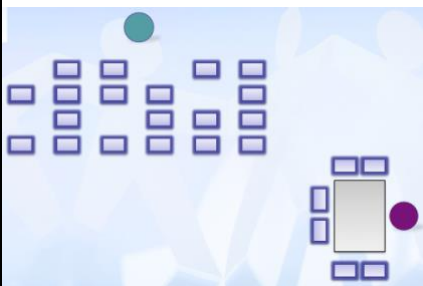
- ✓ **[Project BUMP UP](https://projectbumpup.education.uconn.edu/)** – provides videos, advice for co-teaching, and teaching resources with a focus on supporting advanced learners based on a recent UConn research project funded by the Jacob K. Javits Gifted and Talented Students Education Program funded by the USDOE (*Be sure to check out the “Differentiation Resources” link in the menu across the top.) – <https://projectbumpup.education.uconn.edu/>
- ✓ **[The Academy for Co-Teaching & Collaboration at St. Cloud State University](http://www.stcloudstate.edu/soe/coteaching/)** – includes research, resources, and opportunities for more in-depth training – <http://www.stcloudstate.edu/soe/coteaching/>
- ✓ Books –
 - *Collaboration, Coteaching, and Coaching in Gifted Education* by Emily Mofield and Vicky Phelps (Prufrock, 2020)
 - *A Guide to Co-Teaching: New Lessons and Strategies to Facilitate Student Learning* (3rd Edition) by Richard A. Villa, Jacqueline S. Thousand, & Ann I. Nevin (Corwin, 2013)
 - *Co-Teaching in the Differentiated Classroom* by Melinda L. Fattig & Maureen Tormey Taylor (Jossey-Bass, 2007)
 - *Critical Conversation in Co-Teaching: A Problem-Solving Approach* by Carrie Chapman & Cate Hart Hyatt (Solution Tree Press, 2011)



Co-teaching Approaches to Enhance Opportunities for Gifted Learners

“People have this idea of what co-teaching looks like, but they don’t realize all the different ways – all the different models it can look [like]. It has to be what’s best for you ...” ~KG, Gr. 2 Co-teacher~

Approach	Diagram	Explanation	Notes
One Teach, One Observe or Scout Teaching		One teacher teaches while the other strategically observes and collects purposeful data. Co-teachers share and analyze observational data afterward, and use it to inform instruction, grouping, and/or identification.  <i>How might you use this strategy to collect evidence of high potential?</i>	
One Teach, One Assist or Stretch Teaching		One teacher has the primary responsibility for teaching & planning. Typically, the other teacher moves around the classroom helping individuals and/or “voicing” student perceptions and questions; however, the focus shifts to enriching content and extending student thinking with added challenge.  <i>How might you use this strategy to enhance content and stretch student thinking?</i>	
Parallel Teaching or Tier Teaching		The two teachers plan jointly but split the classroom in half to teach the same content, at the same time, in the same or a similar way. When grouped strategically, an additional tier or layer of challenge can be added to one group to differentiate instruction. (Teaching may be done in different languages or employ slightly different resources.)  <i>How might you use this strategy to add a planned layer of challenge for a smaller group of students?</i>	

Approach	Diagram	Explanation	Notes
Station Teaching or Carousel Teaching		The two teachers share responsibility for planning & teaching. The classroom is divided into teaching centers. Co-teachers are at particular stations; others are run independently by the students or by another adult. Differentiation strategies can be used so that “stations provide movement up toward more challenge or movement down, like a carousel” (Mofield & Phelps, 2020, p. 77).  <i>How might you use this strategy to respond to varying interests and/or readiness levels?</i>	
Alternative or Differentiated Teaching or Safari Teaching		One teacher manages most of the class; the other teacher works with a small group inside or outside of the classroom. This allows students who have demonstrated mastery of content to compact the curriculum. The small group does not have to integrate with the current lesson, and grouping is flexible.  <i>How might you use this strategy to provide an exploration--or safari—that extends the regular curriculum? What evidence do you have that students are ready for and would benefit from this strategy?</i>	
Team Teaching or Tango Teaching		Both teachers are responsible for planning, instruction, and classroom management of <u>all</u> students in the classroom. Lessons are taught by both teachers whose roles and interactions are more fluid and spontaneous. This is often viewed as the most complex approach.  <i>How might you use this strategy to enhance your collaborative efforts to provide differentiated instruction for advanced learners?</i>	

Sources: Bacharach, N., Heck, T. W., & Dahlberg, K. (2010). Changing the face of student teaching through co-teaching. *Action in Teacher Education*, 32(1), 3-14.

Mofield, E. & Phelps, V. (2020). *Collaboration, coteaching, and coaching in gifted education: Sharing strategies to support gifted learners*. Waco, TX: Prufrock.

Tips and Tricks of Co-teaching:

✓ **Set aside the time to plan**

- For co-teaching to run effectively teachers need time to meet, collaborate, and decide how the lesson will run, this avoids confusing during the lesson and allows for quality instruction.

- Side Note: This step becomes easier as co-teachers become more familiar with each other and each teaching style.

✓ **Take the time to reflect on each practice**

- Not every model of co-teaching works every single time or with every group of students. Reflecting on what made a particular lesson work is helpful for planning in the future.

✓ **Use your resources**

- Both co-teachers come with a variety of expertise and resources, do not be afraid to admit that you need help locating a resource. In addition, sharing is caring, share resources to maximize instruction!

✓ **Compare assessment data**

- Both teachers should have a reasonable understanding of where the students are at academically before, during, and after students are in the lesson. One co-teacher might catch something the other might have missed.

✓ **Try each co-teaching model a few times**

- Give each model multiple tries in a variety of settings to see which works best for the class.

✓ **Be open and honest to new approaches**

- Being open-minded helps facilitate co-teaching and collaboration in a meaningful way. In addition, it can help you further your practice.

✓ **Don't be afraid to challenge each other's thinking**

- It is okay to as a faculty member to explain why they are teaching something in a certain way, as long as it is done in a respectful manner. This gives co-teachers a chance to reflect on their own practice, as well as a chance to understand new pedagogies.

✓ **Actually practice how a lesson will run**

- Although time consuming, mapping out how you will interact with one another helps avoid some 'glitches' of co-teaching.

✓ **Have fun!**

- So often teaching can take place in isolation, co-teaching gives teachers a chance to share experiences and maximize their resources.



Thank you to Kimberly Graumnitz and Alison Labaire for this thoughtful advice!