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**Co-teaching with General Education and Special Education Teachers for
Students with Mild to Moderate Needs**

by

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Co-teaching occurs when two or more professionals jointly deliver substantive instruction to a diverse, blended group of students in a single physical space (Friend & Cook, 2007).

Co-teaching is the partnering of a general education teacher and a special education teacher or another teacher to join together to deliver instruction to a diverse group of students. The group of diverse students may include those with disabilities or other special needs. Co-teaching takes place in the general education classroom and has flexibility to deliberately meet the learning needs of all students in the room.

Conderman et al. (2009) define co-teaching in four parts. First, co-teaching involves two or more certified teachers. This can be a general education teacher and special education teacher but can also occur between two or more special education teachers, two or more general education teachers or two or more other certified professionals. Certified professionals can include speech-language pathologists, physical or occupational therapists, school social workers, English as a second language teachers or school psychologists. With this co-teaching approach it allows a great opportunity for integrated learning for students. The second definition of co-teaching that Conderman et al. state is that these professionals deliver substantive instruction to students. Meaning both professionals are meaningfully involved in the delivery of instruction and planning. The third co-teaching occurs in diverse classrooms (Conderman et al., 2009). This allows for inclusion for all students. Inclusion ensures a place for all students in the general education curriculum to receive an education.

Finally, co-teaching occurs within a shared physical space (Conderman et al., 2009). During co-teaching both professionals share the main instructional area. The removal of students is inconsistent with the co-teaching models. It is important that both teachers have equal opportunities to plan and to provide instruction to all students. If a general education teacher and special education teacher are co-teaching, the special education teacher can teach those students with and without disabilities (Conderman et al., 2009).

Conderman et al. (2009) define what co-teaching is not. Co-teaching is not teaching with a paraprofessional, volunteer, or other non-certified assistant. Co-teaching is not implementing the same lesson in the same way you taught them when you did not have a co-teacher. Having two certified teachers providing instruction to a homogeneous class is not co-teaching. Grouping students with disabilities or language differences to work with the special education teacher or the English as a second language teacher at a table in the back or out of the classroom and removing them from instruction is not co-teaching.

Scope of the Paper

In reviewing the research available about co-teaching, teachers and students have varying experiences and opinions about the practice. The amount of time teachers are given for preparing for co-teaching is dependent on each school. The support from administration that is given to special education teachers and general education teachers for co-teaching impacts their opinions on each of their experiences. Teachers report both benefits and challenges to co-teaching.

Research Question/Focus of the Paper

- What are the benefits of a special education teacher co-teaching with a general education teacher for students with mild to moderate disabilities?
- What is needed for co-teaching to be successful for teachers and students?

Personal Interest

I am an elementary special education teacher with students in grades K-4th grade in a level 1-2 cross categorical classroom. I have students with many different needs in the area of Specific Learning Disability (SLD), Emotional Behavior Disorder (EBD), Other Health Disability (OHD), and Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). This 2021-2022 school year, my school has implemented co-teaching for the first time. We had a few hours of training in summer prior to the school year beginning. As a special education teacher I am partnered up with a 4th grade general education teacher. This is her first year at my school as well as her first year co-teaching. We were paid for a few hours to plan for the school year. We do have common prep time but do not have assigned meeting and planning time. I can see how beneficial co-teaching can be but want to expand my knowledge as this is new to me this year. In my research I am hoping to discover new strategies and develop a better understanding on how to successfully plan co-teaching to ensure all students are making progress.

Approaches to Co-teaching

Friend and Bursuck (2009) describe six co-teaching approaches that provide variations that allow teachers a variety of selections to choose from that best fit student needs and instructional intent.

1. One teach, one observe, in which one teacher leads large-group instruction while the other gathers academic, behavioral, or social data on specific students or the class group;
2. Station teaching, in which instruction is divided into three non-sequential parts and students, likewise divided into three groups, rotate from station to station, being taught by the teachers at two stations and working independently at the third;
3. Parallel teaching, in which the two teachers, each with half the class group, present the same material for the primary purpose of fostering instructional differentiation and increasing student participation;
4. Alternative teaching, in which one teacher works with most students while the other works with a small group for remediation, enrichment, assessment, pre-teaching, or another purpose;
5. Teaming, in which both teachers lead large-group instruction by both lecturing, representing opposing views in a debate, illustrating two ways to solve a problem, and so on; and
6. One teach, one assist, in which one teacher leads instruction while the other circulates among the students offering individual assistance.

Co-teaching includes certified professionals using six approaches and variations of them based on student needs and instructional intent. These are listed in the table below.

Table 1*Co-teaching Approaches*

Co-Teaching Approaches	
One teach, one observe	One teacher leads large-group instruction while the other gathers academic, behavioral, or social data on specific students or the class group
Station teaching	One teacher leads large-group instruction while the other gathers academic, behavioral, or social data on specific students or the class group
Parallel teaching	One teacher leads large-group instruction while the other gathers academic, behavioral, or social data on specific students or the class group
Alternative teaching	One teacher works with most students while the other works with a small group for reteaching, enrichment, assessment, pre-teaching, or another purpose
Teaming	Both teachers lead large-group instruction by both lecturing
One teach, one assist	One teacher leads instruction while the other circulates among the students offering individual assistance as needed

Reasons to Co-teach

Teachers may choose to co-teach for a variety of reasons. Here are some of the most common reasons. The school has adapted co-teaching to improve inclusion for all students. The school has a belief that students with disabilities can learn more by remaining in the general education classroom with supports joining them, giving them access to the general education setting. Students without disabilities can also benefit from co-teaching. The school has not been pleased with the results from their pull-out special education service delivery model. The school district embraces inclusive practices. The school believes they have skills that can be beneficial for general and

special education students. The school wants the teachers to work collaboratively together to grow professionally by learning from a colleague (Conderman et al., 2009)

In the late 1980s and 1990s it became increasingly apparent that outcomes for many students with disabilities were not satisfactory and many federal and state laws were put into place to increase outcomes. This is where many schools began to implement co-teaching. One key factor contributing to the interest of co-teaching was the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (Friend et al., 2010). The requirement is that all students, including those with disabilities, have access to the general education curriculum, be taught by highly qualified teachers, and be included in professionals' accountability for achievement outcomes. Another key factor was the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 that had an increased emphasis on educating students in the least restrictive environment (Friend et al., 2010). With both of these laws in place, co-teaching was being implemented to make it possible for students with disabilities to access the general education curriculum while in the general education classroom and receiving specialized instruction strategies necessary to nurture their learning.

Co-teaching is the act of partnering a general education teacher and a special education teacher or another specialist for the purpose of jointly delivering instruction to a diverse group of students, including those with disabilities or other special needs, in a general education setting and in a way that flexibility and deliberately meets their learning needs. The main intent of co-teaching is to make it possible for students with

disabilities to access the general curriculum while at the same time benefiting from specialized instructional strategies necessary to nurture their learning.

Benefits of Co-teaching for Teachers

Co-teaching provides a meaningful teaching and learning experience. As co-teachers, teachers need to consult while designing the class and lesson plans. It allows for ongoing supportive feedback based on direct observation before, during, and after each lesson is taught. During co-teaching a relationship is built between teachers that is a safe environment for each teacher to explore their natural teaching style and have a readily accessible supportive partner. Co-teaching allows for teachers to learn and understand more about their strengths and weaknesses through reflective processes, conversations, and peer feedback. Benefits of co-teaching are that you are able to not only receive positive and constructive feedback but you are able to provide that to your co-teaching for them to build their teacher skills as well. With ongoing direct observation of peer's teaching it is a great way to become a stronger teacher. Co-teaching provides an environment where both teachers can build their skills and become a better teacher. Co-teaching allows each teacher personal growth but allows for sharing the workload which can help with schedule management and mastery of the curriculum and standards.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

Table 2 lists the studies that were reviewed within this starred paper.

Table 2

Studies Reviewed for this Starred Paper

Author(s)	Study Design	Participants	Procedure	Findings
Wilson & Michaels (2006)	Qualitative	-346 students in secondary schools -127 students with disabilities -219 general education students	-Participants were monitored on their grade reports -Participants were interviewed about their experiences.	-Students favored co-teaching -Students received better grades in co-taught classes -Students had developed more skills
Self	Qualitative	-170 students in grades K-3 -14 General Education Teachers -7 Special Service Providers -Greater than 25% of students qualified low achieving	-Teachers were given a survey in which they answered questions about co-teaching experiences. -Participants' reading skills were measured.	-Gain in reading for co-taught students -Positive teacher reports from co-teaching experience
Lundeen & Lundeen (1993)	Qualitative	-134 special education students in grades 9-12 -249 nondisabled students in grades 9-12 -8 general education teachers -5 special education teachers -majority of students with learning disabilities, also emotional behavior disorder, mild-moderate disability, deaf/hard of hearing and English language learners	-Participants' grades were monitored.	-Grades for team-taught program increased in 1st semester -Grades for team-taught programs stayed the same overall in 2nd semester
Vaughn (1998)	Qualitative	-59 special education students in grades 3-6 -126 non-disabled students in grades 3-6 -7 classes -88 females -97 males -students with learning disabilities, students who are low achieving, average, and high achieving	-Teachers and participants were given a survey in which they answered questions about co-teaching experiences.	-Students felt they had more peer acceptance and friendships -Teachers increased their collaboration and consulting with one another

Table 2 (continued)

Klingner & Vaughn (1999)	Qualitative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -4 general education teachers -2 special education teachers -25 special education students in grades 3-6 -89 non-disabled students in grades 3-6 -students with learning disabilities, students who are low achieving, and high achieving 	-Participants' reading levels were monitored.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Students with learning disabilities gained skills in the area of reading after being in the co-taught classroom. -Students did not have any additional gains in the area of math. -Students who were the lowest readers did not improve their reading skills.
Rosman (1994)	Qualitative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 59 students in grades 9-12 -no information was reported on students' disabilities 	-Participants' math achievement scores were monitored.	-Students in co-taught condition had higher math achievement scores
Murawski (2006)	Qualitative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -9th grade students enrolled in an English class -72 general education students -38 students with a learning disability -3 general education teachers -1 special education teacher -students with learning disabilities, and general education students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Participants' grades were monitored. -Participants standardized test scores monitored -Teachers were given a survey in which they answered questions about co-teaching experiences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Teachers surveyed that they need more training on how to co-teach effectively and efficiently -Students with learning disabilities increased their grades -Students with learning disabilities did not increase their standardized test scores
Hang & Rabren (2008)	Qualitative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -58 students with disabilities -54 general education students -students with developmental delays, emotional behavior disorder, hearing impairment, other health impairment, specific learning disability, speech and language impairment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Participants SAT scores monitored. -Participants' absences, tardies, and discipline referral records monitored. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Academic SAT rates of co-taught student participants increased -Student absence, tardy, and discipline referral records increased
Burks-Keeley & Brown (2014)	Qualitative	-37 students from a co-taught English/Language Arts classroom.	-Participants completed a survey about their perception of co-teaching methods.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Students expressed through the survey that they believe behavior is minimized when they are in a classroom with two teachers co-teaching. -Classroom management is not significantly improved with using the co-teaching method of One Teach and One Assist.

Teacher Experiences with Co-teaching

Solis et al. (2012) conducted a co-teaching synthesis that represented 146 studies. The research focused on collaborative models, student outcomes, teachers' attitudes, beliefs, and perception, and students' perceptions.

Teachers' views on co-teaching models were mixed and appear to vary according to several factors. Prior to 1994 most teacher surveys indicated that teacher attitudes were not favorable towards co-teaching, more recent surveys have indicated that teacher attitudes are more favorable (Solis et al., 2012).

According to a 1996 study completed by Scruggs and Mastropieri about 50% of general education teachers and 65% of special education teachers agreed that inclusion for part of the school day provides benefits to students. A very small percentage of teachers, however, agreed that full-time inclusion would provide benefits over pull-out resource programs provided part of the day.

Teachers' attitudes and perceptions vary based on student need. Many teachers' perceptions were influenced strongly by the nature and severity of disabilities for students participating in co-teaching (Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996). Teachers' support of inclusion varied according to the intensity and severity of student needs (Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996). With teachers having more of a positive attitude toward co-teaching and inclusion of students with physical and sensory impairments than those with learning or behavioral disabilities.

Scruggs and Mastropieri (1996) concluded from several surveys of co-teaching that teachers had concerns that students with disabilities may create unique problems

within the general education setting and that significant changes may be necessary to accommodate all students' needs. Teachers who accepted responsibility for teaching students with diverse needs tended to be more successful in implementing inclusion. Through the surveys teachers expressed both caution and concern that students must possess adequate academic and behavioral skills for the co-teaching to be effective. Although overall, teachers reported beneficial experiences as participants in co-teaching, they cautioned about "forced co-teaching" by school administrations. Teachers expressed a belief that co-teaching should be voluntary and based on the compatibility of teachers who display high levels of effort, flexibility, and compromise.

In a qualitative study completed by Murawski (2006) participants were students enrolled in a 9th grade English class and three general education teachers and one special education teacher. Teachers were given a survey in which they answered questions about their co-teaching experiences. Both general education and special education teachers felt they needed more training on co-teaching. They specifically wanted more training on how to co-teach effectively and efficiently.

In a study completed by Kohler-Evans (2006), 15 secondary teachers from urban and suburban districts in and around Seattle, Washington were interviewed in a structured interview format. The interview included general education and special education teachers who replied to a series of open and close ended questions. The teachers were asked to share their opinions as well as factual information about the effects of co-teaching. Most teachers were not asked to co-teach but rather told they would be co-teaching. Teachers shared their attitudes and concerns from their

experiences. The majority of teachers shared they would do it again, and that it had a positive effect on student achievement.

Student Beliefs of Co-teaching

Klingner and Vaughn (1999) summarized students' perceptions of inclusion based on survey research and found that equity and fairness of treatment were consistent findings in research for students' perceptions of inclusion. Students' beliefs were that all students should be assigned the same homework and that modified grades were unfair. However, all students wanted teachers to consider their strengths when considering factors for assigning grades. Student grades were perceived as a meaningful form of feedback from teachers. The construct of grades was not always understood as well by students with disabilities compared with typically achieving peers. Students agreed that adaptations of instruction and materials for students with disabilities as an acceptable classroom practice. Students reported the benefits of helpful assignment routines, including clear directions, repetition of directions, explanation and examples, assistance, listing resources, time considerations, and clear descriptions of purpose, benefit, and evaluation criteria. Overall, student survey results indicated that students preferred classrooms with instructional routines and materials that supported active involvement, assistance, choice, social interaction, creativity, variety, activities, and challenges.

In the qualitative study completed by Wilson and Michaels (2006) 346 students in secondary schools were participants. Of those 346 students, 127 students were students in special education and the remaining students were general education

students. The participants were monitored on their grade reports and interviewed about their co-teaching experiences. Overall, students favored being in a co-taught classroom as they felt they developed more skills throughout the class. They also received better grades in a co-taught classroom compared to a non-co-taught classroom.

Benefits for Students with Disabilities

When students are in co-taught classrooms they benefit from having two teachers in the classroom with them at all times in that they receive more help as it is needed (Conderman, 2011; Fenty et al., 2012; Nichols et al., 2010). Students with disabilities experience multiple benefits from the co-taught classroom. Benefits include positive behavior, curriculum, and social improvements. When students are in a classroom with two teachers present they are less likely to engage in negative behavior. The student to teacher ratio minimizes behavior issues when co-teaching. Dieker (2001) studied that students in special education with emotional behavior disorders (EBD) have been usually served in more restrictive environments, but because two teachers are available during co-teaching to monitor behaviors the students have been able to be more successful in the general education classroom more. When behaviors improve in the classroom, students with disabilities can anticipate curriculum benefits in the form of enrichment.

When students with special education needs are in a co-taught classroom it allows them to receive a more enriched curriculum as opposed to what they may receive in a special education resource classroom. A main reason for this is due to the teacher ratio being reduced in half in co-taught classrooms which allow teachers the

opportunity to focus instruction on small groups of students. Dieker (2001) concluded that a positive learning environment is created in a co-taught classroom resulting in higher academic and behavioral performance. Students with special education needs would not only benefit from curricular benefits and academic benefits but also experience improved social experience.

When students with special education needs are in a co-taught classroom they are not being removed to receive their special education services allowing them more time with their general education peers. They can experience positive feelings about themselves as capable learners. Special education students in co-taught classrooms allow accommodations and modifications to be put into place as required by their Individual Education Plans (IEP).

In a qualitative study completed by Vaughn et al. (1998), 185 students in grades 3-6 in seven classrooms were participants along with teachers. In the 185 students, 59 students were in special education with learning disabilities, 126 students were general education students who were low, average, and high achieving. Out of the students 88 were females and 97 were males. Both students and teachers were given surveys in which they answered questions about their co-teaching experiences. The surveys indicated that the students felt they were more accepted by their peers and had more success with building friendships among their peers. Teachers experienced more collaboration and consulting with fellow teachers.

In a qualitative study completed by Murawski (2006) participants were students enrolled in a 9th grade English class and three general education teachers and one

special education teacher. There was a total of 110 students, 72 general education students and 38 students in special education with learning disabilities. Participants were monitored on their standardized test scores and grades. The survey concluded that students in special education with learning disabilities in the co-taught 9th grade English class increased their grades. The special education students did not increase their standardized test scores from being in the co-taught 9th grade English class.

Successful Implementation of Co-teaching

Co-teaching can be a powerful approach for students and instructors, but also has potential pitfalls requiring consideration (Chanmugam & Gerlach, 2013).

Chanmugam and Gerlach propose seven recommendations for successful co-teaching.

- Discussion and resolution of specific issues at the out of the partnership
- Assessing one's comfort with close observation and feedback
- Ongoing debriefing during the semester
- Communicating explicit with students about co-teaching goals and methods
- Garnering full support from the institution
- Awareness of the additional time co-teaching requires
- Caution regarding imposing co-teaching on a reluctant instructor or pairs
instructors of unequal status

Communication among co-teachers is crucial. Having conversations about power sharing, teacher roles, appropriately pairing teachers, exchanging of feedback between one another, responsibility sharing, and scheduling are all main topics that need to be discussed prior to co-teaching. Having these initial conversations can facilitate and

develop trust between c-teachers and allow for successful co-taught lessons to be delivered to students.

While co-teaching, it is important that you are comfortable as a teacher with being observed. Teachers need to have that level of comfortability to be able to take risks in front of a peer. If teachers do not have that level of comfortability of being observed it may be difficult to take risks to stretch and grow as a professional.

Ongoing debriefing and shared reflection are essential (Chanmugam & Gerlach, 2013). Regularly scheduled discussions between co-teachers should be scheduled. Scheduled meetings allow co-teachers to have time to problem solve. It allows time on the schedule to have conversations about what is working and what is not working. Allows teachers to have that time set aside so it becomes a mandatory time.

Discussion with students about the co-teaching model should take place at the beginning of the year. The discussion should outline details of how the co-teaching partnership works and what are the goals for the co-taught lessons. Have a discussion with the students on how co-teaching will be implemented and what models will be used throughout the year. This allows for students to become familiar with co-teaching models and have a better understanding of expectations from both teachers.

Co-teaching can be very time consuming. Teachers that are going to begin co-teaching need to educate themselves on how much time is needed for effective collaboration and advocate for appropriate support. Many teachers who co-teach struggle with finding the adequate amount of time needed to develop successful co-taught lessons. Teachers who are on a co-teaching journey find that time is crucial.

Co-teaching is by definition a method involving instructors of equal status, it is important to emphasize a model where teaching effectiveness was increased in unique ways because the co-teachers were peers learning together, rather than in a mentoring or apprentice-expert relationship (Chanmugam & Gerlach, 2013).

In a qualitative study completed by Klinger and Vaughn (1999), participants were 6 teachers, 4 general education and 2 special education teachers and a total of 114 students in grades 3-6. Twenty-five students were in special education with learning disabilities and 89 students were in general education who were low, average, and high achieving students. Participants' reading levels were monitored while they were in a co-taught classroom. The study showed that students in special education with learning disabilities increased their reading skills. Students who were classified as low achieving general education students did not increase their reading skills.

Chapter 3: Recommendations for a Successful Co-teaching Experience

Co-teaching Relationships–Communication and Communication Tools

Communication during co-teaching is vital. Both teachers need to have clear, open and continuous communication in order to successfully plan and implement a shared curriculum. Ploessl et al. (2010) developed practical techniques to enhance co-teaching interactions. Self-examination is the first technique, if a teacher is unfamiliar with their own teaching and communication habits they will find it much harder to coordinate with another teacher. Keeping a journal, filling out a self-inventory, or talking with others are all ways to gain insight. Journaling can be a way to reflect on co-teaching interactions that have gone well and those that have not. Reflect on which communication tactics helped or hindered those interactions. There are communication style inventories that may have co-teachers better understand their partner's preferred communication and interaction styles. These inventories are available online. Having conversations with others is an effective way to learn more about perceptions of others. Using these tools is the first step toward improving important communication skills.

Another technique that teachers are often familiar with are Venn Diagrams. These drawings can be used to identify areas of differences and similarities. Co-teachers may use Venn Diagrams to lay out their professional strengths and areas for growth in their co-teaching relationship. It is a great technique that allows teachers to strengthen their relationship by helping them work together to develop a common belief system, shared work ethic, and complement each other's strengths.

Teachers who are co-teaching together need to keep communication as a number one priority. Each teacher has their own teaching philosophies and styles and it is important that they take the time to openly discuss this with one another. Building a solid foundation with focusing on effective speaking and listening will improve co-teaching interactions.

There are tools available to help build these communication skills between co-teachers. Keeping a private journal and filling out an online self-inventory such as the Keirsey Temperament Sorter II or the Communication Style Inventory, or talk with others to gain insight (Buddy, 2007). The Kerisey Inventory has four temperaments which are artisan, guardian, idealist, and rational. The temperament is a configuration of observable personality traits, such as habits of communication, patterns of action, and sets of characteristic attitudes, values, and talents. It also encompasses personal needs, the kinds of contributions that individuals make in the workplace, and the roles they play in society. Each temperament has its own unique qualities and shortcomings, strengths and challenges. Dr. David Keirsey (2022) has identified humankind's four basic temperaments as the Artisan, the Guardian, the Idealist, and the Rational. This tool helps teachers learn more about how their professional and personal traits will help or hinder their co-teaching partnership. The Kerisey Inventory and journaling are just a few tools to use to start improving important communication skills.

Co-teaching Preparation Time

Co-teaching takes a lot of planning and preparation. Forty-five minutes should be set aside each week for uninterrupted planning between co-teachers. Shared

planning time between teachers can be very difficult to come by, teachers need to be creative and flexible. The 45 minutes each week can be split into four or five 10-minute meetings each week if that works better for co-teachers.

Ploessl et al. (2010) shared techniques to use while co-teachers are meeting to get the most out of their time. The meetings should be focused on exchanging ideas, making decisions, and carrying out everyday tasks without interruptions. In order to help teachers find this time to meet, they may request support from administration to help cover classes. Making a meeting agenda beforehand is a way to illustrate effective and efficient use of planning time. The agenda also allows teachers to be more prepared. Agendas developed before the meeting identify the purpose of the meeting, the goals and location as well.

During the meeting use the time to develop timelines and schedules to ensure that teachers are working in unison in the classroom. Together, teachers can map out goals for specific units, and individualized student goals. Teachers need to reevaluate these goals regularly and make changes as needed. Developing a timeline will keep both teachers accountable and on track while co-teaching.

Co-teaching Designing Lesson Plans Together

Before developing co-teaching lesson plans teachers must choose a co-teaching model. Friend and Cook (2007) developed six approaches that can guide effective co-teaching: (a) one teaching, one observing, (b) station teaching, (c) parallel teaching, (d) alternative teaching, (e) teaming, and (f) one teaching, one assisting. After reviewing and deciding what model it is then time to create lesson plans. Lesson plans can be

developed from using standard lesson plan templates that focus on a shared goal and responsibilities of each teacher. Lesson plans can also be created that are specific to co-teaching which can include tasks to be completed, co-teaching model being used, special education teacher's roles and responsibilities, and general education teacher's roles and responsibilities. The lesson plan should also include the lesson overview and standards being addressed.

Reflect on Co-taught Lessons

Reflective teachers are more effective than those who do not take the opportunity to reflect regularly after co-taught lessons. When reflecting, teachers need to focus on two main areas: student achievement and teacher satisfaction. Starting the reflection with positive and specific praise to one another will allow the discussion to start off positive and move into a direction that allows each teacher to provide honest feedback. Ending the reflection with a positive will also help build the co-teaching relationship.

Co-teaching Recommendations

With co-teaching there are steps to take to make co-teaching a partnership and enjoyable for both teachers. Some recommendations include working together to define roles and responsibilities that allows teachers to agree on who does what and when. Being flexible in ways that you may need to try something different. Setting aside uninterrupted time to allow both teachers to plan together will allow for better organized lessons. Communicating with your co-teacher throughout the school day allows you to avoid problems. If needed, seek administrative support that can observe and help identify areas for improvements and coach teachers as needed.

Recommendations for Future Research

With co-teaching there are six different models to use for teachers delivering instruction. In the research it is not discussed what co-teaching models are being used during these samples. Future research should include what co-teaching model is used and what the outcomes of student success is for students in special education. Research should compare student outcomes for what model of co-teaching is being used. It would then help teachers determine what co-teaching model would be best for their classroom instruction.

In the study completed by Burks-Keley and Brown (2014) it was noted that classroom management for behaviors while co-teaching using the model of one teach, one assist did not improve behaviors.

Recommendations for My Practice

While co-teaching this school year, I have shared the research results and related information with colleagues and families. With the research I have come to understand co-teaching much more and the impact it can make if the planning time is provided to teachers. With my co-teaching this school year we have not have adequate planning time and it has impacted the instruction we have given to students while co-teaching. I now understand the importance of a common prep time to co-teachers. Moving forward, I want to share this research with the administration to request proper prep time if co-teaching is something they would like to continue in future school years. Seeing first-hand the relationships that the special education students have been able to create with the general education students from spending more time in their least

restrictive environment in their general education class has been very interesting. I see my students building stronger relationships with their 4th grade peers and feeling more accepted. They feel more included and accepted by their peers due to spending more time in the general education classroom.

Taking the time to sit down with my co-teacher after completing this research has been a great opportunity to practice using some of the tools to build our communication and collaboration. The tools have been useful and beneficial. I highly recommend other teachers who are transitioning into co-teaching to use the tools. The tools help to improve communication between teachers and to better understand yourself as a teacher and what your strengths and weaknesses are. We completed the Venn Diagram to compare our strengths and weaknesses and it was great to see on paper how we can each use our own strengths to best meet student needs.

Summary

Co-teaching can be beneficial for students and teachers when adequate time is allowed for teachers to train and prepare creative lessons. Co-teaching allows students in special education more opportunities to be with their general education peers and receive instruction in the least restrictive environment. Co-teaching overall has positive results for students in academic achievement, social development and emotional well-being. Students often perceive co-teaching to be beneficial to their learning.

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