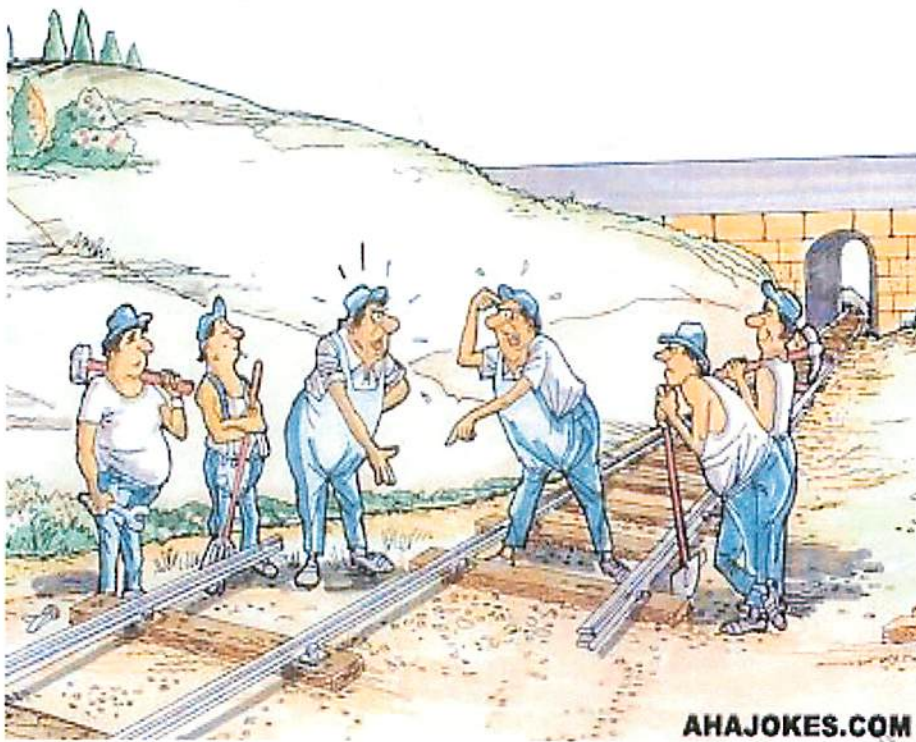


Team Work



Responsible Co-Teaching: Making it Work!
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 region 4[®]
Educated Solutions

Principal's Beliefs

Being an effective leader of an inclusive school requires many different types of knowledge and a variety of skills. Through initial training and professional development principals can build their ability to create schools that welcome all learners and provide the supports and services they need in order to succeed. However, what is difficult to learn is an inclusive belief system, and yet this may be the most important characteristic that an administrator brings to the leadership role. A belief in inclusive schooling has many facets, and it often is demonstrated clearly through the actions that principals do (and don't) take. Examples that illustrate this point are plentiful. One principal, experienced but new to a school, told teachers she expected the achievement scores of students with disabilities to rise at a rate comparable to those of other students and that she was as concerned about those students' achievement as she was about the achievement of other students. In contrast, another principal commented that he was not about to let students with disabilities "control" the master schedule in his school. Here are a few questions for reflecting on your own beliefs about inclusive practices.

- What do I believe about the abilities of students who have IEPs? What are my expectations for them regarding access to grade level curriculum and peers?
 - What is my view about the contribution that students with disabilities make to the classroom and school community?
 - How do I believe students with disabilities should receive their education? How is that belief influenced by the opinions of teachers, other staff members, parents, and community members?
 - What do I believe is the correct balance among setting an expectation for inclusive practices in my school, encouraging teachers and other staff members to meet those expectations, and insisting that inclusive practices be integral to school functioning?
 - How comfortable am I challenging the statements and actions of staff members, parents, and others who do not appear to support inclusive schooling?
 - What are the concrete indicators that my school welcomes all its learners?
 - If teachers in my school were attending a workshop about inclusive practices, what would they say about the level of support I provide?
 - How do data help inform decisions for my school's inclusive practices?
 - If I was suddenly asked to defend inclusive practices at my school, what would I say?
 - What do I consider my own next steps in continuing and deepening my understanding of students with disabilities and inclusive practices?
-

Things Administrators should do or not do to create or maintain an Inclusive School.

True/False-Please indicate a T or an F in the space provided.

1. ____ Be clear and unwavering in your own beliefs. If you are uncertain you'll telegraph your concerns to teachers and other staff members as well as parents.
2. ____ Gently but firmly set standards. Insist that ALL professional staff members rise to meet those standards so that ALL students receive the education to which they are entitled.
3. ____ Think of inclusive practices as another one of those "special education things" whose purpose is only related to a few students.
4. ____ Recognize that inclusion is 80% about the adults and only 20% (perhaps less) about the students. That means efforts should focus on shifting adult thinking and actions.
5. ____ Wait for teachers and other staff members to initiate a move toward inclusive practices, working from the belief that if staff members do not know what to do it is not going to work.
6. ____ Presume that in order for inclusive practices to be implemented, new and ongoing resources will be needed.
7. ____ Visit classrooms, talking with teachers and students, in order to be alert to small problems that can be resolved before they become big issues.
8. ____ Decide that you are going to "do inclusion" and return students wholesale to general education settings without preparing staff members or parents.
9. ____ Invite parents to participate in a way that is respectful and meaningful.
10. ____ Assign certain general education teachers to be "inclusion teachers" who are responsible for working with the school's most challenging learners. Let other teachers be exempt from teaching students with disabilities or other special needs, especially if they don't want to.
11. ____ Make the class sizes larger when co-teaching occurs...after all, there are two teachers in there.
12. ____ Have a clear plan for moving into inclusive practices. Include in the plan staff development, a critical analysis of the school mission statement, parent education, and a detailed plan for progressive implementation and program monitoring, one that includes research-based practices.

13. _____ Put all students with disabilities or other special needs at a grade level/ on a team into a single section. In high school put as many students as possible into a single general education section.
14. _____ Recognize that physically placing students into classrooms is necessary but not sufficient. If teachers and others do not implement differentiated instruction and positive behavior supports, success is unlikely.
15. _____ Maintain multiple “special eds”..One teacher is responsible for going into general education classes, one manages resource, one teaches self-contained. Do not look for ways to distribute caseloads across these personnel.
16. _____ Place inclusive practices in the context of creating schools for every learner. That is, embed inclusive practices in school improvement planning and other all-school activities.
17. _____ After filling classes or section with students with disabilities, assign the remaining seats to students who are at high risk for school failure.

Things Administrators Should Do to Create and Maintain Inclusive Schools

- Recognize that inclusion is 80% about the adults and only 20% (perhaps less) about students. That means efforts should focus on shifting adult thinking and actions.

- Be clear and unwavering in your own beliefs. If you are uncertain you'll telegraph your concerns to teachers and other staff members as well as parents.

- Gently but firmly set standards. Insist that ALL professionals staff members rise to meet those standards so that ALL students receive the education to which they are entitled.

- Have a clear plan for moving into inclusive practices. Include in the plan staff development, a critical analysis of the school mission statement, parent education, and a detailed plan for progressive implementation and program monitoring, one that includes research-based practices.

- Visit classrooms, talking with teachers and students, in order to be alert to small problems that can be resolved before they become big issues.

- Invite parents to participate in a way that is respectful and meaningful.

- Recognize that physically placing students into classrooms is necessary but not sufficient. If teachers and others do not implement differentiated instruction and positive behavior supports, success is unlikely.

- Place inclusive practices in the context of creating schools for every learner. That is, embed inclusive practices in school improvement planning and other all-school

Things Administrators Should NOT Do to Create and Maintain Inclusive Schools

- Think of inclusive practices as another one of those “special education things” whose purpose is only related to a few students.
- Wait for teachers and other staff members to initiate a move toward inclusive practices, working from the belief that if staff members do not know what to do it is not going to work.
- Presume that in order for inclusive practices to be implemented, new and ongoing resources will be needed.
- Decide that you are going to “do inclusion” and return students wholesale to general education settings without preparing staff members or parents.
- Assign certain general education teachers to be “inclusion teachers” who are responsible for working with the school’s most challenging learners. Let other teachers be exempt from teaching students with disabilities or other special needs, especially if they don’t want to.
- Put all the students with disabilities or other special needs at a grade level/on a team into a single section. In high school put as many students as possible into a single general education section.
- After filling classes or section with students with disabilities, assign the remaining seats to students who are at high risk for school failure.
- Make the class sizes larger when co-teaching occurs...after all, there are two teachers in there.
- Maintain multiple “special eds.,” One teacher is responsible for going into general education classes, one manages resource, one teaches self-contained. Do not look for ways to distribute caseloads across these personnel.

Ten Factors that Undermine the Effectiveness of Co-Teaching Programs

1. Ignoring the importance of a shared understanding on the part of all professionals involved (teachers, related services personnel, administrators, paraprofessionals) of what co-teaching is and what it involves.
2. Using co-teaching as the basis of all inclusive services in a school, often fostering a school culture that implies that if a student with an IEP is in a general education setting, then there must be a special educator there to provide services.
3. Failing to distinguish clearly among the roles of the various adults who might be in classrooms—teachers, related services staff members, paraprofessionals, student teachers, volunteers.
4. Basing co-teaching on the preferences and wishes of staff rather than on clear standards, expectations, and the needs of students. A typical result is that co-teaching may be offered only at certain grade levels or on particular middle schools teams or in just some high school departments.
5. Neglecting to develop implementers' knowledge and skills: co-teaching, differentiated instruction, positive behavior supports, and related areas.
6. Implementing co-teaching without using a range of options for grouping students and dividing instructional tasks between the educators. The related question is this: What is being called co-teaching practice?
7. Using co-teaching approaches such that the students in the classroom do not receive increased instructional intensity, often occurring when professionals over-use one approach (e.g., teaming or teaching/assisting). How is this classroom significantly different because two teachers are there?
8. Time: Failing to arrange for at least periodic shared planning time for co-teachers, teachers failing to use that time wisely, using time as a reason not to implement co-teaching practices.
9. Placing too many students with special needs into a co-taught class. One version concerns placing a highly disproportionate number of students with disabilities in the class; another concerns placing an appropriate number of students with disabilities in a class, but then filling in the rest of the class slots with students who struggle to learn or who have other special needs.
10. Failing to gather on-going data that demonstrates the impact of the co-teaching services on student achievement.

Co-Teaching as an Inclusive Service Delivery Option

DEFINITION

Co-teaching is a service delivery system in which

- Two (or more) educators or other certified staff
- Contract to share instructional responsibility
- For a single group of students
- Primarily in a single classroom or workspace
- For specific content (objectives)
- With mutual ownership, pooled resources, and joint accountability
- Although each individual's level of participation may vary.

Service Delivery Systems in Collaborative and Inclusive Schools

In most schools, there should be a wide variety of service delivery systems emphasizing collaboration that provides supports to students.

Support in classrooms. Sometimes services should be delivered in a general education setting, but the partnership required in co-teaching is not needed or not appropriate. Support might be offered in a classroom when paraprofessionals assist students in general education classrooms.

Consultation. In consultation, a professional such as a psychologist, behavior specialist, speech-language therapist, or special educator meets on a regular basis with teachers to problem solve. By jointly identifying a problem, systematically developing an intervention, gathering data, and judging the intervention's effectiveness, teachers and consultants can maximize student learning.

Teaming. Grade-level elementary teams (or primary or intermediate teams), middle school teams, and interdisciplinary or departmental high school teams meet regularly to discuss curriculum and problem solve about students. Special educators and other support providers can join these teams to help create strategies and interventions as well as to address issues related to curricular adaptations. This helps to make communication more consistent and more efficient.

Co-teaching. Co-teaching enables teachers or other licensed professionals to form instructional partnerships for the purpose of delivering high quality instruction to diverse classroom groups. Generally, students with disabilities or other special needs benefit from this option, but so do students who are gifted/talented, students who are typical learners, and students who are at-risk for school failure.

Informal problem solving. Teachers in inclusive schools often need to meet one-to-one to proactively or reactively problem solve regarding students they share. For example, a classroom teacher and a special education teacher might meet to discuss whether a student with an IEP who has violated a school rule should receive special consideration or be excluded from the upcoming field trip.

Instruction in a separate setting. Although the goal in an inclusive school is for most instruction to occur in general education settings, occasionally student needs indicate this is not appropriate. Examples of situations in which instruction in a separate setting might be preferred include a student needing some types of physical or occupational therapy, a student who needs highly specialized speech therapy, a student not learning as expected so that diagnostic teaching is needed, and a student whose behavior requires a small, structured environment.

Collegial staff development. A hallmark of inclusive schools is the sense that there is always new information that can help teachers better address student needs. If teachers and administrators attend workshops, classes, or other staff development opportunities, they share what they have learned with colleagues.

Should Co-Teaching Be Voluntary Only?

Even experienced co-teachers indicate that co-teaching should only occur if both individuals participate willingly. Although this idea has intuitive appeal, the matter is somewhat more complicated. Here are a few questions to consider:

- At what stage of development is your co-teaching program?

In new programs, it is understandable to use volunteers. The professionals who take the risks to develop the program and work out the various challenges that will occur should be those who do so willingly.

- On what basis are decisions made about who will co-teach?

A teacher who is reluctant to work with a colleague may have valid reasons. For example, a teacher who is very near to retirement might simply be too close to exiting his or her profession to undertake this significantly different approach to instruction. However, if a teacher does not want to participate because of not wanting to work with certain students or not wanting to share instruction, a serious problem exists.

- What about student needs?

Co-teaching should be arranged when students need this rather intensive, in-class service delivery option. If it is based on student need, care should be taken that teacher preferences are kept in an appropriate perspective.

- What are the other options?

If a teacher does not want to co-teach, what happens? In some elementary schools, principals have moved teachers to different grade levels because of the need to establish co-teaching at their original level. In high schools, some teachers have lost preferred schedules because of the need to have co-teaching during certain class periods in certain subjects.

e-Harmony for Co-Teachers?

Whenever teachers are asked about how instructional partners should be assigned, they nearly universally respond that co-teachers should be volunteers. Further, many teachers would like to have a voice in selecting the person with whom they teach. Although these sentiments are understandable, they may not be possible to operationalize. Matching teachers for co-teaching should be undertaken with these points in mind.

- In new programs, it may be preferable to seek volunteers for co-teaching. This practice usually enables rapid program development and fosters positive momentum. Principals should provide incentives for these school change pioneers. Those incentives may be preferred schedules, opportunities for extra common planning time, or they may be locally desired privileges (e.g., wearing jeans on Fridays).
- Even if volunteers are co-teaching in a new program, administrators should consistently communicate the message that, over time, co-teaching will become a standard of practice that may affect any teacher in the school. That is, it ultimately may not be a choice. It is a mistake to infer that co-teaching will always rely on volunteers—what happens if no one volunteers in a particular grade level, team, or department?
- How many sections of co-teaching are created must be determined by student need rather than teacher preference and comfortable level.
- If a teacher does not want to co-teach with a particular colleague, it is important to determine what the concern is. If the concern has a realistic base, the problem should be directly addressed. If the concern related to general anxiety, professional development, support, and frequent communication should be employed.
- If a teacher is reluctant to co-teach and near retirement it may be respectful to honor that request.
- If a teacher, even with strong support and professional development, refuses to co-teach, district policies must be followed regarding sanctions. However, principals also can ensure that such individuals are not inadvertently rewarded for their views and actions.

In-Class Support

Some students with disabilities have their needs met through in-class support. The characteristics of this service delivery option are these:

1. The service is delivered in the general education setting.
2. The individual providing the service is most likely to be a paraprofessional.
3. When paraprofessionals provide support, they may ensure that students understand directions, receive tutorial assistance as needed, and keep up with the pacing of classroom procedures and routines. They may also provide some individual or small-group instruction. The latter often occurs when the students in question have significant needs and are participating in a functional curriculum. For students with milder needs, support may include remediation. Generally, though, support by paraprofessionals should not include significant daily initial instruction.
4. In some inclusive schools, special educators and other specialists also provide some in-class support (e.g., a special education teacher who spends 15-20 minutes in a classroom making sure that students have their projects organized). When in-class support is offered by a professional staff member, the expectation is similar to that for paraprofessionals: The intent of this service is to provide assistance to students without the added time commitment and expectations of co-teaching partnerships.
5. When paraprofessionals deliver in-class support, it is necessary for a special education teacher or other appropriate staff member to periodically observe the class to ensure that student needs are being met and to monitor student progress toward achieving IEP goals and objectives.
6. Two important considerations need to be kept in mind when in-class support is employed:
 - Paraprofessionals should not replace general education teachers as the primary instructor for students with disabilities. Ethically and legally, the teacher remains in that role.
 - Special educators who provide this type of support should do so only when the mild extent of a student's needs or the distribution of students across classroom requires it. This option should not be the alternative to a true classroom partnership because of reluctance on the part of one or both of the professionals.

Pullout programming

Is it ever appropriate to have students with disabilities in separate settings in an inclusive school? The answer is a guarded “yes.” Clearly, the federal law provides for options away from the general education classroom. However, in many schools, the decision to remove a student from that setting is made without careful consideration of how to help the student succeed there, without systematically attempting to address the difficulty that is raising the matter of a different setting, or without consideration of the duration of such service or a strategy of assessing its effectiveness.

Here are a few questions to guide your decisions about separate settings. (NOTE: These questions do not all need to be asked pertaining to a single student or situation. They also address both resource room environments and self-contained classes. Some are more pertinent to elementary settings, some to middle and high school settings.)

1. Is the IEP written so that in-class services are a viable option?
2. What is the reason a decision is being considered for pullout services? Is this matter consistent with a philosophy of inclusion (for example, reading level alone should not be a reason for a student to be pulled from a class)?
3. What interventions have been systematically attempted and documented that provide evidence that the student’s needs cannot be met in the general education classroom?
4. What can be accomplished in a separate setting that cannot be accomplished in a general education setting? If the curriculum is the same, what prevents accommodations from being made in the classroom?
5. What is the planned duration of services being offered in the separate setting? What provisions have been made by the team to re-evaluate whether the more restrictive option should be continued or discontinued? How will progress be measured?
6. What is the cost to the student versus the benefit of being assigned to a separate setting? For example, what parts of the curriculum is the student going to miss? How much time is going to be spent going from one setting to the other and back again? To what extent is such a service stigmatizing to the student? How will a separate service setting affect the student’s ability to meet standards on state assessments?

Pullout programming (continued)

7. How could separate services be made part of the overall instructional delivery system of a school? For example, do all students have an advisory period or a flexible period during the day when they may seek assistance from teachers? Does the school already have a learning resource center that serves student without disabilities? Could the center be combined with the resource program?
8. For what proportion of the school day is a separate setting needed? How could this amount of time be decreased over time?
9. What is the family's perspective on the student's educational placement? To what extent have costs and benefits been discussed with the family?
10. How are the needs of the student being considered in relation to teachers' comfort level with working with extraordinarily diverse groups of students in their classrooms?
11. Most importantly, what is the role of collaboration when services are offered in a separate location? What is the need for educators to meet? For some in-class support to be arranged?

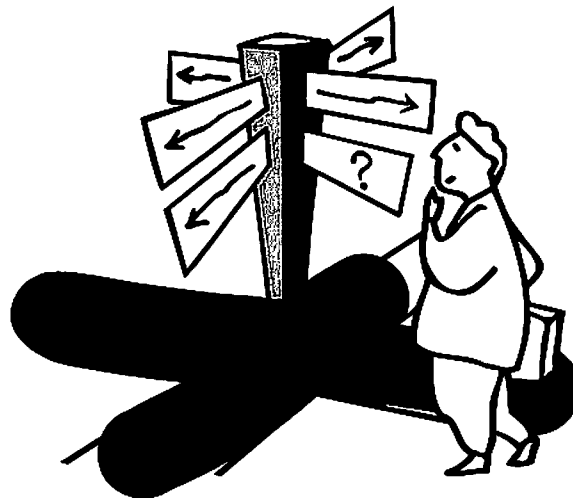
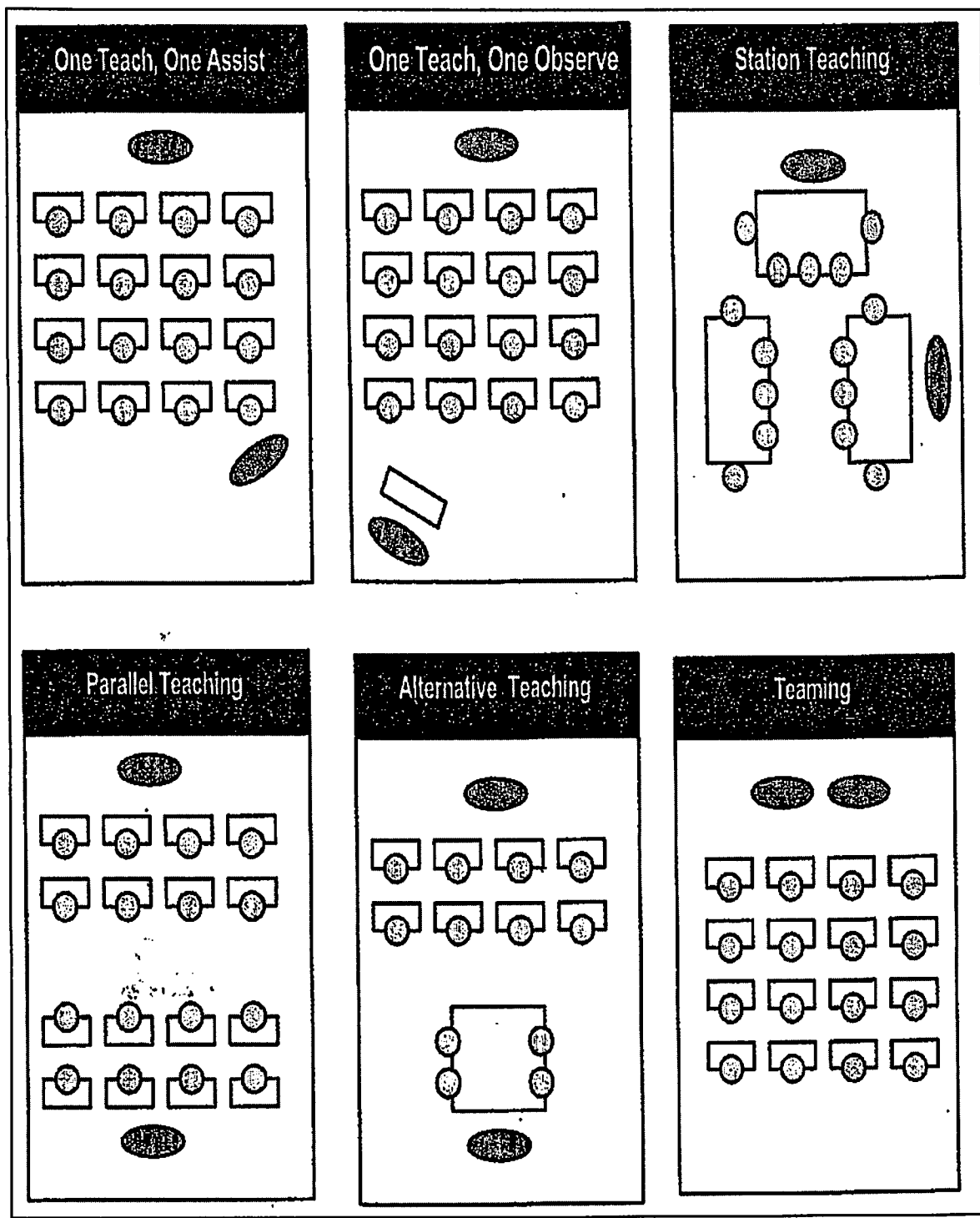


Figure 3.1 Examples of Co-Teaching

Reference: Friend, M. (2007). *Co-teach: A handbook for creating and sustaining effective classroom partnerships in inclusive schools*. Greensboro, NC: Marilyn Friend, Inc. Reprinted by permission of the publisher.



Source: Figure 4.2 Co-Teaching Approaches from Friend, M., & Bursuck, W. D. (2006). *Including students with special needs: A practical guide for classroom teachers* (4th ed., p. 88). Boston: Allyn & Bacon. Copyright © 2002 by Pearson Education. Reprinted by permission of the publisher.

How to Create More Planning Time for Co-Teachers Ideas from Those Who Have Done It!

- ✓ Summer planning to prepare for first grading period
 - Use IDEA, foundation, or professional development funds – give 2 ½ days of summer time to set up for CTing – beginning of August
 - Choreograph the 1st couple days of school
- ✓ After school sessions
 - Provide continuing education credits/staff development hours
 - Publish a calendar and have it at one central location and they can come to the ones they want and accumulate the hours they need
- ✓ Release time during scheduled professional development sessions
 - Anyone co-teaching can request and be exempt for two hours of the day – have a one-page accountability sheet that is to be completed by partners and turned in to Principal
- ✓ Coverage by non-classroom personnel
 - Subs – if you have \$ for them – if you’ve got the \$ and have a really good sub, then you line up that sub for the entire year on a schedule
 - Use your Instructional Specialists, Instructional Paraprofessionals, (Sped, ESL, Bilingual, Title I, etc...) Counselors, Testing Coordinators, others
- ✓ Administrative Coverage
 - Each Principal/AP twice a month covers a CT class to free up time to plan – shows the teachers they are being supported
 - Shows Administrators are in classroom for other reasons than typical disciplinary reasons and models to kids that Administrators are teachers too
- ✓ Pair up two CT pairs/classes
 - Have the Special Education Co-teacher or General Education Co-teacher in one class cover the other Co-Teach class and then vice versa
- ✓ Cross grade level classrooms
 - On a regularly scheduled/coordinated basis you combine two predetermined classrooms (i.e. one 6th grade CT and one 8th grade CT or one 3rd CT and one 5th CT)
 - The Co-teachers from one class run “peer tutor” activities with both classrooms and the other Co-teachers plan
- ✓ Release from duties to allow additional planning time
 - Example: If you are co-teaching, you are not assigned morning duty, instead on your assigned “morning duty” is to co-plan with your co-teacher. A structured planning guide could be completed and submitted to administrator

Adapted from Marilyn Friend, *Co-Teach! Handbook* (2007)

Staffing in Inclusive Schools

Does your school have enough staff members to be inclusive? In some ways, this is a trick question. The most fundamental answer is that a school should be inclusive—that is, it should welcome all its learners and educate them with their peers except in specific unusual situations—regardless of the number of staff members or their particular assignments. Of course, this is not usually what is meant when questions about staffing occur. Instead educators doubt whether students can receive an appropriate amount of service unless additional staff members are employed to support those students in general education settings. This is a rather complex matter and no single response can be given related to staffing. Some considerations include the following:

- Although it is tempting to presume that an inclusive school needs additional staff members, this may not be the case. The goal should be to address student needs without needing additional personnel. This argues for implementing various services gradually, as staff members increase their knowledge and skills, rather than providing additional staff. When the latter strategy is used, hard feelings and frustration often occur when those additional staff members later are eliminated.
- Staffing is directly related to scheduling. To the extent that the master schedule fosters the effective and efficient use of staff, the number of needed personnel remains reasonable.
- Staffing is also related to the willingness (at the building level but also at the policy level) of professionals to blend programs and services to eliminate redundancy. For example, when remedial reading, bilingual, and speech/language services are examined, along with special education, as a system of supports, staffing needs may not seem quite so formidable.
- In some schools, care must be taken to avoid the problem of “over-serving” students with disabilities. Ultimately, this is a question about the amount of special education service that is needed to appropriately address a student’s goals and (possibly) objectives. Many students are entitled to some direct special education service, but they do not need full-day support. In fact, this amount of service may, in some cases, result in students’ becoming dependent on the support which may, in turn, prevent the students’ growth related to independence.
- The number of staff members needed in inclusive schools is related to the nature of students’ disabilities and their distribution across classes and sections.
- How paraeducators are assigned and directed in inclusive schools also may affect overall staffing needs. For example, when students with relatively mild needs are assigned to a class or section, at least some services may be provided (with direction) by these individuals. Conversely, staffing a single classroom with a special educator as well as paraeducators is only justified in situations in which the students with disabilities have extraordinary needs.

Scheduling Considerations

1. Scheduling for inclusive schools is complex and iterative. It usually takes several years for scheduling dilemmas to be resolved.
2. For the first year or two, it is common for a partial schedule to be developed. That is, some co-teaching and in-class support is created, but many traditional classes or the resource program remain.
3. In secondary schools, one strategy that has been successful concerns setting goals to reduce separate sections. This is accomplished by first listing all the sections of separate coursework offered (either subject-matter classes or resource sections) and then making a commitment to reduce by a specific percentage the amount of such coursework (for example, 15% the first year, 8% the second year).
4. In secondary schools, in-class services are sometimes more readily scheduled by clustering three students with disabilities for scheduling purpose (that is, these three students will have the same daily schedule). By placing two clusters of students in a class (that is, six students), in-class services can be justified.
5. In both elementary and secondary schools, the question of daily versus less-than-daily in-class services should be considered for at least some students.
 - a. In a secondary school, in-class services might be grouped. For example, on Tuesdays during second period, the special education teacher will be either in one sophomore English class or one junior English class. This can occur on a set schedule of with variation based on teachers' judgments about meeting student needs.
 - c. In middle school, in-class service could be negotiated based on the day of the week. For example, on Mondays the special education teacher co-teaches in English, Tuesdays math, Wednesdays science, and so on. Every student receives services every day, but not always in the same subject.
 - d. Another middle school alternative is to schedule co-teaching by unit of instruction. For example, for the two weeks of instruction on integers co-teaching will occur in math every day. Then, as the English class reaches its major research project, co-teaching switches to that class for the next two weeks.

Scheduling considerations (continued)

6. Special education teachers should pool their resources for addressing resource, in-class, and self-contained class needs. For example, if just one or two students need instruction in math, perhaps those students can attend a self-contained class during math instead of requiring a period scheduled by a resource teacher. In general, it is strongly advised that ALL special service providers participate in some in-class services in an inclusive school. If this is not done, teachers in self-contained programs themselves become isolated.
7. The schedules for special education teachers and paraprofessionals should retain some flexibility at the beginning of the year, if at all possible and if there is a great likelihood that additional students will be identified during the course of the school year. That is, at least some time during the week should be reserved for new responsibilities; this time can be used in the interim for assessment, observation, consultation, and other duties.
8. The best overall strategy for addressing scheduling is to work with a representative group from the school (each grade level; team, or department; an administrator; a representative from the related arts and/or vocational arts; other support staff (nurse, psychologist, speech/language therapist, ESL, others); and a paraprofessional. If this group begins its task of discussing scheduling before the close of the school year and continues it for two or three work sessions during the summer, usually a one-year plan can be developed.
9. Staff members not involved in re-thinking a school schedule should be prepared for the fact that first efforts may not be completely successful. Instead of resorting to complaining, staff members should be encouraged to suggest alternatives to improve the schedule for the following year. The more a schedule is developed taking into account ALL services, the more likely it is to meet student needs effectively and efficiently.



How Many Students with Special Needs Should Be in a Co-Taught Class?

- In an elementary school or a small secondary school, all students with disabilities are sometimes grouped into a single section, classroom, or team. Terms such as “inclusion class,” “inclusion classroom” or “inclusion team” might even be used. Generally, it is inappropriate to group students with disabilities in this manner, unless student needs are very mild and behavior is not a problem.
- In some schools, a decision is made that everyone should participate in the education of students with special needs. In these schools, the approach used is “one for you, one for you, one for you,” with students being distributed equally across classes or sections. This approach has a tremendous risk of making it virtually impossible for special service providers to adequately address or even monitor student needs.
- One effective strategy for distributing students is to have teachers at a grade level or on a team, or the special education teachers, assign students based on their knowledge of the students and their classmates.
- In secondary schools, it sometimes happens that co-taught classes receive a disproportionately high number of students at-risk, the logic being that with two teachers these students will have a better educational experience. The problem with this approach is that it may result in a *de facto* segregated class being formed, one that looks very similar to a traditional special education class. Students do not have positive role models when this occurs, and the philosophy of inclusive practices is undermined.
- Professional common sense is the most logical way to make decisions about the number of students with disabilities or other special needs to be placed in a co-taught class. If a student with a moderate or severe disability is enrolled, the class should not also have several students with significant behavior challenges. If several students with learning disabilities are similar in need, it might be best if they are placed in the same location so that services can more readily be delivered.
- In addition to students with disabilities, students at-risk also should be considered in determining class composition. Just a few students with significantly higher needs than other students can affect the learning standards. The goal is to maintain the standard for most learners while making needed accommodations for students who need them.
- Yet another consideration in assigning students for co-taught classes concerns students receiving assistance through other programs. For example, in elementary schools a number of students may be enrolled in a reading program or an ESL program. Generally, students should not be grouped into classes on the basis of services received. However, the number and intensity of all services in a classroom is a factor to review when assigning students.
- In middle schools and high schools, assigning students sometimes becomes problematic because schedules are built by computer. Few teachers report that the computer scheduling is adequate. Two alternatives exist: Either teachers (usually the special education staff) can schedule students by hand prior to computer scheduling, or they can modify students’ schedules after the computer has generated them. In most cases, when the latter system is employed students needing in-class assistance who are assigned singly in a class are re-assigned to a co-taught class.

Evaluation Data: Implementation and Outcomes

To accurately judge whether co-teaching as a service delivery option is effectively meeting the needs of students with disabilities, several considerations are necessary. The first is whether what is being called co-teaching would be considered such when applying a definition as the one discussed elsewhere in these materials. Once that fact can be confirmed, that is, once treatment integrity is clear, then the impact of co-teaching on student outcomes, adult perceptions, and other indicators can be examined.

IMPLEMENTATION DATA (process)

- Core question: What has occurred?
- Examples of specific questions:
 - What training activities have been undertaken to foster collaboration, inclusive practices, and co-teaching?
 - Staff development? (school and district)
Evidence: announcements of training opportunities, participant logs, training materials, minutes of meetings, copies of newsletters
 - Parent education?
Evidence: advertising materials (e.g., e-mail announcements, brochures), training materials
 - Student education?
Evidence: training materials
 - How has service delivery changed for students with disabilities?
 - Has the amount of pullout time decreased?
Evidence: student schedules, IEP records of service delivery
 - To what extent has co-teaching been implemented? In which classes? How often? For what periods of time? To what extent is classroom co-teaching practice judged to meet criteria for quality?
Evidence: teacher schedules, teacher reports, observational data, checklists

Evaluation data (continued)

- How have instructional practices (academic and behavioral) changed?
 - To what extent is differentiating occurring?

Evidence: teacher reports, student materials, observational data, unobtrusive measures (e.g., posting of classroom expectations and reward systems)

OUTCOME DATA (results)

- Core question: What has been the impact of the activities/changes implemented?
- Examples of specific questions:

- How has student achievement been influenced by the implemented activities?

Evidence: longitudinal student achievement data (self-comparison); achievement data from current year for students with disabilities and peers without disabilities in the same school (within-school patterns); achievement data for students with disabilities and students without disabilities from participating schools and comparable non-participating schools (cross-school comparison)

- How has student behavior been influenced by the implemented activities?

Evidence: longitudinal student discipline records for students who have been in a single school for 2-3 years (self-comparison); discipline records from current year for students with disabilities and peers without disabilities in the same school (within-school patterns); discipline records for students with disabilities and students without disabilities from participating schools and comparable non-participating schools (cross-school comparison)

- What has been the impact of the initiative's activities on the perceptions of school professionals, parents, and others?

Evidence: survey or questionnaire results; interview data, anecdotal reports

Assessing Co-Teaching Quality

Simply achieving the goal of having two educators delivering instruction in a general education setting is not enough. One dilemma administrators face is judging the quality of co-teaching in their schools. Little has been written about this topic, and no instruments exist for the purpose of evaluating co-teaching practices from an administrative perspective. However, the following chart summarizes some of the key factors that may help administrators decide the current status of co-teaching in his/her school and directions for refinement. The chart is not exhaustive, and its sections are not mutually exclusive. Rather, the chart is a means for prompting conversations about what should and should not occur in co-teaching.

	Exemplary Practices	Average Practices	Problematic Practices
Philosophy	<p>Teachers are deeply committed to educating all students.</p> <p>Teachers believe that two viewpoints create a stronger instructional environment.</p> <p>Teachers believe the possibilities are endless and that there is always something new to learn/try to help students succeed.</p>	<p>Teachers want all students to succeed, but express reservations about co-teaching as a means of providing services.</p> <p>Teachers tend to take on the responsibilities that are associated with their roles and are uncomfortable with taking risks related to role responsibilities.</p> <p>Teachers want co-teaching as part of inclusive practices, but believe that "there are limits."</p>	<p>Teachers not only believe they were "told" to co-teach, they question the purpose of the shared classroom.</p> <p>Teachers tend to use the language of "your" kids and "my" kids.</p> <p>Issues such as fairness are a priority.</p> <p>Teachers want to know which students with special needs should be in a co-taught class and which should not.</p>
Participant	Teachers are flexible and	Teachers tend to want to know	One or both teachers are

<p>characteristics</p>	<p>forgiving of each other.</p> <p>Teachers are strong and highly competent professionals.</p> <p>Teachers have highly developed skills related to their areas of expertise (e.g., curriculum, individualization).</p>	<p>who should do what.</p> <p>Teachers characterize themselves and implement classroom practices based on role (e.g., general educator as keeper of the curriculum, special educator as individualizer).</p> <p>Teachers are skilled in working with children (that is, they have strong pedagogical knowledge, skills, and dispositions).</p> <p>Teachers are expert in their areas of expertise, but may experience difficulty in blending them. For example, the classroom teacher may comment that a student in fifth grading reading at the first grade level won't benefit from the literature program. A special educator may not know how to use strategies in a large-group setting.</p>	<p>unwilling to move from traditional roles (e.g., classroom teacher always leads instruction; special educator always "helps")</p> <p>When teachers have disagreements, they tend to escalate. Former issues are raised in subsequent conversations.</p> <p>One or both teachers believe that there is really only one "right way" to do things.</p> <p>One or both of the teachers has weak skills for interacting with children, or in their own area of expertise.</p>
<p>Collaboration</p>	<p>Teachers tend to use "we" language in discussing students and instruction.</p>	<p>Teachers genuinely believe that each person makes a significant contribution to the classroom.</p>	<p>Teachers are friendly, but they do not collaborate regarding instruction.</p>

	<p>Teachers share key decisions, but complete many tasks individually.</p> <p>The contribution of each professional is equally valued, and teachers can discuss differences without becoming defensive.</p>	<p>Even if assigned to work together (instead of volunteering), teachers want co-teaching to work.</p> <p>Teachers work well together as long as issues are small; when a serious problem arises, they are uncertain about what to do.</p>	<p>In secondary schools, the comment may be heard, "If she doesn't know history (or any other subject), what does she have to offer?"</p> <p>Teachers have repeated negative interactions.</p> <p>Teachers do not feel comfortable raising issues related to co-teaching, and they may tend to talk about such issues with other colleagues.</p>
Classroom practices	<p>Classroom visitors seldom can tell which educator is a general educator and which is a special educator.</p> <p>Students look to teachers equally for guidance.</p> <p>Classroom instructional practices are highly differentiated.</p> <p>Special services are unobtrusive but clearly carried out.</p> <p>A variety of co-teaching approaches are employed.</p>	<p>Both teachers are willing to work with any students.</p> <p>Assisting is used often as an approach to co-teaching.</p> <p>Instructional differentiation occurs, but it is seen as an event or a special option.</p> <p>Teachers struggle to map a student's IEP goals and objectives onto the general education curriculum.</p> <p>Special educators spend most</p>	<p>Classroom teacher does the great majority of leading during instruction.</p> <p>Special educator tends to function as the "Instructional Red Cross."</p> <p>Assisting is the most common co-teaching approach.</p> <p>Special services tend to be offered by pulling student with special needs to the side of the room.</p>

		co-teaching time “helping,” not teaching.	All students are expected to complete the same work; alternative assignments are considered exceptional and questionable. Teachers take turns being “in charge” of instruction.
Context	<p>Teachers use allocated planning time efficiently and effectively, and they create additional planning minutes as needed.</p> <p>Teachers recognize the place of co-teaching in a larger service delivery system.</p> <p>Teachers make decisions on services based on student needs, not traditional practices.</p> <p>Teachers can implement fluid service delivery.</p>	<p>Teachers use allocated planning time, but they frequently mention that they cannot effectively co-teach without weekly planning time.</p> <p>Teachers schedule co-teaching in elementary schools based primarily on pragmatic factors (e.g., when they are available, when a paraprofessional can be in the room).</p> <p>Teachers tend to allow competing priorities to interfere with co-teaching (e.g., calls from the office, parent drop-ins).</p>	<p>Teachers often do not use planning time, or spend it mostly discussing a student incident or unrelated matters.</p> <p>Teachers tend to see co-teaching as an “all or none” option.</p> <p>Teachers tend to believe that if a student has special needs, the general education teacher is entitled to co-teaching services.</p> <p>Teachers want a schedule that lasts for the year.</p>

Hiring and Evaluating Teachers in Inclusive Schools

Leaders in inclusive schools pay careful attention to the hiring and personnel evaluation procedures. Questions to ask and topics to address include these:

HIRING

1. What has been your best experience with collaboration? What made it so good? What has been your worst experience with collaboration? What made it so bad? What role could you play in turning a bad collaboration experience into a good one, even as a new staff member?
2. In our school, students with disabilities generally have access to the general curriculum, and so they will be in your class(es)? What do you believe are appropriate changes/accommodations to make for students with disabilities so that they can succeed? How would you help a non-reader to be successful in your class(es)? What is your responsibility for making those changes?
3. What would your reaction be if you learned that you would be expected to co-teach? At the first meeting with your teaching partner, what are some of the most important questions you would want to ask? What do you think should happen when co-teachers have a disagreement?
4. How would you address this situation? NOTE: Provide a description of a common dilemma related to inclusive schooling. Topics might include disagreeing with a colleague about grading, disagreeing about whether a student is being successful, disagreeing with a parent about a decision related to a student, or disagreeing with activities of a paraprofessional.

EVALUATION

1. How are teachers' instructional and behavioral strategies assessed to determine whether they are effective for students and consistent with the school's inclusive practices?
2. What are district policies about observing (for formal evaluation) teachers who are co-teaching? Is just one teacher observed? Both teachers? Does observation for evaluation include solo as well as co-teaching?
3. How is co-teaching addressed in personnel evaluation procedures? What is the expectation for teachers to participate in co-teaching? Other collaborative activities related to inclusion?
4. How is the matter of class composition taken into account when reviewing the achievement outcomes of students in co-taught and other classrooms that have students with disabilities as members?

Co-Teaching Observation Form

Teachers _____ Date _____
_____ School _____
Subject/course _____ Lesson _____

Information Gathered Before Observation

Objective(s)

____ Lesson plan that explains implementation of co-teaching
____ Indication that lesson was jointly planned
____ Information (as needed) on students with disabilities in the class

Information Gathered During Observation

EXTENT OF EVIDENCE:

1=little/no 2=small amount 3=adequate evidence 4=significant 5=extraordinary
NA=Not applicable/not observed

Instructional Environment

- ____ Students with disabilities are distributed throughout the classroom rather than clustered in a single location.
- ____ Furniture and other classroom equipment has been arranged to foster co-teaching (e.g., desks moved to form groups).
- ____ Students and teachers are arranged in the class so that instructional groups are separated as much as possible from each other to minimize noise and distraction (e.g., opposite sides of the room).
- ____ Teachers have positioned themselves to foster student attention and minimize distractions (e.g., back-to-back, seated instead of standing).
- ____ Classroom displays and decorations convey an inclusive belief system (e.g., student work is displayed; individuals with disabilities are part of photos).
- ____ Teachers use classroom equipment/supplies (e.g., flipchart, furniture, smart board) to divide groups and reduce distractions.

NOTES:

Co-Teaching Approaches

- ___ A specific co-teaching approach (or variation) is in use.
Specify _____
- ___ Teachers and students appear accustomed to implementing the selected approach.
- ___ The approach being used appears to facilitate attainment of the instructional objectives.
- ___ The approach being used appears to facilitate appropriate student participation and behavior.
- ___ Instructional intensity is greater than it would be if only one teacher were present.

NOTES:

Differentiation

- ___ Instruction is based on principles of active student participation.
- ___ Students are using a variety of materials, selected based on their learning needs.
- ___ Students are using instructional technology as necessary to foster learning.
- ___ Students are using assistive technology as necessary to foster learning.
- ___ Appropriate accommodations are provided to students (e.g., fewer example of work to complete, oral responses instead of written, audio access to instruction instead of sole reliance on print).
- ___ Teaching procedures are clear, structured, and responsive to student needs.
- ___ The evaluation of student performance comprises a variety of techniques designed to encourage success.

NOTES:

Classroom and Behavior Management

- ___ Pace of instruction is brisk.
- ___ Transitions between activities occur with a minimal loss of time.
- ___ Students appear to have been taught transition strategies.
- ___ Instruction is well-organized (e.g., each teacher knows assigned roles, procedures for planned activities, routines).
- ___ Students have options for moving or standing, as needed (e.g., wiggle cushion, standing desk).
- ___ A positive behavior support system is in place and implemented consistently.

NOTES:

The Professional Relationship(s)

- ___ Talk time in the classroom is approximately equal or otherwise equitable.
- ___ Teachers interact with each other during instruction in ways that further the goals of the lesson.
- ___ Teachers both interact with all students for instructional purposes (e.g., asking questions, responding to questions).
- ___ Teachers both interact with all students for classroom management purposes (e.g., permission to use the restroom or go to locker; discipline).
- ___ Both teachers address classroom chores (e.g., distributing materials, getting out supplies, cleaning up).
- ___ Students interact with and respond to teachers approximately equally.
- ___ Parity is evident between the teachers.
- ___ If paraprofessionals are present, they work under the direction of the teachers in review or other supplemental instruction (rather than initial instruction).

NOTES:

A Blueprint for Building and Sustaining a Co-Teaching Program

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Leadership

- 1. Principal understands co-teaching in the context of inclusive schooling.
- 2. Principal is committed to co-teaching as a means for improving access and improving outcomes for students with disabilities.
- 3. Co-teaching is embedded in a set of services and supports that characterize an inclusive school.
- 4. Although other administrators may play a significant role in the day-to-day implementation of co-teaching, principal is directly involved in the program.
- 5. Principal ensures that an appropriate range of service delivery options is available for students with disabilities.
- 6. Principal is proactive in addressing concerns about co-teaching and resistance/reluctance from teachers.
- 7. Principal is prepared to address questions and concerns voiced by parents of students with disabilities as well as parents of students who are typical learners.
- 8. Principal has a three-year plan for systematically developing co-teaching and institutionalizing it as a means of providing services to students with disabilities.
- 9. Principal identifies accomplishments related to co-teaching and implements strategies to publicize and celebrate them.

Professional Development

- 1. Co-teachers receive joint initial professional development prior to implementation.
- 2. Co-teachers have opportunities to meet with others periodically to discuss topics related to co-teaching.
- 3. Co-teachers have opportunities to visit the classrooms of accomplished co-teachers and to interact with them regarding effective strategies.
- 4. Staff members who are not co-teaching receive overview and awareness professional development related to co-teaching.

Logistics

- 1. Co-teachers have at least periodic common planning time as well as a structure and a means of demonstrating accountability for its efficient and effective use.
- 2. Co-teaching is part of master scheduling.
- 3. Students are scheduled to receive co-teaching as their specially designed instruction based on their assessed needs. A decision that a student should be in a co-taught section does not invariably result in a student schedule that includes co-teaching in all core academic areas.
- 4. Special educators who co-teach are given schedules that reflect their content expertise, their other roles and responsibilities (e.g., consultation, delivery of service in a separate setting), and student needs.
- 5. Co-teaching occurs in classrooms in which students are heterogeneously grouped; grouping students with disabilities with only students who struggle to learn or who otherwise are considered at risk is avoided.
- 6. Unless a compelling reason exists for change, co-teaching partnerships are assigned for a minimum of two years.

Instruction/Classroom Practice

- 1. Co-teachers use evidence-based practices.
- 2. Co-teachers are both actively engaged in the instructional process.
- 3. Co-teachers ensure that the delivery of core academic content and specially designed instruction demonstrates integration rather than isolation, with each teacher contributing expertise (e.g., content and process).
- 4. Co-teachers ensure parity by sharing teaching, responses to student behavior, management of the classroom, and other tasks.
- 5. Co-teachers discuss and share in the tasks that surround instruction (e.g., planning, preparation of materials, evaluation of student work, grading).
- 6. Teachers share key decisions but divide labor in order to accomplish their goals for co-teaching and student outcomes. For example, general education teachers provide materials and tests far enough in advance that special educators can make needed adjustments for students with disabilities while special educators ensure that general educators know about and understand provisions on students' IEPs.

Personnel

- 1. Co-teaching and other inclusive practices begin with volunteers but emerge as a standard of practice in the school.
- 2. Procedures for employing new teachers directly address co-teaching and other inclusive practices.

- ___ 3. Principals provide an appropriate array of supports to reluctant participants, and they directly address ongoing resistance.
- ___ 4. Principals incorporate co-teaching into personnel observations and other aspects of the supervision/evaluation of teacher performance.

Program Evaluation

- ___ 1. Data document student outcomes (e.g., progress monitoring, quarterly scores/grades, attendance, discipline referrals, scores on high stakes tests)
- ___ 2. Data document teacher perceptions of co-teaching.
- ___ 3. Data document non-participant perceptions of co-teaching (e.g., teachers, related services personnel, administrators).
- ___ 4. Data document parent perceptions of co-teaching.
- ___ 5. Teachers are active participants in discussions regarding student and other data related to co-teaching.
- ___ 6. Data and discussions concerning data lead to program revisions.

Culture/Climate

- ___ 1. Co-teaching is embedded in a collaborative school culture.
- ___ 2. Co-teaching is embedded in a school with an inclusive belief system.
- ___ 3. Teachers participating in co-teaching receive incentives (e.g., preferable class schedules, fewer duties).
- ___ 4. Systems and structures are in place to communicate that co-teaching is integral to school functioning. Examples: Both teachers' names are on schedules, rosters, and report cards as appropriate; both teachers can access records for all students in their co-taught class.
- ___ 5. Co-teaching is included on the school's website and listed with other programs in brochures about the school, student handbooks, and other materials describing school services.

NOTE: The items in this checklist are designed to provide a general overview of essential components in successful co-teaching programs. Several of the items could easily be expanded so as to become separate checklists. For example, the observation of co-teachers during instruction should include a pre-observation interview, items to look for during observation, and questions to be address after observation. A sample observation protocol, for surveying parents and teachers, and other checklists are included in other materials being distributed at this session.