### Six Models of Co-Teaching Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CO-TEACHING APPROACH</th>
<th>BENEFITS</th>
<th>CAUTION</th>
<th>VISUAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>One Teach, One Assist</strong></td>
<td>• Provides individualized support for students in a timely manner.</td>
<td>• Students can perceive one teacher to have more authority or ownership of the lesson than the other teacher.</td>
<td><img src="image1.png" alt="Diagram" /></td>
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<td>• Can be an unintimidating entry point for new teachers beginning their work with students in a classroom setting.</td>
<td>• Can lead to one teacher focusing on students’ behavior rather than their learning.</td>
<td><img src="image2.png" alt="Diagram" /></td>
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<td><strong>One Teach, One Observe</strong></td>
<td>• The observing teacher can gather evidence about what students are doing and saying during the lesson which can be used as diagnostic, formative, or summative assessments.</td>
<td>• Be careful that the observations don’t evaluate the teacher or the quality of the lesson, but focus on what students are doing and saying during the lesson.</td>
<td><img src="image3.png" alt="Diagram" /></td>
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<td><strong>Parallel Teaching</strong></td>
<td>• Allows teachers to work with smaller groups of students.</td>
<td>• Be careful that this approach does not lead to the separation of students into different ability groups.</td>
<td><img src="image4.png" alt="Diagram" /></td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Useful for focused work on particular competencies and content.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Creates the opportunity for students to discuss and share their learning with the other group of students after parallel lessons have finished.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Creates the opportunity for teachers to discuss and share their reflections on the parallel lessons and then co-plan future lessons.</td>
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| Alternative Teaching | - Allows teachers to work with smaller groups of students.  
- Useful for focused work on teaching or assessing particular competencies and content.  
- Allows teachers to be responsive to students' needs as they arise. | - Be careful that this approach does not lead to the separation of students into ability groups.                                                                                                           | ![Alternative Teaching Diagram](alt.png)                                                                                                      |        |
| Station Teaching     | - Allows teachers to work with smaller groups of students.  
- Useful for focused work on particular competencies and content.  
- Provides an opportunity for teachers to differentiate instruction to meet emerging student needs.  
- Useful for working on multi-step problems, or strategy-focused groupings. | - Be careful that this approach does not lead to the separation of students into different ability groups.                                                                                             | ![Station Teaching Diagram](sta.png)                                                                                                       |        |
| Teaming              | - Can be engaging and fun for teachers and students.  
- Students experience different teaching styles and perspectives.  
- The co-planning, co-teaching, and co-learning cycle provides dual ownership of the lesson and valuable learning opportunities for teachers to improve their practice.  
- Provides opportunities for both teachers to gather evidence about what students are doing and saying during the lesson. | - This approach can lead teachers towards dividing up the work rather than collaborating in a co-planning, co-teaching, and co-learning cycle.                                                 | ![Teaming Diagram](te.png)                                                                                                                  |        |
Co-teaching: Enhancing the Student Teaching Experience

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PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR ARTICLE
Co-teaching: Enhancing the Student Teaching Experience

by Thomas J. Diana, Jr.

Abstract
Find out how co-teaching can be used as a vehicle for effective professional development during preservice teacher education.

Key words: teacher education/certification, secondary education, elementary education

Co-teaching is a common practice in many P–12 schools today. An emerging trend, however, is the use of this practice in teacher preparation as one way of enhancing the development of student teachers. With the increase in teacher accountability and the heightened scrutiny of teacher evaluation, co-teaching is a strategy that can be incorporated into student teaching to ensure that effective teaching is taking place and that student learning is maximized. In fact, some colleges and universities are beginning to examine the implementation of a co-teaching model to replace the traditional model of student teaching (Bacharach, Heck, & Dahlberg, 2010). Co-teaching as an instructional strategy may not be a new phenomenon in education, but it may just change how we prepare our new teachers in the future.

Co-teaching is defined as two or more teachers working together with groups of students, sharing the planning, organization, delivery, and assessment of instruction as well as the physical classroom space (Teacher Quality Enhancement Center, 2010; Villa, Thousand, & Nevin, 2008). Research data show that co-teaching is a way to strengthen connections between universities and school partners; provide both support and professional development for cooperating teachers; increase targeted opportunities for the placement of teacher candidates; better meet the learning needs of students; build strong relationships between teacher candidates and cooperating teachers; give teacher candidates more opportunities to teach; enhance the communication skills of teacher candidates and cooperating teachers; and induct and mentor teacher candidates (Friend, Cook, Hurley-Chamberlain, & Shamberger, 2010; Goodnough, Osmond, Dibbon, Glassman, & Stevens, 2009; Murphy & Scantlebury, 2010; Nevin, Thousand, & Villa, 2009). For students in classrooms where co-teaching occurs, reported findings indicate that students become more engaged by working in smaller groups, receive more individual attention, get their questions answered faster, and get papers, assignments, and grades back faster (Teacher Quality Enhancement Center, 2010). These benefits are just a few ways in which co-teaching can enhance the work of teacher education programs and support student learning.

Co-teaching as Professional Experience
Educational stakeholders are currently at a crossroads in determining how to recruit, prepare, and
sustain effective professionals for long-lasting careers. Teacher educators, specifically, are reviewing their current student teaching programs and considering how to deliver quality professional experiences that will have a lasting impact on reform-oriented teachers. One approach is to incorporate a co-teaching experience into teacher education programs.

The co-teaching experience not only benefits the preservice teacher, but also offers professional development for the cooperating teacher. These teams can be most effective when supported by an effective learning community. Attributes of the community, as identified by the National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future (NCTAF), include: (a) shared values and goals; (b) collective responsibility; (c) authentic assessment; (d) self-directed reflection; (e) stable settings; and (f) strong leadership support (Fulton & Britton, 2011, p. 5).

According to an NCTAF report (Fulton & Britton), participating in learning teams can successfully engage teachers in discussions about the subjects they teach. This may sound like a simple and basic idea; but as the report identified, this is crucial for effective teaching. While it is considered a professional trait to continuously seek more knowledge, it can actually be threatening for some professionals to acknowledge that there may be something more they should know or understand better. Many teachers operate in isolation and are often hesitant to discuss the content they teach. The NCTAF report found that improving teaching quality is the single most important investment we can make to prepare today’s students for college and career success. However, this need comes as many states and school districts are struggling with significant reductions in funding at both the state and national level, in addition to making major adjustments to changes in teacher evaluation.

In the face of these reform mandates and given the fiscal reality of education today, we need innovative ways to organize teachers for better learning outcomes with a more cost-effective deployment of existing resources. The NCTAF report found that we can achieve this objective by enabling teachers to team up for more effective teaching and learning. Implemented effectively, co-teaching among preservice and cooperating teachers can successfully include each of the six principles identified in the NCTAF report and help to increase both student learning and new teacher satisfaction.

**Co-teaching During Student Teaching**

Co-teaching can have a positive impact on the key stages of the teacher professional continuum. Figure 1 illustrates the various phases of the continuum. Although co-teaching can have a positive impact on all stages of the continuum, integrating co-teaching during preservice teacher education programs will have a long-term effect on sustaining educational reform across the continuum.

With many states placing a greater emphasis on student test scores as one indicator of teacher performance, many potential P–12 cooperating teachers are hesitant to work with student teachers in their classroom. In addition, many administrators worry about how student teachers might impact teacher and administrator evaluation. Implementing a co-teaching model during the standard student teaching placement can alleviate these concerns and provide more stability in the classroom. Because a teacher candidate, often with little to no experience teaching in an actual classroom, will not be left alone, this approach will significantly diminish classroom management issues, minimize the teaching of incorrect content, and increase the teacher-to-student ratio in a classroom that is filled with diverse learners.

Even though co-teaching with an experienced teacher breaks the trend of traditional student teaching, teacher candidates still are afforded the opportunity to work with real students in a real classroom setting while at the
same time eliminating the sink or swim approach that schools and students cannot afford. In addition, because the cooperating teacher is always in the classroom, the likelihood for greater communication and feedback with the student teacher is increased.

Teacher candidates and their cooperating teacher work together on the planning, organization, delivery, and assessment of instruction. Research indicates that for all teachers (including student teachers) to fully engage in professional development, they need to feel that such engagement is truly meaningful (Van Driel & Berry, 2012). Meaningful professional development is relevant, of high quality, and will benefit the quality of teaching and ultimately impact student learning. One important component of professional development is ownership. Most teacher educators would argue that beginning teachers need to contribute to their own professional development.

One example of this model of effective professional development is co-teaching. In essence, co-teaching consists of educators working together to examine student work and determine ways to improve teaching and learning (Desimone, 2009). Co-teaching functions best under the skillful guidance of an experienced, reform-minded leader who may have a connection with a local university. For instance, co-teachers may discuss their lessons (what worked and what did not work) and receive feedback from colleagues. Co-teachers may look at student work and discuss students’ alternate conceptions and evidence of learning. Working in cooperation, the co-teachers can examine standards-based lessons and adapt them to the needs of their classroom and students. Co-teaching for preservice teachers provides opportunities for relationship building in addition to enhancing both the communication and collaboration opportunities for student teachers. So, what does co-teaching during teacher preparation look like?

**About Co-teaching**

A core strength of co-teaching is the collaboration among two or more teachers who may have different ways of thinking and beliefs about teaching to develop a plan for teaching and learning. Essentially, the individuals working together (i.e., the preservice teachers and cooperating teachers) establish trust, develop and work on communication, share responsibilities, and problem-solve to overcome the challenges of the classroom environment.

Villa et al. (2008) described the effective co-teaching team as two or more people who agree to do the following:

1. Coordinate their work to achieve at least one common, publicly agreed-on goal.
2. Share a belief system that supports the idea that each of the co-teaching team members has unique and needed expertise.
3. Demonstrate parity by alternatively engaging in the dual roles of teacher and learner, expert and novice, giver and recipient of knowledge or skills.
4. Use a distributed functions theory of leadership in which the task and relationship functions of the traditional lone teacher are distributed among all co-teaching team members.
5. Use a cooperative process that includes face-to-face interaction, positive interdependence, interpersonal skills, monitoring co-teacher progress, and individual accountability. (p. 5)

In practice, co-teaching in classrooms often takes the form of one of the models described in Table 1 (Gargiulo & Metcalf, 2010).

Because the experiential portion of teacher preparation programs is limited by time constraints, co-teaching teams involving preser-
vice teachers can be challenging to effectively develop and implement as described. However, if these characteristics and skills begin to be developed during teacher preparation programs and continue during the early induction years of teaching, significant benefits can be realized.

**Benefits of Co-teaching**

Research has found that, if successfully implemented, co-teaching is effective for students with a variety of instructional needs, including English language learners (Mahoney, 1997), those with hearing impairments (Luckner, 1999), those with learning disabilities (Friend et al., 2010; Rice & Zigmond, 2000), students with a high risk of academic failure (Dieker, 1998), and students in a language remediation class (Miller, Valasky, & Molloy, 1998).

In addition to the research-based benefits, co-teaching also improves the teacher-to-student ratio, and develops a greater sense of community in the classroom. P–12 students have increased opportunities for getting help, both when and how they need it, with co-teachers in the classroom. This is a significant benefit for many school districts that are unable to hire qualified teacher assistants for the classroom. Student teachers represent qualified individuals with the content knowledge and theoretical background needed to assist cooperating teachers in the classroom.

Co-teachers also report professional growth, enhanced motivation, and an increase in job satisfaction (Villa et al., 2008). No matter what model of co-teaching is used, the benefits go hand-in-hand with the goals teacher educators have for preservice teachers and student learning.

**Challenges of Co-teaching**

Like most reform-oriented changes in education, co-teaching has its share of challenges. One of the most formidable challenges is teacher resistance. Cooperating teachers may be resistant to co-teaching for several reasons. With the constant state and national mandates being proposed for P–12 education (e.g., common core learning standards, teacher evaluation), inservice teachers and administrators may mistakenly view co-teaching as an educational fad. Numer-

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**Table 1. Co-teaching Models.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Models</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
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<tr>
<td>1) Interactive Teaching</td>
<td>• Both teachers equally share the instructional activities for the entire class.</td>
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<td>• Each teacher takes a turn presenting, engaging, and evaluating.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Each teacher has equal status in the class.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Requires a high level of professional trust, commitment, and compatibility of teaching styles.</td>
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<td>2) Alternative Teaching</td>
<td>• One teacher provides instruction to a heterogeneous group of learners while the other teacher interacts with a small group of students.</td>
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<td>• Although commonly used for remediation purposes, alternative teaching is equally appropriate for enrichment as well as for pre-teaching activities and in-depth study.</td>
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<td>• Students with disabilities must not be exclusively and routinely assigned to the small group—all members of the class should participate periodically in the functions of the smaller group.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3) Station Teaching</td>
<td>• The lesson is divided into two or more segments and presented in different locations in the classroom.</td>
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<td>• One teacher presents one portion of the lesson while the other teacher provides a different portion.</td>
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<td>• Then the groups rotate, and the teachers repeat their information to new groups of students.</td>
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<td>• Depending on the class, a third station can be established where students work independently or with a learning buddy to review material.</td>
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<td>4) Parallel Teaching</td>
<td>• Instruction is delivered by each teacher to one-half of a heterogeneous group of learners.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5) One Teach, One Support</td>
<td>• Both individuals are present, but one teacher takes the instructional lead while the other quietly provides support and assistance to the students.</td>
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<td>• It is important for teachers to exchange roles frequently; this model should be used sparingly or as one of several approaches in order to avoid students becoming overly dependent on additional assistance as well as jeopardizing the credibility of one of the teachers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6) One Teach, One Observe</td>
<td>• One teacher presents the instruction to the entire class while the second teacher circulates, gathering information on specific students, on a small group of students, or on targeted behaviors across the whole class.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• It is important for teachers to exchange roles frequently to avoid one professional being perceived as the “assistant teacher.”</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*(Based on Cooperative Teaching Models in Gargiulo & Metcalf, 2010, pp. 141–143)*
ous teachers may lack the motivation needed to effectively implement co-teaching in their classroom and school. Other teachers continue to teach through a traditional approach simply because they do not know other methods. If individual teachers have been disappointed by poor-quality professional development that has not been meaningful to them, they may stand in the way of implementing change.

In contrast, professional development that allows cooperating teachers to systematically investigate and incorporate alternative teaching strategies such as co-teaching will overcome many of the challenges and provide cooperating teachers with positive experiences during which they can inquire about their own teaching practices and their students’ thinking and learning. After most teachers experience co-teaching in their own schools and classrooms, they become eager to learn more (see Table 2 for additional resources). So, the challenge that remains is to get buy-in from cooperating teachers so that they will be willing to start the process of implementing co-teaching into their practice.

**Future Implications for Co-teaching**

Research points to the need for further development of a continuum of professional co-teaching experiences that begins in teacher education programs, continues during student teaching, and then carries over into the early induction years of teaching. These experiences need to seamlessly flow together across the various levels of the teaching continuum. In addition, future research studies need to address the impact, positive or negative, of co-teaching on student learning and achievement at all education levels.

Incorporating co-teaching during preservice teacher preparation programs has significant resource implications. To bring about change, resources need to be allocated to support the implementation of professional development experiences such as co-teaching in P–12 education. If implemented effectively, co-teaching in teacher education programs can significantly change the way we prepare future teachers as well as enhance the teaching profession.

**References**


