

Co-Teaching: Collaboration That Makes a Difference

As there is a continued move toward accountability in education, it is critical that we prepare tomorrow's teachers with the best training for their increasingly diverse classrooms.

Utilizing the co-teaching model during the student teaching semester provides a comprehensive and rigorous experience for our teacher candidates, allows the cooperating teachers the ability to remain actively involved through consistent mentoring, and enhances the quality of learning for P-12 students (Schwab Learning, 2003).

We are defining **co-teaching** as a teacher candidate and a Cooperating Teacher working together with groups of students and sharing the delivery of instruction and physical space (Friend & Bursuck, 2011; Cook & Friend, 1995). Many elements influence the success of the process and the impact on student learning.

What does the Co-teaching Model look like?

With co-teaching, the teacher candidates typically become involved in the classroom immediately. Lessons are planned and taught by both teachers, resulting in the teaching candidate being seen by students as a "real teacher" from the beginning of the experience. The co-planning process is designed for the teacher candidate to hear and discuss the thoughts and strategies that are used in lesson planning by their mentor teacher. As the experience continues, a shift in the roles happens slowly, with the teacher candidate taking more responsibility for the planning and teaching lessons. There is still time to "solo" and be in the classroom by him/her self and be fully in charge. The most effective use of co-teaching comes when the teacher candidate and Cooperating Teacher determine which lessons lend themselves to this style of teaching, and plan accordingly. The co-teaching strategies do not need to be used on every lesson.

How to begin the process of Co-teaching?

1. *Make communication a priority*
2. *Schedule time to plan together*
3. *Share and discuss planning and assessment*
4. *Establish clear expectations*
5. *Share leadership role in the classroom*
6. *Remain flexible*

Co-teaching conversations may include:

1. *What is most important to you?*
2. *How can we share the responsibility for maintaining the learning environment?*
3. *What techniques do you use to introduce new materials?*
4. *How will students be assessed on content?*
5. *How will paperwork be handled on a regular basis?*
6. *What classroom management process will we utilize?*

What are the seven approaches to co-teaching?

1. ***One Teach, One Observe*** – The key is to focus the observation. The co-teaching pair determines which specific behaviors to observe. It is important to remember that either the Cooperating Teacher or the teacher candidate could take either role.
2. ***One Teach, One Supports*** – This is 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.
3. ***Station Teaching*** – The co-teaching pair divides the instructional content into parts. Each teacher instructs one of the groups; groups then rotate or spend a designated amount of time at each station.
4. ***Parallel Teaching*** – Each teacher instructs half the students. The two teachers are addressing the same instructional material, using the same teaching strategies.
5. ***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 retaught, extended or remediated.
6. ***Alternative (differentiated) Teaching*** - Alternative teaching strategies provide two different approaches to teaching the same information. The learning outcome is the same for all students; however, the avenue for getting there is different.
7. ***Team Teaching*** – Well-planned team taught lessons exhibit an invisible flow of instruction with no prescribed division of authority. Using a team teaching strategy, both teachers are actively involved in the lesson.

What is a suggested timeline for who initiates lesson plans?

Planning the experiences of a teacher candidate will be different at each setting. It is especially difficult for the Saint Louis University School of Education to suggest any set pattern because of the differences among teacher candidates, Cooperating Teachers, and classroom settings. Consequently, Cooperating Teachers are in the best position to formulate a plan by which their teacher candidates will assume classroom responsibilities.

Soloing – Two weeks of “*solo teaching*” is required some point during the student teaching experience for certification. The teacher candidate plans, teaches and assesses the whole experience for the students; the Cooperating Teacher is encouraged to leave the room at this time. Timeline should be determined by the team.

Sample Schedule

Week	One Placement (15 weeks)	Two Placement (12 weeks/3 weeks)
1	Cooperating Teacher Plans	Cooperating Teacher Plans
2	Cooperating Teacher plans	Cooperating Teacher plans
3	Cooperating Teacher plans	Cooperating Teacher plans
4	Cooperating Teacher and Teacher Candidate plans	Cooperating Teacher and Teacher Candidate plans
5	Cooperating Teacher and Teacher Candidate plans	Cooperating Teacher and Teacher Candidate plans
6	Cooperating Teacher and Teacher Candidate plans	Cooperating Teacher and Teacher Candidate plans
7	Cooperating Teacher and Teacher Candidate plans	Teacher Candidate Plans
8	Teacher Candidate Plans -midterm	**Teacher Candidate Plans –midterm
9	**Teacher Candidate plans	**Teacher Candidate plans
10	**Teacher Candidate plans	**Teacher Candidate plans
11	**Teacher Candidate plans	Cooperating Teacher and Teacher Candidate plans
12	**Teacher Candidate plans	Cooperating Teacher and Teacher Candidate plans (Teacher candidate observes 3 other classrooms)
13	Cooperating Teacher and Teacher Candidate plans	Cooperating Teacher Plans
14	Cooperating Teacher and Teacher Candidate plans	**Teacher Candidate plans
15	Cooperating Teacher Plans (Teacher candidate observes 3 other classrooms)	Cooperating Teacher and Teacher Candidate plans

** At least 2 of these weeks need to be solo teaching.