BENCHMARKING CO-TEACHING POLICIES & PRACTICES

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HANOVER RESEARCH

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INTRODUCTION

Like many state education departments, the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) wants to develop more efficient and successful methods of instructing and learning that address the needs of and improves achievement for all students. Recently, the NDE has begun developing co-teaching practices and procedures for the state's public-school districts. Co-teaching relies on the collaborative relationship between a special education teacher and a general education teacher as they share instructional responsibilities to support students' diverse needs. The NDE has identified potential misconceptions among educators on the roles of general and special education teachers within a co-teaching model. To bridge this potential gap in understanding, NDE has partnered with Hanover Research (Hanover) to conduct a study of tangible, effective co-teaching practices across the country. Hanover presents this benchmarking analysis, which reviews best practices in co-teaching and state-level co-teaching policies to foster deeper comprehension and understanding among Nebraskan educators who will be implementing new co-teaching policies in their districts. This report contains two sections:

- **Section I: Co-Teaching Practices** provides effective strategies and best practices for planning for and implementing co-teaching models; and
- **Section II: State Co-Teaching Policies** reviews guidance and standards from four state education departments who have in recent years adopted co-teaching practices and disseminated information to their public-school districts.

METHODOLOGY

Using publicly available resources, Hanover began with a search of Nebraska school districts to determine if any districts within the state are currently utilizing co-teaching practices. Hanover could not identify any Nebraska districts with up-to-date co-teaching guidelines or standards, so Hanover expanded its search nationally to school districts and state education departments. From this search, Hanover was able to identify four states with current co-teaching policies and standards that serve as guidance for general and special education teachers and administrators.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on our findings, Hanover Research suggests that NDE consider the following recommendations.

Create and communicate broadly a shared definition about co-teaching to establish a common understanding and set of expectations. The NDE can draw from some common articulations of co-teaching among the state education departments featured in this report to emphasize the importance of a collaborative process, shared responsibility, professional working relationships, inclusive learning, continuous development, and adaptability in the co-teaching models that teachers employ over time. Hanover will also develop a culminating infographic that includes the shared definition and common terms to provide all educators with a foundational understanding of co-teaching strategies, alongside the additional, planned research.

Offer opportunities for teachers to share best practices with each other and to develop a mindset of collective success. State Departments of Education stress the importance of a culture of open communication between co-teachers, where, for example, they can learn to analyze student data together and experienced co-teachers can mentor teachers who are new to the practice. In addition, district and state leaders should promote what Robert Feirsen from the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) describes as "psychological ownership," an idea stronger than buy-in that helps districts achieve a mindset of collective success and ownership of the future vision among teachers and staff, such as to shift toward inclusive education for all students.

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KEY FINDINGS

- **Co-teaching models provide educators with inclusive and flexible methods for providing differentiated instruction to students in the general education classroom.** Effective co-teaching models can meet the needs of students with disabilities and other diverse learners. Co-teaching creates more opportunities for individual and small group support and access to core content in the least restrictive environment for students with disabilities. The framework requires teachers to shift their instructional mindset and develop collaborative partnerships of shared responsibilities. Co-teachers benefit from ongoing professional feedback from and collaboration with peers during a highly collaborative relationship that builds an inclusive learning environment for students of all abilities.

- **District and state leaders must promote teacher and staff investment and buy-in by including educators at all levels in crucial decision-making conversations to adequately create and sustain inclusive educational environments.** Maintaining such environments requires systemic, ongoing, intentional action from educators and education partners at all levels. Robert Feirsen from the ASCD describes the concept of "psychological ownership," an idea stronger than buy-in that helps districts achieve a mindset of collective success among staff. Building this mindset and creating disability-inclusive educational environments requires a long-term shift in educator mindset and culture away from a "one-size-fits-all" way of thinking about and conducting education to a tailored approach that increases the school's ability to meet learners' diverse needs.

- **All state education departments include glossaries of common terms and vocabulary within their co-teaching manuals to provide all educators with a foundational understanding of co-teaching strategies.** By including common terms and phrases within the documents, each state Department of Education ensures that educators at all levels across their states comprehend co-teaching practices and methods in the same ways and can implement co-teaching models with fidelity. Alongside glossaries, some state education departments also include tables or visuals to demonstrate what co-teaching is and what co-teaching is not. The South Carolina Department of Education, for example, publishes a table at the beginning of its co-teaching framework that describes multiple aspects of co-teaching and distinguishes co-teaching from other models that leave one teacher in an assisting or helping role for the length of the year.

- **Only the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDOE) and the Texas Education Agency (TEA) provide implementation guidelines for educators at multiple levels of locality.** District-, site-, and classroom-level strategies provide comprehensive standards and guidelines for administrators at all levels to consider when planning, developing, and instituting co-teaching structures. The TEA, for example, divides guidelines for administrators into "Considerations for Beginning a Districtwide Co-Teach Program," "Considerations for Beginning a Campus Co-Teach Program," and "Considerations for Implementation Co-Teaching in the Classroom." At the classroom level, co-teachers are provided with guidance on how to build a collaborative partnership over three stages.

- **All state departments of education, except the West Virginia Department of Education (WVDOE), emphasize the importance of professional development and support to ensure co-teachers sufficiently develop and grow their skills to implement co-teaching models successfully in the classrooms.** States and districts must provide ongoing professional learning support to educators engaging in and responsible for implementing co-teaching strategies successfully, as both teachers must be equally competent in using co-teaching methods properly and effectively. By heavily investing in professional development, states and districts provide teachers and instructional staff with the tools they need to implement co-teaching models in their schools successfully.

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SECTION I: CO-TEACHING PRACTICES

The co-teaching approach creates more opportunities for individual and small group support; specifically, for students with disabilities, co-teaching facilitates access to core content in the least restrictive environment while setting high expectations, leading to higher performance. One of the most frequently cited strategies for implementing more inclusive classrooms involves integrating special education (SPED) teachers into general education classrooms and adopting co-teaching models where both teachers share the responsibility of planning, instructing, and assessing students.[1] Co-teaching can successfully meet the needs of all students when co-teachers:[2]

- Have ample time to build a trusting relationship with one another;
- Have shared planning times; and
- Have the ability to use their individual expertise in the classroom.

Co-teaching relies on the collaborative relationship between a special education teacher and a general education teacher as they share instructional responsibilities to support students' diverse needs. Co-teaching facilitates inclusive learning environments that promote a positive classroom and school culture. Although co-teaching requires teachers to shift their instructional mindset and practices, co-teachers benefit from ongoing professional feedback and collaboration with peers. Teachers can seek feedback from one another and can consistently provide their partners with constructive criticism and ideas during weekly collaborative planning periods.[3] Figure 1.1 lists the eight components of co-teaching, which teachers must develop through their partnerships to deliver effective, high-quality instruction.

Figure 1.1: Components of Co-Teaching

INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION Effective interpersonal communication involves verbal, non-verbal, and social skills to communicate ideas. At first, teachers may face a clash of communication styles, lack of openness, and dissatisfaction. Over time, they should develop a collaborative style that becomes a positive model for students.	**PHYSICAL ARRANGEMENT** Co-teachers must agree on the physical arrangement of the classroom, including the placement of materials, students, and teachers. Co-teachers should be fluid in their positioning within the classroom and mindful of each other's control and positioning.	**FAMILIARITY WITH CURRICULUM** Both teachers must be familiar with the content and methodology used in the classroom to facilitate competence and confidence in both teachers. Both instructors should appreciate specific competencies that they bring to the content.	**CURRICULUM GOALS AND MODIFICATIONS** Teachers need to discuss goals, accommodations, and modifications necessary for specific students to be successful. Both teachers should differentiate instruction and goals through changes in activities, support, and assignments.
INSTRUCTIONAL PLANNING Instructional planning involves on-the-spot, day-to-day, week-to-week, and unit-to-unit planning of coursework. Effective	**INSTRUCTIONAL PRESENTATION** The presentation of lessons and structuring of classroom activities comprise the instructional	**CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT** Effective classroom management involves two major components: structure and	**ASSESSMENT** Assessment in the co-taught classroom involves developing systems for evaluating individual students, adjusting

[1] Stein, E. "What Is Co-Teaching? An Introduction to Co-Teaching and Inclusion." CAST Professional Publishing, 2016. https://publishing.cast.org/stories-resources/stories/co-teaching-introduction-inclusion-stein

[2] Bulleted text taken verbatim with modifications from Morin, A. "6 Co-Teaching Models." Understood. https://www.understood.org/en/articles/6-models-of-co-teaching

[3] "Co-Teaching to Meet the Needs of All Students." Education Resources Strategies. p. 1. https://www.erstrategies.org/cms/files/2822-co-teaching-template-and-revere-profile-pdf.pdf

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planning requires teachers to appreciate the need for modifications of the curriculum and accept the responsibility of teaching all students in the classroom. Common planning time is essential if teachers are to become truly collaborative.	presentation component of the co-teaching classroom. Both teachers participate in the presentation of the lesson, provide instruction, and structure the learning activities. Students address questions and discuss concerns with both teachers.	relationships. In a structured environment, rules and routines structure the learning experience. Teachers mutually develop consistent expectations for students' behavior, which are clear to the students and enforced within the classroom. Teachers use community-building and relationship-building activities to enhance classroom management.	standards and expectations for performance to meet individual needs while maintaining course integrity. Both teachers consider ways to integrate the goals and objectives written into students' IEPs. The teachers develop these processes on an ongoing basis.

Source: The Council for Exceptional Children[4]

These eight components can serve as a starting point for co-teachers to discuss plans and identify a model for their classroom.[5] Co-teachers should evaluate their current knowledge and competencies and identify one or more co-teaching models to implement in the classroom.[6] Teachers and staff should use several approaches and adapt over time as students' needs develop or change and as teachers increase collaboration, as each model is valuable in specific contexts.[7] For example, supervisors and co-teachers can use the co-teaching rating scale or a similar tool to increase collaboration, develop a positive professional relationship, and monitor progress toward shared goals.[8] Co-teaching models with common planning time allow teachers to create learning connections within and across subject areas and share knowledge, enhancing both teachers' abilities to meet students' needs.[9] Figure 1.2 briefly describes seven co-teaching models, as published by the University of Nebraska at Omaha, and identifies potential benefits and challenges to using each.

Figure 1.2: Seven Models of Co-Teaching

MODEL	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLE	BENEFIT
TEAM TEACHING	Well-planned, team-taught lessons exhibit an invisible flow of instruction with no prescribed division of authority. Using a team-teaching strategy, both teachers are actively involved in the lesson. From the students' perspective, there is no clearly defined leader – as both leaders share the instruction, are free to interject information, and available to assist students and answer questions.	Both instructors can share the reading of a story or text so that the students hear both voices.	With this strategy, students benefit from the combined knowledge and strengths of both teachers. Due to the relationship developed and the collaboration, students no longer recognize the difference between the general education and special education teachers. Students receive the most effective instruction, allowing both teachers to accept responsibility for the growth of student learning, development, and achievement.

[4] Figure text taken verbatim with modifications from: Gately, S.E. and F.J. Gately. "Understanding Coteaching Components." *Teaching Exceptional Children*, 33:4, March 2001. https://doi.org/10.1177/004005990103300406

[5] Ibid.

[6] Ibid.

[7] [1] Ibid. [2] "Co-Teaching Rating Scale for Supervisors." The Council for Exceptional Children, 2011. https://sarahbsd.files.wordpress.com/2011/05/14-s3co-teachingratingscalesupervisor.pdf

[8] "Co-Teaching Rating Scale for Supervisors," Op. cit.

[9] Darling-Hammond, L. and J. DePaoli. "Why School Climate Matters and What Can Be Done to Improve It." *National Association of State Boards of Education*, May 2020. p. 8. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1257654.pdf

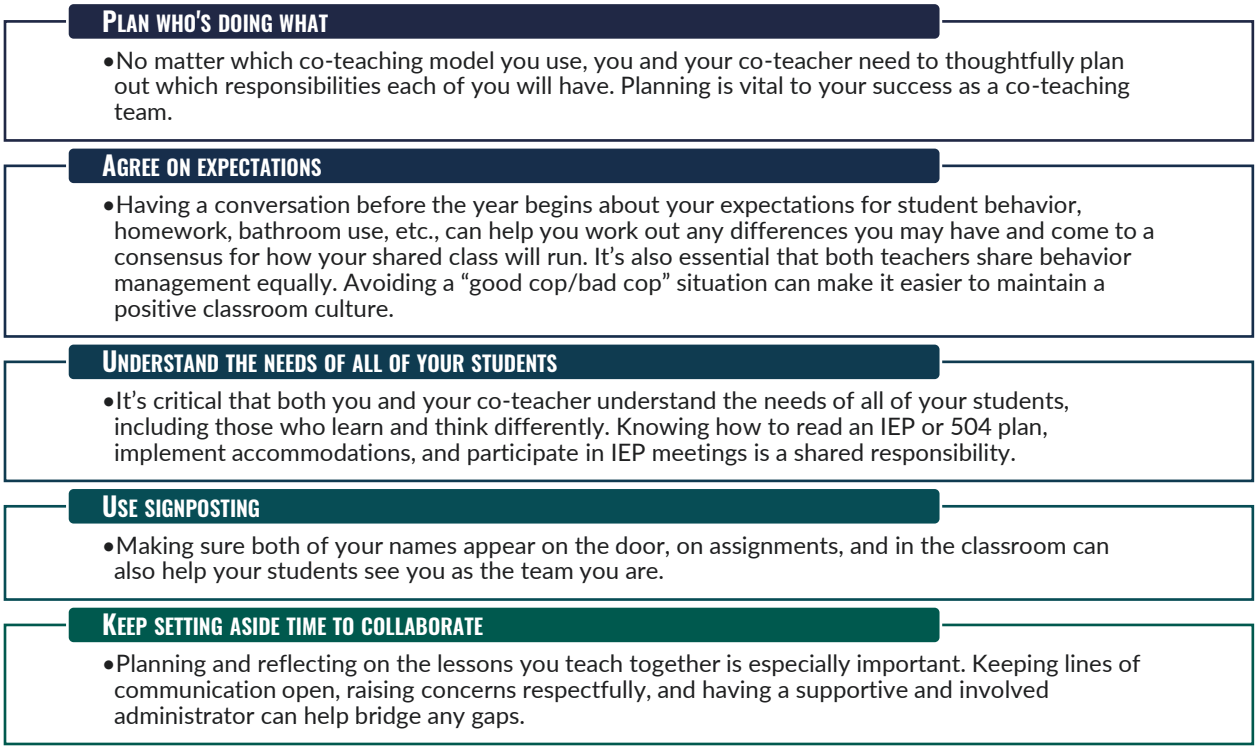
MODEL	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLE	BENEFIT
Parallel Teaching	Each teacher instructs half the students. The two teachers are addressing the same instructional material and presenting the material using the same technology.	Both teachers are leading a discussion on specific current events and the impact they have on our economy.	The greatest benefit to this approach is the reduction of the student-to-teacher ratio. It gives both teachers active but separate instructional roles in the classroom and allows for intensive work with a smaller group of students.
Station Teaching	The collaborative pair divides the instructional content into parts. Each teacher instructs one of the groups. Groups then rotate or spend a designated amount of time at each station; often an independent station will be used along with the teacher-led stations.	One teacher might lead a station where the students play a money math game, and then students rotate to another teacher to purchase items and make change in a mock store.	Students can strategically be placed in groups. With smaller group sizes and two teachers, more content can be covered in the same amount of time. This allows more time for guided practice and direct instruction.
Alternative or Differentiated Teaching	This strategy provides two different approaches to teaching the same information. The learning outcome is the same for all students, however, the instructional methodology is different.	One teacher might lead a station where the students play a money math game and the other teacher could have a mock store where the students purchase items and make change.	With smaller group sizes and two teachers, teaching strategies can be specifically designed for learning styles and needs.
One Teach, One Assist	One teacher has primary instructional responsibility while the other assists students with their work, monitors behaviors, and assists with formative assessments.	While one teacher has the instructional lead, the person assisting can be the "voice" for the students when they do not understand or are having difficulties.	Additional educators circulate through the room to assist as needed.
One Teach, One Observe	One teacher has primary responsibility while the other gathers specific observational information on students or the instructing teacher. The key to this strategy is to focus on the observation where the teacher doing the observation is observing specific behaviors.	One teacher can observe students for their understanding of directions while the other leads.	Teachers can synthesize the actions of their partner teacher and discuss the actions as they happen. The initial structure of the observation builds background in addition to setting the foundation for relationship building and reflection.
Supplemental Teaching	This strategy allows one teacher to work with a large group of students, while the other teacher works with the rest of the students who need the information and materials retaught, extended, or remediated.	One teacher may work with students who need reteaching of a concept, while the other teacher works with the rest of the students on enrichment.	This strategy allows one teacher to work with students at grade level, while the other teacher works with those students who need the information repeated or retaught.

Source: University of Nebraska at Omaha[10]

[10] Figure text quoted verbatim with modifications from: "Co-Teaching Strategies." University of Nebraska at Omaha. https://www.unomaha.edu/college-of-education-health-and-human-sciences/student-services/_files/docs/Co-Teaching/oss-strategies.pdf

The seven basic models utilize co-teaching partnerships in different ways, but all aim to maximize SPED students' exposure to the general education setting and improve learning for all students.[11] All models have benefits and considerations for teachers and administrators to consider, such as teacher compatibility and sufficient time for lesson planning.[12] To make co-teaching as successful as possible, educators may use different strategies day-to-day and must have sufficient time in their schedules to appropriately plan, review, and develop instructional strategies that will meet all students' needs where possible.[13] Figure 1.3 lists the steps schools will need to take to ensure they implement co-teaching successfully. ERS also publishes a best practices template for handling resources related to people, time, money, and technology when implementing co-teaching in schools.[14]

Figure 1.3: Making Co-Teaching Successful



Source: Understood[15]

EDUCATOR INVESTMENT

State and district education leaders must include educators at all levels in critical decision-making conversations when developing and implementing systemic changes that require high levels of buy-in and educator support.[16] By seeking staff input and listening to their needs, education leaders build investment

[11] Stein, Op. cit.
[12] Morin, Op. cit.
[13] Schwartz, S. "What It Takes to Make Co-Teaching Work." *Education Week*, December 2018. https://www.edweek.org/teaching-learning/what-it-takes-to-make-co-teaching-work/2018/12
[14] "Co-Teaching to Meet the Needs of All Students," Op. cit.
[15] Figure text taken verbatim with modifications from Morin, Op. cit.
[16] [1] "How Administrators Can Get Teacher Buy-in on Change Initiatives." K-12 Dive, July 2017. https://www.k12dive.com/news/how-administrators-can-get-teacher-buy-in-on-change-initiatives/446550/ [2] "Why Teacher Buy-In Is Overrated." ASCD, February 2022. https://www.ascd.org/el/articles/why-teacher-buy-in-is-overrated [2] Graham, E. "Maximizing Student Success with Least Restrictive Environments and Appropriate Models of Inclusion." National Education Association, May 2022. https://www.nea.org/advocating-for-change/new-from-nea/maximizing-student-success-least-restrictive-environments-and-appropriate-models-inclusion

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among a variety of educators through active collaboration and participation.[17] More than buy-in, district and state leaders can foster psychological ownership of the future vision among teachers and staff. [18] Psychological ownership operates on three key ideas: the desire for efficacy or agency; an urge to create a self-identity; and a need for belonging, which allow districts to achieve collective success among educators at all levels. Achieving a mindset of collective success and ownership creates a self-reinforcing cycle that unites teachers, staff, administrators, and other educators through shared purpose, identity, and agency; raises levels of individual and group efficacy; and lets students experience the benefits of a schoolwide commitment to professional learning and collaboration.[19] Such a collective mindset requires a shift in the educational culture within teaching and support practices, and a move away from a "one-size-fits-all" educational experience to a tailored approach that increases the school's ability to meet the diverse needs of all learners, not only those with disabilities.[20] By embedding the collective mindset that all learners matter equally in all teachers and staff, districts and schools can create a cultural shift away from one of disparate educational outcomes for students with disabilities toward equitable educational attainment and quality inclusive education for all students.[21] Inclusive education requires a shift in the entire educational system, as described in Figure 1.4.

> *Psychological Ownership achieves collective success when educators develop deep knowledge of the target (e.g., through leading a pilot program for restorative justice, or the adoption of project-based learning), exercise control in implementation (e.g., having responsibility for determining criteria for program success), and forge a sustained connection with colleagues and the school, creating a literal and figurative sense of place or "home.""*
>
> *—Robert Feirsen, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development*

Figure 1.4: Elements of an Inclusive Education

COMMITMENT AND INVESTMENTS FROM EDUCATION DEPARTMENTS — It takes time and money to change systems.
SUPPORT FOR TEACHERS AND STUDENTS — Teachers need training and guidance, and students need to be provided with services to overcome barriers to learning.
PROMOTION OF RESPECT FOR DIVERSITY AND INCLUSIVE LEARNING — Action is needed to challenge negative attitudes and prejudice against children with disabilities.
HIGH EXPECTATIONS OF ALL STUDENTS — Teachers need to invest in and support all children.
SAFE AND INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENTS — Children cannot learn if they are frightened of teachers or bullying from other children.
PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN PARENTS, ORGANIZATIONS OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES, AND SCHOOLS — Inclusive education will benefit from the widest possible experience and knowledge.
SYSTEMS TO MONITOR PROGRESS — It is vital to measure whether the situation is improving, and if not, what further changes are needed.

Source: UNICEF[22]

[17] [1] "Six Actions to Keep Moving Your School's Vision Forward | New Leaders Blog." New Leaders Blog, March 2022. https://www.newleaders.org/blog/blog-six-actions-to-keep-moving-your-schools-vision-forward [2] "8 Ways to Establish Shared Vision." International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE), April 2015. https://www.iste.org/explore/Lead-the-way/8-ways-to-establish-shared-vision

[18] "Why Teacher Buy-In Is Overrated," Op. cit.

[19] Ibid.

[20] "Disability Inclusive Education and Learning." UNESCO IIEP Learning Portal, September 2021. https://learningportal.iiep.unesco.org/en/issue-briefs/improve-learning/disability-inclusive-education-and-learning

[21] Alasuutari, H. and Q. Wodon. "Shifting Mindsets to Support Disability-Inclusive Education." World Bank Blogs, December 2020. https://blogs.worldbank.org/education/shifting-mindsets-support-disability-inclusive-education

[22] Figure text taken verbatim with modifications from: "Inclusive Education: Including Children with Disabilities in Quality Learning: What Needs to Be Done?" UNICEF, September 2017. pp. 2–3. https://www.unicef.org/eca/sites/unicef.org.eca/files/IE_summary_accessible_220917_brief.pdf

SECTION II: STATE CO-TEACHING POLICIES

Here, Hanover reviews the state-level co-teaching policies from four state departments of education.

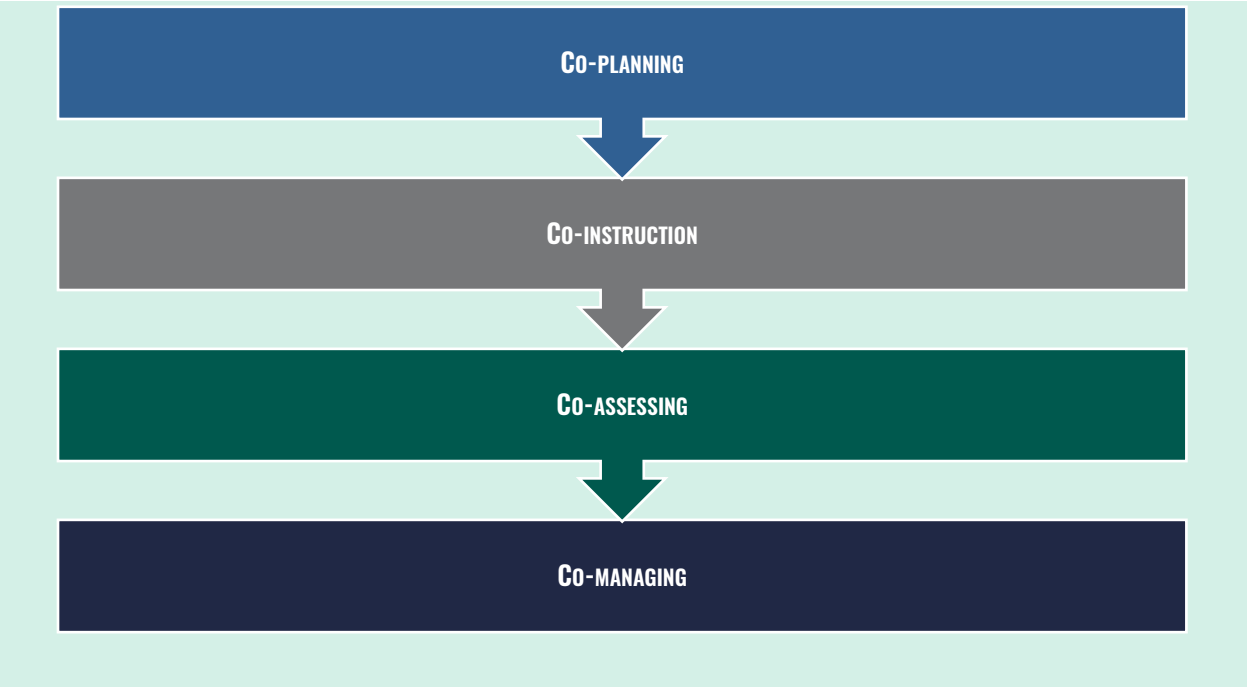
SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

INTRODUCTION TO CO-TEACHING

The South Carolina Department of Education (SCDOE) adopted a co-teaching framework in 2020 following a collaborative development process with in-state school districts, South Carolina institutes of higher education, and varying offices within the Department of Education.[23] The framework starts with common language that all education partners should know to fully appreciate all aspects of co-teaching and maximize the efficiency of implementation. By establishing common definitions of frequently used terms, the SCDOE provides educators across the state with a foundational understanding of co-teaching practices and their uses.[24]

The SCDOE describes co-teaching as "teachers working together with groups of students; sharing the planning, organization, delivery, and assessment of instruction (academic and behavior), as well as sharing physical space." The co-teaching model utilizes the Four Cs of instructional delivery to describe how educational professionals collaborate to teach and assess in a common space: Co-planning, Co-instructing, Co-assessing, and Co-managing. Figure 2.1 summarizes each step of the co-teaching model, for which the SCDOE also provides common definitions. Between each step, educators should reflect on pedagogy and student performance to complete the cycle of continuous improvement and collaborative instructional delivery.[25]

Figure 2.1: Four Cs of Co-Teaching



[23] "South Carolina Co-Teaching Framework." South Carolina Department of Education, September 2020. https://ed.sc.gov/newsroom/school-district-memoranda-archive/south-carolina-co-teaching-framework/south-carolina-co-teaching-framework-attachment/

[24] Ibid., p. 1.

[25] Ibid., pp. 4–5.

CO-PLANNING

Co-planning occurs when the co-teachers discuss and develop lessons and assessments collaboratively. Both teachers are actively involved in the planning process by sharing ideas, developing drafts for feedback, and sharing resources, etc. Two or more professionals plan instruction for a diverse group of learners together.

CO-INSTRUCTION

The act of two or more certified teachers using effective strategies to bring collaborative lesson plans to life. Co-instruction is a partnership that aims to provide substantially different instruction and outcomes for students. Co-instruction happens when both teachers are instructing students, either together or at the same time, and teachers implement specific roles and responsibilities for instructional activities.

CO-ASSESSING

Co-assessing occurs when the co-teachers collaboratively evaluate, grade, and reflect upon the results of assessments to meet the diverse needs of the students and make co-teaching more effective. Co-assessing is used to inform students and teachers of student progress, guide student grouping, and design lesson plans and learning activities. Co-assessing is **not** one teacher responsible for assessing one group of students while the other teacher assesses the remainder of the students in a parallel effort.

CO-MANAGING

Co-teachers are charged with the same duties as all classroom teachers including the management of logistics, information, materials, and discipline in the classroom. In a true co-management partnership, these responsibilities must be shared. It is imperative that co-teachers plan for co-management as carefully as they plan for co-instruction and co-assessment by collaborating, communicating, and establishing equity in their partnership to ensure a positive, productive classroom learning environment.

Source: South Carolina Department of Education[26]

As part of the "co-teaching" definition, the SCDOE dispels common misconceptions about co-teaching models, including the idea that the special service provider (i.e., gifted and talented teacher, special education teacher, speech-language therapists, etc.) must always be the "co-teacher" pushing into the general education classroom to assist the general education teacher. In fact, both teachers take on the title of "co-teacher" and may not always consist of a general education teacher and a special education teacher but could be made up of two or more teachers with different specialties or content certifications. For example, a co-teaching pair may be a general education teacher and a special education teacher, two special education teachers, or a speech-language therapist and a general education teacher. Figure 2.2 further summarizes what co-teaching does and does not consist of.[27]

Figure 2.2: What is Co-Teaching?

CO-TEACHING IS…

- Two or more teachers working together.
- Conducted in the same physical environment.
- When both teachers plan for instruction together.
- Two or more teachers with various areas of expertise who collaborate to meet the needs of diverse students.
- Two or more teachers teaching all students in the classroom.
- Two or more teachers responsible for a behavior management system.
- When both teachers share in student assessment, including providing the assessment and analyzing the results.
- Each teacher being accountable for the Four Cs.
- Both teachers reflect on all aspects of planning, instructing, managing, and assessing the classroom.

[26] Figure text quoted verbatim with modifications from: Ibid., pp. 2–5.
[27] Ibid., p. 5.

CO-TEACHING IS NOT…	▪ When a few students are pulled out of the classroom regularly to work with an intervention specialist. ▪ A teacher and an assistant, aide, or paraprofessional. ▪ When a certified teacher plans all lessons and a certified specialist only joins to assist the certified teacher, asking "What are we doing today, and what would you like me to do?" ▪ Job sharing, where teachers teach on different days. ▪ Less work – as it is different work. ▪ Getting "full credit for half the work." ▪ Combining two full-sized classrooms to share two teachers. ▪ One teacher does all the instructing and the other handles all behavior.

Source: South Carolina Department of Education[28]

The SCDOE then cites several studies to demonstrate the effectiveness of co-teaching. Generally, studies that support co-teaching show it leads to increased consultation and collaboration between school staff, skill gains among content area teachers as they adapt instruction to meet individual student needs, and increased academic achievement among students who receive co-taught instruction. The SCDOE also provides four subcategories of evidence:[29]

- Effective Instructional Practices in General Education Which Complement Co-Teaching
- Evidence to Support Co-Teaching Related to Student Academic Outcomes
- Evidence to Support Co-Teaching Related to Student Socioemotional Outcomes; and
- Evidence to Support Co-Teaching Across Student Populations.

IMPLEMENTATION GUIDANCE

The SCDOE's implementation guidance is to support district-, building-, and school-level personnel with specific considerations as they develop, implement, and evaluate their co-teaching structures. For each level of personnel, the SCDOE divides considerations into three stages: development and initiation, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation. During development and initiation at the district level, some considerations for administrators include defining a common vision and vocabulary for co-teaching, identifying initial program development structures and frameworks, and developing system-wide goals and timelines. When implementing, district administrators may develop an outcome of expected steps and accountability checks for schools, consider school scheduling needs when developing planning times, and assess for specific and ongoing needs to provide adequate professional development academic resources. While monitoring the system, district administrators may evaluate district- and building-level training, student progress, and fidelity of implementation to assess the effectiveness of the co-teaching program and make necessary adjustments. One of the crucial components of effective implementation that the SCDOE emphasizes is professional development; the SCDOE notes that for successful implementation, teachers should receive ongoing professional learning support throughout the year.[30]

The SCDOE also provides specific resources and considerations to support co-teachers at the classroom level. During development, co-teachers may determine which specific students would most benefit from the co-teaching instructional model by reviewing student data and plans, setting expectations for effective communication, reviewing content standards and unit topics for the year, identifying methods for collecting student achievement data, and reviewing which co-teaching models they will utilize. In the implementation stage, co-teachers should ensure ongoing instructional co-planning, deliver lessons using a variety of co-teaching approaches and strategies, implement data collection procedures to effectively monitor student

[28] Figure text quoted verbatim with modifications from: Ibid.
[29] Bulleted text taken verbatim with modifications from: Ibid., pp. 10–11.
[30] Ibid., pp. 19–20.

progress, and adjust instruction based on student performance and observed needs. To monitor and evaluate, co-teachers are continuously evaluating student achievement as well as their working relationship for maximum effectiveness.

TEXAS EDUCATION AGENCY

INTRODUCTION TO CO-TEACHING

In 2018, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) published a co-teaching guide for districts across Texas to provide support to teachers implementing specially designed instruction (SDI) models to students eligible for special education services. **The guidelines are meant to establish a common understanding of various co-teaching and inclusive education strategies to implement and evaluate the program most effectively.** Like the SCDOE, the TEA begins with common vocabulary, including inclusion, co-teaching, and universal design for learning (UDL). The TEA describes co-teaching as an inclusive "service delivery option, a way to provide students with disabilities or other special needs the special instruction" they need in the least restrictive environment. The TEA also outlines qualities do not qualify as co-teaching.

Co-teaching is not:

- Teachers teaching alternating subjects.
- One person teaching while the other makes materials or grades student work.
- One person teaching a lesson while the others sit, stand, and watch without function or assignment.
- When one person's ideas determine what or how something should be taught.
- One person acting as a tutor.

Source: Texas Education Agency[31]

The TEA provides further guidance for district- and school-level administrators, as well as classroom teachers. The following subsections will summarize the TEA's considerations for district administrators and classroom teachers. For the full co-teaching manual, please see the Texas Co-Teaching Guidelines here.

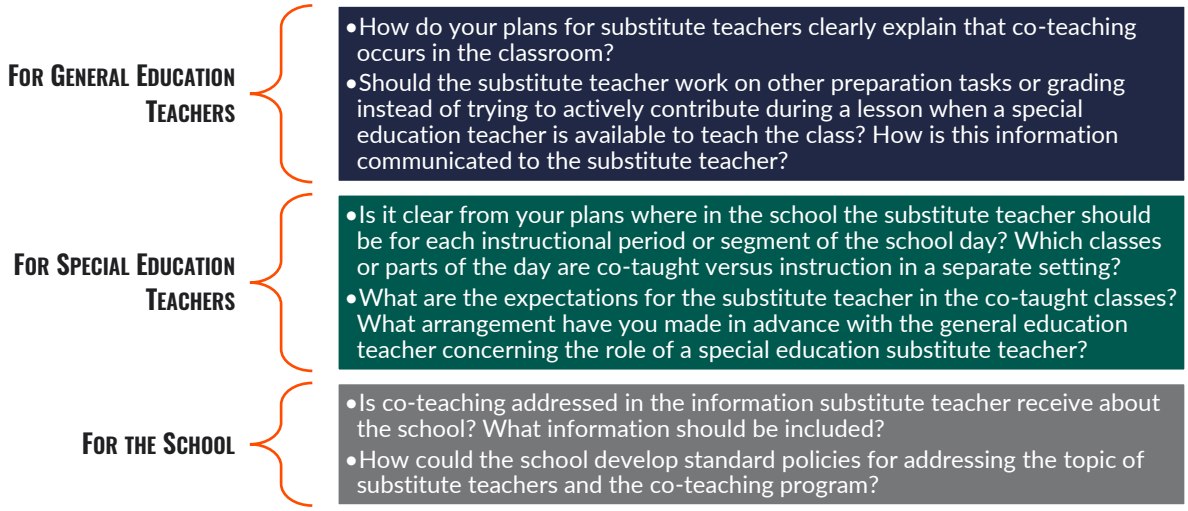
GUIDELINES FOR DISTRICT ADMINISTRATORS

District administrators should consider several aspects of district structure and function to successfully develop and implement a co-teaching program. For example, districts may consider the population of students who will most benefit from the program and how to target them, such as students with 504 Plans. The TEA recommends integrating co-teaching into district documents at all levels, such as campus improvement plans, teacher evaluation tools, and substitute teacher procedures. Co-teaching is not only for special education, so information on co-teaching should not be restricted to the special education section of the district website. Instead, co-teaching should be treated as a central instructional approach to communicate to staff and parents that co-teaching facilitates better learning for all students in more inclusive settings.[32] Figure 2.3 illustrates possible considerations concerning how substitute teachers fit into co-teaching models.

[31] Bulleted text quoted verbatim with modifications from: "Co-Teaching, A How-to Guide: Guidelines for Co-Teaching in Texas." Texas Education Agency, May 2018. pp. 3, 6–8. https://www.esc15.net/cms/lib/TX50000034/Centricity/Domain/139/20984-CoTeaching_Updated-Print-05.10.18.pdf

[32] Ibid., pp. 15–18.

Figure 2.3: Co-Teaching Considerations for Substitute Teachers



Source: Texas Education Agency[33]

When evaluating a co-teaching program, districts must address multiple layers of process and procedure. For successful implementation, administrators must identify aspects of student learning to monitor, such as assessments of achievement and behavior; professional staff function, such as classroom observations; and parent and community member perceptions. While preparing the district for co-teaching, the TEA suggests administrators take time to identify the target population, consider populations that may benefit from co-teaching, recruit schools and participants for early implementation, provide supports for early implementors, and provide professional development for district- and school-level staff and teachers. In the final three phases of implementation, district administrators should continue to support early implementors, check the fidelity of implementation, continue needed professional development, aid struggling co-teachers, and evaluate the effective use of student achievement data. As the district gradually expands co-teaching to more classrooms and schools, it should continue to gather evaluation data on student achievement and the perceptions of education partners across the district, including staff and parents. Figure 2.4 lists questions district administrators may consider when developing and implementing co-teaching across the district.

Figure 2.4: District Considerations for Co-Teaching

Co-teaching is most successful when it is implemented with fidelity, integrated into school and district long-term plans, and supported through professional development and accountability strategies. Some questions to consider when implementing co-teaching at the district level:

- How have expectations for co-teaching been articulated at the district level? What formal policies and procedures exist related to co-teaching? What policies and procedures should be approved to foster sustainability for co-teaching?
- To what extent have district-level personnel received professional development about co-teaching? (Note: This question pertains to general education as well as special education leaders.)
- What supports has the district offered to create a viable infrastructure for co-teaching (e.g., assistance in scheduling, clarification of service delivery options)?
- How has co-teaching been integrated into options related to strategic and school improvement planning?
- How are resources allocated to support co-teaching (e.g., funding for professional development, periodic common planning time for co-teachers, data collection and aggregation)?
- How is co-teaching presented in district materials and media (e.g., district website, student handbooks, parent communication)?
- How is co-teaching part of the interview and hiring practices of the district?

[33] Figure text quoted verbatim with modifications from: Ibid., p. 17.

- How are site administrators accountable for co-teaching implementation integrity?
- How is co-teaching incorporated into principal and other site administrator evaluation protocols and procedures?
- How is essential information about co-teaching disseminated to site administrators, teachers, and others?
- What data are reported to the district to determine the impact of co-teaching on key student outcomes?

Source: Texas Education Agency[34]

GUIDELINES FOR CLASSROOM TEACHERS

The TEA begins its classroom guidelines by emphasizing the importance of establishing strong partnerships between co-teachers. Co-teachers develop relationships and common understanding over three stages, as illustrated in Figure 2.5.

Figure 2.5: Development Stages of Co-Teacher Relationships

BEGINNING STAGE

- Teachers communicate about instructional issues, but remain somewhat guarded in their interactions. In the classroom setting, teachers continue to separate students and materials. Even though they are co-teaching, a "yours and mine" approach is usually evident. In the area of curriculum, the special educator may be unfamiliar with the content or methodology of general education. As a result, the general educator may initially take a lead role. Finding time to plan instruction may become a challenge because programs may be driven by standards, textbooks, and tests. The special educator may be viewed as a "helper." As teachers work on planning instruction, they focus on preparing lessons for their own students. Initially, one individual is viewed as the "teacher" and the other as the "helper" or "behavior enforcer."

COMPROMISE STAGE

- Teacher communication is more relaxed, open, and interactive. They begin to share the physical space and materials. As they begin to develop confidence, in both curriculum and differentiated instruction, both teachers start to see more ways to modify and demonstrate "give and take" in planning and lesson delivery. In the area of instruction presentation, the teachers begin to incorporate mini-lessons to provide clarifications of strategies. Both teachers work together to develop rules and implement behavior plans. Finally, co-teachers at this stage begin to explore a variety of evaluation measures.

COLLABORATIVE STAGE

- Co-teachers begin using more nonverbal communication and nonverbal signals to coordinate their efforts in the classroom. Students move in and out of flexible grouping configurations, and whole-group instruction is more evident. Both teachers can be observed presenting, instructing, and structuring learning activities. Both teachers are involved in classroom rules and routines, and they use a variety of assessments to monitor student understanding.

Source: Texas Education Agency[35]

The TEA offers additional guidance on establishing positive co-teaching relationships to ensure the successful implementation of co-teaching practices. Teachers may spend time discussing their vision for the program and goals for student success and professional growth, finding planning time and ways to use it effectively, determining how to resolve conflicts, establishing classroom routines and behavior management, and sharing teaching styles and preferences. To ensure co-teachers present themselves as parts, the TEA recommends making sure both teachers' names are on the door, ensuring all parent correspondence and syllabi include the names of both teachers, and introducing the teachers as a team. Figure 2.6 offers additional guidance for positively starting co-teaching partnerships.

[34] Figure text quoted verbatim with modifications from: Ibid., p. 20.
[35] Figure text quoted verbatim with modifications from: Ibid., p. 42.

Figure 2.6: Tips for Starting Off on the Right Foot

Effective co-teachers combine several elements: a shared, unwavering belief that the teacher's primary responsibility is to help every student succeed; knowledge and skills for effectively teaching diverse learners; recognition that teacher teachers – with different but respected points of view – can generate more ideas for reaching students than a teacher alone; and a commitment to success that blends flexibility and a sense of humor with a strong allegiance to the partnership. Of course, it takes time to develop exemplary co-teaching, and the first step is beginning the school year on a positive note. Here are several suggestions:

- As soon as teachers learn of one another, they should reach out to each other and suggest a meeting prior to the start of the school year, even if that option has not been formally arranged by an administrator.
- Before teaching, they should discuss what each teacher considers non-negotiable – those beliefs that are most important to them as teachers. If some of the items conflict (e.g., the general educator believes they should deliver all curriculum but the special educator disagrees), it is important to reach an agreement before facing students. Be sure to address instruction as well as behavior and classroom management.
- Discuss how introductions will be handled on the first day with students. How will it be communicated to students that co-teachers work as a pair and both teachers have parity in the classroom, even if one teacher is not there at all times?
- Create a relatively detailed lesson plan for the first day with students and ensure aspects of the lesson plan include grouping students and have both teachers assuming an active teaching role.
- Plan out the first week of lessons, extending the conversation about the first day to group strategies and teaching responsibilities.
- Discuss several "what ifs": What if one teacher makes a mistake during teaching? What if a teacher is concerned about something the other says to students? What if one teacher dislikes the way the other addressed a particular instructional or behavioral issue during class?
- Begin a conversation on other important matters, including grading student work, the system for evaluating the work of students with disabilities (e.g., avoiding a grade penalty when accommodations are made), report card grades, options for both teachers' (or one or neither teachers') comfort with accommodating students with diverse needs, etc.
- Discuss teaching tasks and how they will get done (e.g., lab set-up).
- Set up several times during the first month of school to touch base regarding instruction, behavior, and the partnership.
- Spend a few minutes getting to know each other as professionals and people to become more comfortable with one another as teaching partners.

Source: Texas Education Agency[36]

WEST VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

The West Virginia Department of Education (WVDOE) published its Co-Teaching Foundations Manual in 2021 to assist teachers and administrators around the state in planning and implementing co-teaching best practices. The manual includes recommendations related to planning, scheduling, implementing, and assessing co-teaching strategies, as well as a list of common definitions for terms used throughout the manual, though it is less comprehensive than other states' lists. These co-teaching guidelines should support educators by providing a general overview of co-teaching applicable at all programmatic levels, guidance on different co-teaching models with examples of when each would be appropriate, resources to support co-teaching

Co-teaching, as per West Virginia Board of Education Policy 2419, is defined as "two or more professionals delivering substantive instruction to a diverse or blended group of students in a single physical space. For co-taught classrooms where instructional responsibilities are shared between the special and general educator, special education students requiring specially designed instruction (special education) must not exceed 50% of the total class enrollment. The special educator should not be assigned to more than one co-teaching classroom during one instructional block."

[36] Figure text quoted verbatim with modifications from: Ibid., p. 44.

relationships, parents with a toolkit to support family communications, and administrative tools to support co-teaching practices.[37]

To ensure the success of co-teaching structures, districts must establish strong foundations in the four absolutes of co-teaching: Professional Working Relationships, Co-Planning, Monitoring, and Scheduling. Figure 2.7 describes each component and provides examples of scenarios within each aspect of co-teaching.

Figure 2.7: Four Absolutes of Co-Teaching

ABSOLUTE	DESCRIPTION
PROFESSIONAL WORKING RELATIONSHIPS	Professional working relationships are at the very heart of a successful co-teaching classroom. Co-teaching pairs must take time to build positive working relationships and open communication. Co-teaching is much more than content knowledge and useful strategies. Co-teaching is undoubtedly more than simply two teachers teaching in the same room. Co-teaching is two professionals working together to grow and enhance the learning experience of a group of students. Co-teaching is the blending of two great educators communicating and delivering effective models through thoughtful planning and intentional reflection.
CO-PLANNING	Effective co-planning goes beyond procedures and what content to provide in a class. Co-planning allows both teachers to lend their areas of expertise and training to meet the needs of the learners. Planning consists of determining when to plan, exchanging teaching materials before planning time, keeping an open mind to new ideas, and having direction for the next planning session. Being intentional about planning means setting time aside to review lesson ideas and formative assessments to drive the plans. Additionally, each teacher should prepare a substitute packet explaining the role of the substitute in the classroom.
MONITORING	Monitoring can refer to the school administration being deliberate in observing and coaching co-teaching pairs. However, most of the monitoring process rests with the co-teaching pairs. Co-teachers will regularly debrief and honestly discuss the successes as well as the challenges of the co-teaching lessons. Determine if activities or responsibilities that can fall under this absolute are occurring.
SCHEDULING	Scheduling establishes the structure that can allow the maximum growth of co-teaching best practices. To ensure teachers have collaborative time and are meeting student goals, many schools schedule students with disabilities first. Special educators need time to ensure they meet the learning goals of students' IEPs within the structure of the schedule.

Source: West Virginia Department of Education[38]

The WVDOE features five co-teaching models within its manual, separating them into two levels of co-teaching to demonstrate the progression of co-teaching relationships. Level one of co-teaching consists of one teacher taking on primary teaching responsibilities while the second teacher acts as support and includes the one teach, one support model. Level two co-teaching includes parallel teaching, alternative teaching, station teaching, and team teaching models, as at level two, co-teachers should be able to teach smaller groups of students at the same time and better implement data-based interventions, small group instruction, and students' needs.[39] Regardless of the level at which co-teachers are teaching, effective co-teaching still requires ongoing planning, communication, and collaboration between teachers.[40] Figure 2.8 lists six steps the WVDOE suggests schools and teachers take to successfully implement the absolutes of co-teaching and build strong partnerships that deliver high-quality instruction.

[37] Bulleted text quoted verbatim with modifications from: "Co-Teaching Foundations: Building Blocks to Successful Co-Teaching." West Virginia Department of Education, 2021. p. 2. https://wvde.us/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/22006-2021-CoTeaching-Foundations-Manual-v3.pdf

[38] Figure text quoted verbatim with modifications from: Ibid., pp. 5–7.

[39] Ibid., p. 12.

[40] "Co-Teaching Fact Sheet." West Virginia Department of Education, 2021. https://wvde.us/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/20805-Co-teaching-Fact-Sheet_v3.pdf

Figure 2.8: Implementing the Absolutes of Co-Teaching

1 **ESTABLISH RAPPORT**	The co-teaching team needs to establish a relationship even before the students enter the building. Get to know each other on a personal level. Co-teaching teams will typically teach together for at least an entire school year. Start to determine commonalities. When co-teaching teams have a healthy relationship and rapport, the students feel more comfortable in the classroom. Students can sense tension as well as harmony within the learning environment. A positive relationship will minimize misunderstandings and motivate the team to resolve problems before escalation.
2 **IDENTIFY TEACHING STYLES AND USE THEM TO CREATE A COHESIVE CLASSROOM**	Determine who loves doing things like experiments and using manipulatives. How are the experiments completed and manipulatives used in class? How are student behaviors managed? What are the teachers' discipline methods? Examine instructional and discipline styles so the team can combine the best of both teachers' techniques and create a cohesive classroom. Find a balance that makes everyone comfortable. When planning lessons together, use the varying styles to complement one another and enhance the experiences and delivery of instruction. Creating a cohesive classroom with consistent expectations occurs when both teachers are on the same page with instruction and discipline styles.
3 **DISCUSS STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**	How can each instructor's strengths and weaknesses be utilized? An excellent way to do this is to have co-teaching teams make a list of strengths, weaknesses, likes, and dislikes. Take the lists, compare them, and highlight the strengths that are dominant for one teacher and allow that person to be the lead teacher in those areas. Differentiate instruction using these strengths to meet the needs of a larger group and allow for individualized instruction.
4 **DISCUSS ANY IEP AND CONTENT-RELATED EDUCATION GOALS.**	To create an IEP the special educator must involve the general educator in the special education process. Students in special education are the responsibility of both educators, so the general educator must be informed about the IEP for each student. Otherwise, the two teachers cannot effectively execute the plans. It is also essential to discuss modifications and accommodations, as well as goals and objectives to ensure each student's success in the classroom. Both teachers should work together to meet student goals and ensure adequate progress. In the same way, general education teachers must discuss their goals for students with special education teachers, as the general education students are the responsibility of both teachers as well. Both educators should address the goals, objectives, and mandatory curriculum for that grade level of students.
5 **FORMULATE A PLAN OF ACTION AND ACT AS A UNIFIED TEAM**	Teachers continuously make decisions throughout the year by formulating a plan of action at the beginning. By starting the year with an action plan, co-teachers will experience minimal disruptions. Consider the following items in a plan of action: ▪ Scheduling; ▪ Expected classroom behaviors; ▪ Classroom procedures, such as classroom, homework, and turning in policies; ▪ Consequences of not following rules and procedures; ▪ Grading; and ▪ Communication between home and school. Talk about what will be acceptable behavior in the classroom as well as how each teacher will respond to actions that are not acceptable. Be consistent when dealing with parents and meet as a team for conferences. Determine teacher roles in advance so teacher teams send a common message and do not contradict each other or foster misunderstandings during meetings.

6 **TAKE RISKS AND GROW**	A beautiful aspect of co-teaching is that it allows the team to take risks; it will enable teachers to learn from each other and grow as professionals. When teachers take risks in instruction, co-teaching provides a safety net. When there is only one teacher in the room and an activity fails, the teacher must often stop and move on and later analyze why the activity fell apart without the assistance of another. However, in co-teaching, activities are better supported and redirected when they do not go as planned.

Source: West Virginia Department of Education[41]

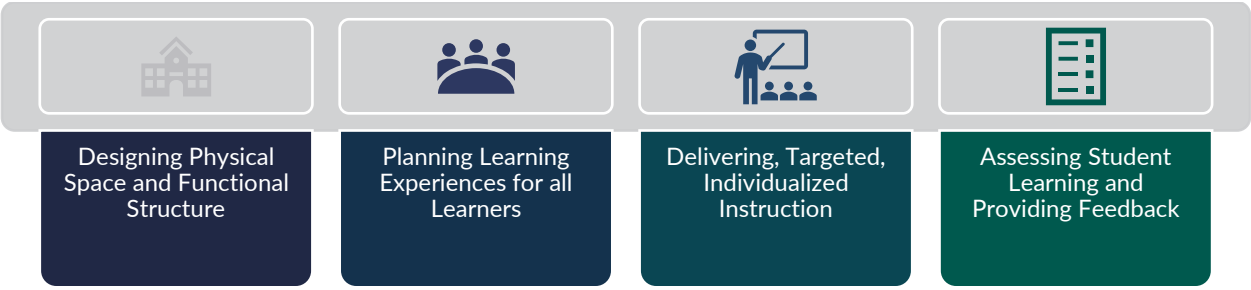
The WVDOE's Co-Teaching Foundations Manual includes detailed sections on each aspect of co-teaching and strategies for effectively co-planning and co-teaching. Sample lesson plans provide teachers and administrators with effective ways to find collaborative time for planning, reviewing, and discussing student data and curriculum content. Unlike other states, the WVDOE also features strategies specifically for successfully co-teaching and determining teachers' roles in virtual environments as well as considerations teachers may have for the physical space of a classroom. Finally, the manual reviews best practices for engaging with families about co-teaching, including sample brochures and family letter templates that teachers may use to introduce families to the concept of co-teaching and how it will work in the classroom.

WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

INTRODUCTION TO CO-TEACHING

Finally, the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (WIDPI) published its Co-Teaching Foundations and Practice Profile in 2020 with an emphasis on the "why," "how," and "what" of co-teaching. In a department-wide presentation, the WIDPI introduced co-teaching as a fundamental aspect of the state's larger initiative to build more inclusive learning environments for all students and asked educators to consider their "why" for co-teaching. Overall, the WIDPI hopes to address issues with equity and social justice within its districts through inclusive learning communities using co-teaching strategies.

In Wisconsin, co-teaching is the practice of two or more licensed educators, typically a special education and general education teacher, sharing equal responsibility for planning, delivering, and evaluating instruction, and learning to meet the diverse needs of students within a shared space. Wisconsin co-teachers must develop proficiency in four competencies:



Source: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction[42]

The four competencies are measured on a scale of Expected and Proficient to Developmental to Unacceptable Use in Practice, which identifies practitioners who have not yet developed the skills they need to implement co-teaching successfully. The Co-Teaching Practice Profile describes each competency in detail, providing educators with explanations and examples at each level of expertise. The WIDPI also

[41] Figure text quoted verbatim with modifications from: Ibid.
[42] Figure text quoted verbatim from: "Co-Teaching in Wisconsin." Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. https://dpi.wi.gov/sped/educators/consultation/co-teaching

includes a list of common terms and vocabulary that educators should be familiar with to implement co-teaching in their districts effectively.[43] Figure 2.9 summarizes each level of expertise on the scale.

Figure 2.9: Co-Teaching Proficiency Rubric

EXPECTED AND PROFICIENT	DEVELOPMENTAL	UNACCEPTABLE USE IN PRACTICE
Includes activities that exemplify practitioners who can generalize required skills and abilities to a wide range of settings and contexts, use these skills consistently and independently, and sustain these skills over time while continuing to grow and improve in their position. Phrases used to describe expected and proficient activities may include "consistency," "all of the time," and "in a broad range of contexts."	Includes activities that exemplify practitioners who can implement required skills and abilities, but in a more limited range of contexts and settings, use these skills inconsistently or need a supervisor or coach consultation to complete or successfully apply skills, and would benefit from a coaching agenda that targets particular skills for improvement to move practitioners into the "expected and proficient" category. Phrases used to describe developmental activities may include "some of the time," "somewhat inconsistently," and "in a limited range of contexts." This section helps to define the coaching agenda.	Includes activities that exemplify practitioners who are not yet able to implement the required skills or abilities in any context. Often, if practitioners' work falls into the unacceptable category, there may be challenges related to the overall implementation infrastructure. For example, there may be issues related to how they are selecting or training staff, managing the new program model, or using data to inform continuous improvement. Activities in the unacceptable variation may include phrases such as "none of the time" and "inconsistently." The section should include unacceptable activity that is beyond the absence, or opposite of, activity articulated in the "developmental" or "expected" categories.

Source: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction[44]

The WIDPI also divides co-teaching into two levels, though each level represents the proportion of time co-teachers should spend within each level. This 70/30 split instructional model encourages co-teachers to utilize level two co-teaching practices, such as parallel and station teaching, at least 70 percent of the time and use level one co-teaching practices, which creates the lead and support role among co-teachers, for only 30 percent of instruction. Level one co-teaching models include team teaching and what the WIDPI refers to as "one teach, one collects data," which combines the "one teach, one assist" and "one teach, one observe" models.[45]

COMPETENCY ONE: DESIGNING PHYSICAL SPACE AND FUNCTIONAL STRUCTURE

The first competency requires co-teachers to develop a strong understanding of how the physical space of the classroom will function and establish a strong foundation of expected roles and responsibilities. Proper contribution to co-teaching practice asks teacher partners to design physical spaces intentionally and collaboratively within the classroom with functional structures for all learners in mind. With intentional design, co-teachers create more equitable and inclusive learning environments that promote fairness and achievement for all students. Figure 2.10 includes the "expected" and "unacceptable" criteria for the first competency, which consists of two subcategories.

[43] "Co-Teaching Practice Profile." Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, September 2020. pp. 1–4. https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/sped/pdf/co-teaching-practice-profile-ereader.pdf

[44] Figure text quoted verbatim with modifications from: Ibid., p. 2.

[45] "Co-Teaching Foundations: Building an Inclusive Environment." Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. pp. 16–17. https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/sped/co-teaching-foundations-slide-deck-with-notes.pdf

Figure 2.10: Designing Physical Space and Functional Structures Criteria

CATEGORY	EXPECTED USE IN PRACTICE	UNACCEPTABLE USE IN PRACTICE
PHYSICAL SPACE AND FUNCTIONAL STRUCTURES	▪ There is evidence that the environment was intentionally designed to provide accessibility and flexibility for academic, physical, social, and emotional learning. ▪ Flexible learner groupings occur over 70% of the instructional week within the classroom, with both teachers controlling and utilizing the space. When small groups are used, groups stay within the classroom and are not removed to a segregated setting in the building. ▪ The classroom makeup is intentionally developed for representative distribution that avoids clustering and is reflective of the school's learners across all sub-categories.	▪ There is no evidence that learner variability and specially designed instruction needs are considered. Desks may be arranged in rows interfering with small groupings, some areas are inaccessible to some learners, and materials are presented in only one way with no observable use of technology to make materials more accessible. ▪ A majority of the instruction over the course of the week is done in whole group instruction, and when small grouping is attempted, the group makeups are consistently the same. One teacher controls the space, with the second teacher appearing to be a guest in the classroom. ▪ The classroom makeup is used to cluster a large homogenous group of students with the same label or eligibility for the ease of scheduling teachers or students.
RELATIONSHIPS, ROLES, AND RESPONSIBILITIES	▪ Co-teachers model positive and collaborative relationships to create a strong partner team. ▪ Co-teaching partners enjoy parity of roles and responsibilities – they are treated as equals, both mutually and by learners, although they may not necessarily perform identical tasks. ▪ Co-teaching partners share the collective responsibility for instruction, structures, routines, norms, and procedures through a defined and regular planning time. ▪ Co-teaching partners adjust and adapt their roles and responsibilities quickly and efficiently through non-verbal communication and mini-conferences as learner needs are assessed during the lesson. ▪ When communicating with each other or with stakeholders, language is inclusive, asset-based and person-first, and reflective of "our" students. ▪ Both teachers take equal responsibility for all learners in the classroom regarding classroom safety.	▪ There is visible animosity between the two teachers, or they ignore one another in the classroom. ▪ There is a disparity or imbalance of power between the co-teaching partners to each other's or learners. ▪ One teacher bears the responsibility for lesson planning, instruction, structures, routines, and classroom norms and procedures. There is no defined and regular planning time. ▪ There is no evidence of non-verbal communication or mini-conferences during the co-teaching time, and roles and responsibilities are not adjusted to meet the learner's needs. ▪ Language is exclusive and reflects "your" and "my" learners. ▪ There is only one teacher in the room who consistently responds to behavior or safety needs or is seen as being responsible for the behavior or safety needs of a certain group of learners.

Source: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction[46]

[46] Figure text quoted verbatim with modifications from: "Co-Teaching Practice Profile," Op. cit., pp. 5–7.

Competency Two: Planning Learning Experiences for All Learners

Competency Two consists of three sub-categories for co-teachers to master, all of which relate to pre-planning and co-planning, collaborative planning strategies, and preparing for instruction post-planning. Co-teachers should be able to effectively plan for a co-taught environment to increase learner efficacy, engagement, and self-efficacy. When engaged in collaborative planning, education teams intentionally plan specially designed instruction to support individualized learner plans (ILPs), including IEPs and At-Risk Plans. Planning together and with intention promotes educational equity by ensuring learner agency and ownership to meet learning targets. Figure 2.11 describes the proficient and unacceptable practices for each category.

Figure 2.11: Planning Learning Experiences for All Learners Criteria

CATEGORY	EXPECTED USE IN PRACTICE	UNACCEPTABLE USE IN PRACTICE
Pre-Planning and Co-Teaching Partners Prepare for Co-Planning Sessions	▪ Administration provides professional learning for all staff so that co-teaching partners can be equally competent to use the instructional materials, provide instruction, and support learner social-emotional growth. ▪ Co-teaching partners are aware of all learner's needs – partners have access to all student-related data and documentation in shared documents. ▪ Co-teaching partners develop and review formative student assessment data and have a shared understanding of grade-level learning targets. ▪ Co-teaching partners review curriculum, select language and content to address upcoming lessons, and identify background knowledge students need to be successful. ▪ When accessing grade-level curriculum, co-teaching partners devise learning targets based on state standards.	▪ Administration provides no professional learning to either of the teaching partners, or provides separate professional development opportunities based on teacher licensure areas (e.g., providing instructional professional development to the teachers considered the content lead). ▪ Specialists only have access to IEPs and other student-related needs around academics or behaviors, or only one teacher has access to student information systems or progress monitoring tools. ▪ There are different expectations of learning targets for different groups of students, and teachers do not review formative learner assessment data together. ▪ The general education teacher selects language and content to address upcoming lessons and depends on the specialist to identify background knowledge if it is identified at all. ▪ Only one teacher has access to the grade-level curriculum.
Collaborative Planning	▪ Administration provides a minimum of 30 minutes daily of dedicated time within the building schedule for co-planning, where partners finalize the different aspects of the lesson either in a face-to-face meeting or using an agreed-upon virtual platform. ▪ There is an agreed-upon planning template to capture decisions made in the co-planning session. ▪ All student's progress on formative and summative assessments are used to co-determine: ○ Planning instructional objectives;	▪ Administrators have not scheduled time for teachers to co-plan, causing them to find time before or after the workday or during their lunch hour. ▪ There is no agreed-upon template for use in co-planning sessions. ▪ The teachers follow the curriculum pacing guide with no regard for the student's learning needs and without considering formative assessment data. General education teachers often create the lesson, and special educators adapt and modify it for students with disabilities after the fact.

CATEGORY	EXPECTED USE IN PRACTICE	UNACCEPTABLE USE IN PRACTICE
	○ How to incorporate specially designed instruction; ○ The supports needed for content and instructional objectives; ○ How to address and evaluate concepts and skills, and co-develop and document learner success criteria; and ○ Instructional roles and responsibilities related to the choice of instructional models.	
POST-PLANNING INSTRUCTION PREPARATION	▪ Each co-teaching partner completes various lesson planning tasks (such as instructional scaffolding activities) assigned within the planning template.	▪ There is inconsistency in who prepares materials prior to the lesson delivery.

Source: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction[47]

COMPETENCY THREE: DELIVERING TARGETED, INDIVIDUALIZED INSTRUCTION

The third competency has one category, "Instruction uses high-leverage instructional strategies," and aims to guide classroom pedagogy. Co-teaching allows instructors to consistently ensure authentic learner engagement, learner development, and outcomes that improve, with an intense focus on individualization and small group experiences. Figure 2.12 lists the expected or proficient and unacceptable uses of the co-teaching practice.

Figure 2.12: Delivering Targeted, Individualized Instruction Criteria

CATEGORY	EXPECTED USE IN PRACTICE	UNACCEPTABLE USE IN PRACTICE
INSTRUCTION USES HIGH LEVERAGE INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES	▪ Learning materials are represented using multiple modalities (visual, auditory, tactile, concrete). ▪ Instruction intentionally embeds SDI, adjusting as needed based on student progress in the general curriculum. ▪ All staff interact with all students assuming collective responsibility for the classroom environment, instruction, and behavior support. ▪ Co-teaching partners utilize visible options (use of assistive technology, stations with materials, spaces for independent or small group interaction, visual or audio cues) for engaging with the lesson or learning target. ▪ Co-teaching partners interchangeably confer with all students, who fluently converse about their own learning goals and the activities that will lead them to achieve those goals. ▪ Flexible groups are used a minimum of 70% of the instructional week, which allows for peer support and peer models so that	▪ Instruction is provided using only one modality (visual, auditory, tactile, concrete). ▪ SDI happens in a different space, a segregated space, or is not appropriate to the needs of the learner. ▪ Responsibility for students is based on their ability status (e.g., general education teacher focuses on students with ILPs and special education teacher focuses on students with IEPs). ▪ Goals are teacher-determined, and activities are teacher-directed without student input or knowledge of their own goals. ▪ Flexible grouping is rarely used, or flexible grouping is used to track learners or similar or same skill level. ▪ There is no evidence of co-teaching partners collaborating during the co-teaching session.

[47] Figure text quoted verbatim with modifications from: Ibid., pp. 8–10.

CATEGORY	EXPECTED USE IN PRACTICE	UNACCEPTABLE USE IN PRACTICE
	learners engage with peers around learning targets.	

Source: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction[48]

COMPETENCY FOUR: ASSESSING STUDENT LEARNING AND PROVIDING FEEDBACK

The final criterion requires teachers to learn how to effectively co-assess their students collaboratively and effectively contribute to the co-teaching practice. In successful co-teaching environments, co-teachers believe all learners can and will succeed and strive to ensure all students have opportunities to bring out their inner experts. Teaching teams should gather and analyze student assessment data to guide future instructional and assessment practices. By providing students with ongoing, consistent, supportive, sensitive, and meaningful feedback, co-teachers can reduce students' discrepancies between current understandings and performance and their desired learning goals. Figure 2.13 describes the expected and unacceptable uses in practice for the fourth competency's singular category.

Figure 2.13: Co-Assessing Learning Targets Criteria

CATEGORY	EXPECTED USE IN PRACTICE	UNACCEPTABLE USE IN PRACTICE
CO-ASSESSING LEARNING TARGETS	▪ Co-teaching partners routinely manage and engage in ongoing data collection using curriculum-based measures, informal classroom assessments, observations of student academic performance and behavior, self-assessment of classroom instruction, and discussions with key stakeholders (i.e., students, families, and other professionals). ▪ Well-targeted formative assessment informs what the learning targets will look like for the next day or week. Co-teaching partners can then identify where all students are in their learning, allowing scaffolding and response when planning the next level of instruction. ▪ Co-teaching partners can use IEPs and ILPs to formatively assess all learners' progression towards achieving the learning target. ▪ Assessments reflect multiple avenues for learning to choose to demonstrate their learning so that assessments may be individualized to support student skills that vary in terms of learner strengths, weaknesses, and learning needs. ▪ Co-teaching partners integrate assessments into the learning process, which include learner reflection and goal setting (e.g., often co-created by learners).	▪ Co-teaching partners follow pre-made curricular assessments and do not manage or engage in data, but instead use assessments exclusively for grading purposes. ▪ Formative assessments are not aligned with the learning targets. ▪ Assessments are not created using specific information from IEPs and ILPs goals. ▪ Assessments are whole group experiences with no consideration for learner strengths, weaknesses, and learning needs. ▪ Assessments are not integrated in the learning process, are given for the sole purpose of grading, and do not allow learners to reflect on their learning and set goals.

Source: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction[49]

[48] Figure text quoted verbatim with modifications from: Ibid., pp. 11–13.
[49] Figure text quoted verbatim with modifications from: Ibid., pp. 14–15.

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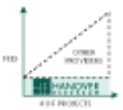

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