

Co-Teaching with Student Mentors

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Handouts	Page Number(s)
What is Co-Teaching?	1
Levels and Models of Co-Teaching	2
What can cause Conflict Between Co-Teachers & Strategies for Mediating Conflicts	3
Co-Teaching Issues	4-5
Building a Collaborative Relationship	6-7
Value Cards Activity	8
Reflections on Your Tolerance for Different Classroom Behaviors	9
Before, During, After Co-Teaching	10
Suggestions for Student Mentors and Faculty Working Together along with situations	11-12
Co-Teaching Resources	13-14

What is Co-Teaching

What is Co-Teaching?

- Two teachers actively involved in instruction
- Requires co-planning time together
- Leadership is shared.
- An interdependent partnership

What Co-Teaching is Not

- Co-teaching is not a principal teacher and an assistant
- Co-teaching is not inviting guest lecturers or tag teaming in the classroom
- It's more than both teachers being present in the classroom at the same time

Advantages of Co-Teaching

- Professional growth: learning from each other
- Increased student engagement
- More differentiation of instruction
- Additional teacher access
- Improved student performance
- Models synthesis of multiple perspectives

Challenges of Co-Teaching

- It is not easy
- It takes more time
- It is not a fix for weak teachers
- It is not right for every situation

Contexts of Use

- Special Education Teacher & Regular Education Teacher
- Cooperating Teacher & Student Teacher
- University Faculty with Different Expertise
 - Study Abroad courses
 - Honors Apprentice working with faculty
 - FYE

Relates to MSUM High Impact Initiatives

#1 - Interdisciplinary Initiatives

#2 - Paired classes

#4 - Enhanced Course Pedagogy

Co-Teaching Model	Description	Pros	Cons
Lead and Support	General education teacher does up front planning. Special education teacher is fully involved in daily planning, implementation and assessment.	Both teachers involved in most phases of instruction	Less input in planning for differentiation
Duet Model	Both teachers share the entire instructional process.	Most integrated for students Fully utilizes all expertise	Most time intensive
Speak and Add/Chart	One teacher leads, the other teacher adds visually or verbally.	No co-planning time Almost anyone can do this	Can step on toes Doesn't fully utilize expertise
Skills Group	Teachers divide students into more homogeneous subgroups and provide leveled instruction.	Clear responsibilities Focused expertise	Possible feel of "tracking"
Station Teaching	A small group of students is pulled to the side for direct instruction.	Focused expertise	Impacting only a few kids with the expertise of the specialist
Learning Style	Teachers plan lesson and divide responsibilities by learning styles.	Addresses learning style of the 'typical' struggling student Clear responsibilities	Assumes that teachers will tolerate activity in the lesson
Parallel Teaching	Class is broken into 2 heterogeneous groups. Each teacher takes a group.	Good student teacher ratio	Requires equal expertise Lots of planning time
Complementary Instruction	General education teacher focuses on curriculum. Special education teacher focuses on study skills, survival skills, special education strategies through mini-lessons or input.	Good for related professionals Focused expertise Sets up expectation that special education will be provided in general education setting	May slow down pacing
Adapting Model	One teacher leads, while the second teacher wanders the room, providing on-the-spot adaptations.	Very little co-planning time Focused expertise	Less fundamental impact on student learning

What Can Cause Conflict Between Co-teachers?

- Differences in teaching styles
- Differences in philosophical approaches to teaching and learning
- Ethics and belief systems
- The feeling of insecurity
- The feeling that one party is a "spy," reporting to administrators
- Inability to work with others
- Issues of trust
- Issues of confidence in the other person's ability to perform well
- The use of terms like "my students" and "your students"
- Being organized versus disorganized

Strategies for Mediating Co-teaching Conflicts

- Ask someone to mediate (a colleague trusted by both parties)
- Make an agenda of what you want to discuss and share the agenda in advance with the other person
- Create resolutions and potential solutions
- Hear each person out fully and without emotion
- Compromise
- Use honesty and respect in your conversations
- Speak from the "I" point of view and not the "you" point of view
- Focus on each other's strength areas
- Clarify roles
- Revisit the parity questions in more detail
- Use an agenda to stay on task
- Agree to disagree on unimportant matters

Co-Teaching Issues for Discussion and Planning

Strengths faculty brings are:

Strengths student mentor brings are:

My fears faculty about co-teaching are:

Fears student mentor have about co-teaching are:

Ground Rules for operating as a team:

- 1) There will be no unspoken resentments. We will deal with any conflict in an open manner.
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____

Logistics

Both faculty and student mentors are to identify three pet peeves that that may affect their co-teaching relationship?

How will we explain our co-teaching arrangements to the students and convey that faculty and student mentors are both responsible for FYE instruction?

How will you refer to each other in front of the students?

How will a balance of decision-making power be maintained among co-teachers?

Time for planning

Where will we find the time to meet?

How will we use our time together?

What records can we keep to facilitate your planning?

Attendance and Participation

How will student absences be addressed?

By whom?

Communication

How will you ensure regular communication between you and your student mentor?

What frequency of communication should we have with students?

Who will communicate with students?

What are a few more guidelines on communication with students?

- 1) Use social media responsibly, transparently, and primarily for purposes of teaching and learning.
- 2) Recognizing that some electronic communications are records under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and state public access laws and should consider the implications of sharing sensitive information electronically either via professional or personal devices/accounts.
- 3) Understanding the intent of Federal Educational Rights to Privacy Act (FERPA) and how it applies to sharing electronic student records.
- 4) _____
- 5) _____

(The first three come from the Model of Code of Ethics for Educators- <http://www.nasdtdec.net/?page=MCEE>)

Building a Collaborative Relationship

Developing a collaborative relationship takes time. Here are some suggestions for discussion points throughout the year.

Prior to the semester:

- What will each member contribute to the learning environment?
- When will we have time to plan together?
- What ground rules do we want to set related to planning time?
 - Arrive promptly
 - Bring needed materials
 - Make the most of limited time
 - Make a plan for if you cannot make it
- How will we proceed if we don't have enough time to plan?
- What is the best thing we anticipate from our work together this year?
- What is our greatest fear about working as a team?

Around week 4:

- How will we determine if things are going well?
- How will we determine the students' perceptions of the learning assistant?
- How will student learning be evaluated?

Around week 8:

- Are there any problems related to our collaborative relationships that we need to solve?
 - What are the issues?
 - What factors may have contributed to the problem?
 - What solutions could be used to solve the problem?
 - Which solution are we going to use to solve the problem?

Around week 12:

- Do we both feel comfortable in our roles?
- What successes have we experienced?
- What areas need to be addressed in future labs/classes?
- Do we need to do any role clarification?

Around week 16:

- Did we help all students learn this semester?
- Were there academic tasks/behaviors that we found difficult to deal with this semester?
- Are there issues in which we need support in order to successfully educate all students?
- Can we think of 10 things we accomplished this semester?
- Can you list 5 or more reasons why you would want to do this again?
- What are 1 or 2 things you would improve/change for next semester?
- Can you share something positive about your relationship?
- How do you feel about your roles?

Source: Dieker, L. A. (2006). *The co-teaching lesson plan book*, 3rd ed. Whitefish Bay, WI: Knowledge by Design, Inc.

Value Cards

This is an activity that we use to assist pairs in developing a relationship with their co-teaching partner. Essentially each individual receives a group of small cards (business card paper works well) with the same set of words. Individually participants are asked to quickly identify whether the word or value is "Very Important," "Somewhat Important," or "Not Important" to them at this moment. Pairs ultimately identify 3 very important words and discuss why they chose them.

Directions:

- 1) Place the 3 green cards labeled "Very Important", "Somewhat Important" and "Not Important" on the table.
- 2) Quickly go through the deck of values and sort them according to how important that value is to YOU, today. It does not matter if it is something that you currently possess or do, or something you want to improve on - if it is very important, place it in that pile.
- 3) Do not sort the cards based on what you THINK someone else would expect of you. This is a personal activity, and there are NO right or wrong answers.
- 4) After sorting the cards, set aside the Somewhat Important and Not Important cards. Look only at the cards you placed in the Very Important category.
- 5) You will now choose 3 cards that represent the values that are most important to you, at this moment. This is something that does not define you for life. What is most important today may not be the same as what is most important 6 months from now.
- 6) Reflect for a moment on why those things are important and what they mean to you.

Discuss with your partner what you have learned about yourself.

What you need:

Deck Labels - We do these in a bright color and a small card size

Very Important; Somewhat Important; Not Important

Reflections on Your Tolerances for Different Classroom Behaviors

Source: Vaughn, S., Bos, C., & Schumm, J. (1997). *Teaching Mainstreamed, Diverse and At-Risk Students in a General Ed. Classroom*

Reflect upon the degree to which you view the following behaviors as acceptable or unacceptable:

	Acceptable		Unacceptable	
	4	3	2	1
1. Student often arrives late to class				
2. Student does not complete assigned readings				
3. Student frequently has late work or does not meet deadlines				
4. Student frequently misses class				
5. Student does not participate in class activities/discussions				
6. Student often has side conversations with other students in class				
7. Student is consistently using cell phone during class				
8. Student uses offensive language during class discussions (profane, vulgar, demeaning)				
9. Student frequently requests to be excused from class				
10. Student frequently makes irrelevant comments during class discussions				

Reflection/Discussion Questions:

1. What is your rationale for the degree of tolerance you have for different behaviors? (Discuss those behaviors for which your tolerance appears to be opposite of your discussion partner.)
2. What other behaviors bother you as a teacher? How does this affect your attitude in the classroom or toward the student? How can you and your Student Mentor work together to overcome some of these challenges?

What does each co-teacher do before, during and after the lesson:

	Faculty	Student Mentor
What are specific tasks that I do <u>before</u> class?		
What are several tasks I do <u>during</u> the class?		
What are tasks that I do <u>after</u> class?		

Where, when, and how do co-teachers debrief and evaluate the outcomes of the lesson?

Suggestions for Student Mentors and Faculty Working Together

- Spend time learning about one another as people, not just as educators
 - Introduce the student mentor to other faculty members, support personnel, etc.
 - Provide access to necessary texts, manuals, supplies, etc.
 - Provide the student mentors with names of the students he/she will be interacting with in class
 - Provide the student mentor with a schedule of classes for the semester
 - Encourage the sharing of ideas
 - Allocate time to prepare outside of the class
 - Discuss “rules” and expectations you have for:
 - Student behavior in class
 - Student attendance
 - Student questions during or outside of class
 - Group work
 - Establish expectations related to roles:
 - Is it ok for the student mentor to answer questions like “Will we be graded on this assignment?”
 - Who should handle disciplinary concerns?
 - Who should communicate with students outside of class?
 - How will time be managed during class?
 - Who is responsible for grading?
 - Who is responsible for setting up/preparing class materials?
 - What expectations do you have for meeting times, debriefing after class, etc?
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Situation 1: What happens when a student complains to a student mentor about the relevance of FYE course content?

Role of Faculty Member:

Role of Student Mentor:

Situation 2: What happens when a student asks the faculty mentor a question and then goes to the student mentor and asks the same question?

Role of Faculty Member:

Role of Student Mentor:

Situation 3: What should the student mentor do when he/she notices that during group work some students are not participating?

Role of Faculty Member:

Role of Student Mentor:

Situation 4: You notice some students are continually on their phone during class. How do you react to this?

Role of Faculty Member:

Role of Student Mentor:

Situation 5:

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