

Co-teaching

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As Ohio strengthens its education system with bold new reforms, educators need new approaches aimed at consistent, high-quality instruction. Co-teaching, one such approach, is proven effective with students. It also benefits teachers, ranging from pre-service to seasoned educators.

What is co-teaching?

Co-teaching occurs when “two or more professionals deliver substantive instruction to a diverse or blended group of students in a single physical space.” (Cook and Friend, 2004)

During the past several decades, co-teaching strategies developed with a special focus on meeting the needs of diverse learners, such as students with disabilities and English language learners. Today, as the positive effect of co-teaching on students has become better documented, more educators have begun to use co-teaching to meet the challenges of the state’s more rigorous teaching and learning standards.

How does co-teaching work with pre-service teachers?

Co-teaching positions the student teacher as an “apprentice” to the regular classroom teacher. Both the student teacher and classroom teacher, however, take an active role in planning lessons, providing instruction and assessing students. The classroom teacher retains a great deal of responsibility, but the student teacher takes some ownership of student learning.

How can cooperating teachers and pre-service teachers benefit from using co-teaching strategies?

Seasoned and pre-service teachers can gain rich professional development experiences when co-teaching. The collaboration and conversation between co-teachers at every stage of lesson development – from planning through delivery, assessment, reflection and feedback – offers continuing opportunities for growth. The teamwork encourages both educators to adapt and modify their lessons for maximum student learning.

How do students perform in co-teaching classrooms?

According to credible research, co-teaching produces students who outperform their peers in single-teacher classrooms in reading and math achievement. (Bacharach et al, 2010).

Villa et al (2004) indicate that all students benefit when their teachers share ideas, work cooperatively and contribute to one another’s learning. *(Continued on back)*

Why would co-teaching work with all types of students?

It works because co-teaching:

- Reduces teacher-student ratios so students get more individual attention;
- Allows students to learn firsthand how their co-teachers use teamwork and problem-solving skills in the classroom;
- Results in higher levels of enthusiasm and involvement among students than in traditional classrooms;

How does co-teaching differ from other collaborations?

Current research sheds light on what authentic co-teaching truly is – and what it is not. Co-teaching is not:

- One person teaching one subject, followed by another person teaching a different subject;
- One person teaching while another prepares instructional materials or corrects papers;
- One teacher facilitating a lesson while another watches with no participation;
- One teacher's ideas dominating another's when teaching strategies are selected.

High-quality co-teaching means that each educator shares leadership, engages in both teacher and learner roles, and works toward a common goal. Good co-teachers take turns as expert and novice, and giver and receiver of knowledge and skills.

Keeping the hiring pipeline open

School administrators who work with high-quality teacher degree programs to give pre-service teachers meaningful student teaching experiences help their schools maintain a supply of well-equipped beginning faculty.

The Ohio Department of Education, Ohio Board of Regents and university teacher preparation program deans are working together so that future teachers are prepared for Ohio's higher teaching and learning standards. Contact the education departments of universities in your area to discuss how you can employ co-teaching approaches with cooperating and pre-service teachers in your district's classrooms.

For more information:

Attend the department's co-teaching training. Contact brinda.price@education.ohio.gov.

[The National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities](#)

Bacharach, N., Heck, T., & Dahlberg, K. (2010). Changing the Face of Student Teaching through Co-teaching. *Action in Teacher Education*, 32(1), 3-14.

Cook, L., Friend, M. (1995). *Co-Teaching: Guidelines for creating effective practices*.

Villa, R.A., Thousand, J.S., & Nevin, A.I. (2004). *A guide to co-teaching: Practical tips for facilitating student learning*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.