

Co-Teaching Strategies

One Teach, One Observe

One teacher has primary instructional responsibility while the other gathers specific observational information on students or the (instructing) teacher. The key to this strategy is to focus the observation. It is important to remember that either (teacher or mentor teacher) could take on both roles.

When to Use: New co-teaching situations, when questions arise about students, to check student progress, to compare target students to others in class.

One Teach, One Assist

An extension of one teach one observe. One teacher has primary instructional responsibility while the other assists students' with their work, monitors behaviors, or corrects assignments. Often lending a voice to students or groups who would hesitate to participate or add comments.

When to Use: Behavior / Classroom Management, when the lesson lends itself to delivery by one teacher, In new co-teaching situations, in lessons stressing a process in which student work needs close monitoring.

Station Teaching

The co-teaching pair divide the instructional content into parts. Each teacher instructs one of the groups. Groups then rotate or spend a designated amount of time at each station. Often an independent station will be used along with the teacher led stations.

When to Use: Mini Experiments, to hit multiple Bloom's Taxonomy categories, when content is complex but not hierarchical, in lessons in which part of planned instruction is review, when several topics comprise instruction.

Parallel Teaching

Each teacher instructs half the students. The two teachers are addressing the same instructional material and presenting the material using the same teaching strategies. The greatest benefit to this approach is the reduction of student teacher ratio.

When to Use: When the lower teacher – student ratio is needed to improve instructional efficiency, To foster student participation in discussions, For activities such as drill and practice, re-teaching, modelling, and test review.

Supplemental Teaching

This strategy allows one teacher to work with students at their expected grade level, while the other teacher works with those students who need the information and / or materials extended or remediated.

When to Use: After assessment, for Absent students / pullouts, when high achieving students have grasped a concept and need some enrichment activities, to provide additional instruction to students who have not grasped the concept, to provide additional scaffolding for ELL.

Alternative Teaching

Alternative teaching strategies provide multiple different approaches to teaching the same information. The learning outcome is the same for all students however the avenue for getting there is different.

When to Use: When high levels of mastery are expected for all students, when enrichment is desired, when some students are working in a parallel curriculum.

Team Teaching

Team taught lessons exhibit an invisible flow for instruction with no prescribed division of authority. Using a team teaching strategy, both teachers are actively involved in the lesson. From the students' perspective, there is no clearly defined leader, as both teachers share the instruction, are free to interject information and available to assist students and answer questions.

When to Use: When two heads are better than one or experience is comparable, during a lesson in which instructional conversation is appropriate, in co-teaching situations in which the teachers have experience and a high sense of comfort, when a goal of instruction is to demonstrate / model some type of interaction to the students.

Graze & Tag- The lead teacher role shifts between co-teachers during instruction. While one co-teacher leads instruction the other grazes, assisting students and maintaining order.

Think-alouds- Co-teachers contribute alternative solutions and approaches during instruction offering students different ways to solve problems by "thinking out loud."

Demonstrative modeling – While one co-teacher provides instruction in the lead voice, the second co-teacher demonstrates skills and procedures for the benefit of learners.

Cognitive apprenticeship modeling - One co-teacher assumes the role of a student and models appropriate learner behavior: sitting among learners, demonstrating on-task attentiveness, asking questions, making suggestions, and simulating information acquisition while the "lead teacher" conducts the class.

Record & Edit- The lead teacher elicits responses from students during a brainstorming session while the co-teacher paraphrases and records responses on an overhead, a whiteboard, chalkboard, or poster – allowing the lead teacher to focus on the lesson's instructional tempo and student engagement.

Cooperative Learning- During any cooperative learning activity, co-teachers are involved in the planning, preparation, and monitoring aspects increasing the effectiveness and manageability of the activity.

Conferencing – Co-teaching affords one co-teacher opportunities for small-group conferencing to support learners while the other co-teacher provides large-group instruction.

Strategic Pull Out - As the lead teacher provides instruction the co-teacher may use an adjacent room, lab, or media center for small group instruction or to remove one or more learners for individual attention or behavior correction.

One-on-One- While the lead teacher provides whole-group instruction, the co-teacher supports student learning through individually administered assessments, tutoring, book conferences, make-up work or enrichment.

Parallel Teaching- Co-teachers conduct similar lessons simultaneously with smaller groups. Sometimes instruction may take place in the same classroom; at other times, a nearby teaching space may be utilized to minimize distractions.

Literature Circles- Teachers assign roles to students in groups who then conduct book study discussions monitored by co-teachers.

Learning Centers- Similar to stations but not requiring the rotation of all learners, centers are designed, equipped and monitored by co-teachers to facilitate individual and small group learning.

Staged Arguments- Student attention is never higher than when learners believe that co-teachers are embroiled in a verbal disagreement. Careful scripting of “arguments” can be an effective way of presenting the pros and cons of an issue.

Games/Simulations - Co-teachers organize, monitor and manage games and simulations, especially activities that might prove too complex or unwieldy for one teacher alone.

Tiered Instruction- Used in conjunction with other strategies, co-teachers can meet the needs of different levels of students by appropriately combining and redistributing classes.

Experiments – As with stations, centers, games and simulations, the active involvement of co-teachers facilitates the assembly, management, assessment and clean-up associated with lab and classroom experiments.

Role Play- Co-teachers prepare in advance to assume roles that will enrich instruction such as story-telling, historical characterizations, debates, and problem- solving scenarios. Alternatively, co-teachers may assign roles to learners for discussions, simulations or demonstrations that are managed more easily by co- teaching colleagues.

Open Door Policy- Internship mentors sometimes find themselves hosting an intern and a methods candidate simultaneously. The presence and active involvement of three collaborators improves the student-teacher ratio during instruction and serves to enhance the co-teaching skill set of the methods candidate.

Proximity/Grazing – The mere physical presence of a co-teacher near a learner often has a positive effect on engagement and compliance with behavior expectations. While one co-teacher is providing the lead voice in instruction, the other can “graze” the room to use proximity with potential management challenges and to offer quiet assistance and support as needed.

Eavesdropping - When co-teachers engage in "teacher talk" that learners are subtly permitted to overhear, this strategy can enhance student attention and motivation. Learners are all ears when they listen in on teachers' stage whispered conversations such as "Do you think we should put this on the test next week?"

Technology Assistance – When technology functions properly it can be an effective way to meet diverse learner needs. When it doesn't, having a co-teacher enables the lesson to continue while adjustments are made. Co-teachers are also able to set up and better utilize the available technology.

Fake-a-mistake - K-12 students love to catch their teachers making a mistake. If rehearsed and set up carefully, one co-teacher can submit a "flawed" piece of work for review by P-12 students, knowing that they will be able to pick out the errors. An essay that lacks text support or a math problem's solution that takes a wrong turn are common examples.

Mock Debates - When both co-teachers are available for instruction, they can take opposing sides of an issue and dramatize the pros and cons for P-12 students. The debate format can be used to deliver instruction directly or to serve as a model for P-12 student debating in subsequent lessons.

Planted Questions - Teachers often hope that students will ask questions in class in order to clarify or reinforce key points of a lesson. Too often, those questions don't emerge from students in the form or at the time most appropriate. In co-teaching, one teacher can be supplied in advance with key questions to ask at the optimal moment if students fail to do so.