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Taking the Plunge

What Is Co-Teaching All About?

All across the nation, general and special education teachers, English as second language teachers, and other service providers, such as speech-language pathologists from all grade levels and all content areas, are taking the plunge into co-teaching. Many of these teachers have had little or no preparation in this approach, so they are learning about co-teaching largely through trial and error. Perhaps their administrator informed them that they would be co-teaching, and therefore, they did not have much say in the matter, or maybe they volunteered for this new way of providing instruction to students. In either case, with little guidance or advice, they—perhaps like you—have taken the plunge into co-teaching.

The good news is that taking this plunge does not need to be a scary, dreadful, or uninformed experience. Many resources, examples, and real cases from the field are now available that can inform our practice. In short, we can learn from the experiences of others who have taken the plunge before us.

This book is intended to illustrate effective co-teaching practices and provide a road map for those who have—or will—take the co-teaching plunge. After reading this introductory chapter, you will be able to do the following:

- Offer a definition of co-teaching.
- Describe what co-teaching is and is not.
- Explain prerequisites for co-teaching.
- Propose reasons for co-teaching.
- Describe co-teaching stages.
- Articulate a model of co-teaching.

We invite you to take the plunge into the exciting and rewarding experience of co-teaching.

WHAT IS CO-TEACHING?

One widely accepted definition of *co-teaching* from Friend & Cook (2007) is the following:

> Co-teaching occurs when two or more professionals jointly deliver substantive instruction to a diverse, blended group of students in a single physical space. (p. 113)

The four parts of this definition, as well as the examples we share in this book, provide the context for our discussion of co-teaching. First, co-teaching involves *two or more certified teachers.* Usually we think of co-teaching as involving a general and special educator, but given the definition above, co-teaching can occur between or among two or more special educators, two or more general educators, or two or more other certified professionals. Many certified service providers, such as speech-language pathologists, school social workers, physical or occupational therapists, and English as second language teachers, now provide their services or support in the general education classroom rather than pulling students out for services. This approach often provides greater opportunities for more integrated learning for students, rather than focusing on isolated skills in a totally different context. Integrated services allow for immediate application and natural assessment of critical skills. While in the general education classroom, these professionals may coplan and copresent lessons applicable to all the students in the class. For example, a speech language pathologist might join general educators in selecting and preteaching vocabulary words for an upcoming unit. Mastering the vocabulary words is critical for all the students in the classroom—not just those with special needs. As noted, co-teaching often involves a special educator and a general educator. In fact, many special educators co-teach with several different general educators every day.

Second, the definition of co-teaching notes that these professionals *jointly deliver substantive instruction* to students. In other words, both professionals are meaningfully involved in the delivery of instruction, and instruction reflects recommended practices in the field. This is critical with the emphasis on research-based instructional practices under No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). With two or more professionals in the room, the instruction should be qualitatively different than if you were teaching the class by yourself. With others in the room, perhaps different instructional grouping systems, different technologies, and varied assignments can be used that would be difficult—or impossible—to implement with just one teacher. Many co-teachers report that they are able to use approaches they could not implement on their own, perhaps due to classroom management or other issues. Co-teaching allows teachers to explore new or different ways of teaching all students.

Third, co-teaching occurs in *diverse classrooms.* A major tenant of co-teaching is that two teachers can better meet the needs of students in diverse, inclusive classrooms. According to Turnbull, Turnbull, Shank, and Wehmeyer (2007) inclusion seeks to ensure a place for all students in the general education curriculum to the maximum extent appropriate for each child, and professional collaboration is the strategy that advances inclusion and enhances the likelihood of its success. Clearly, IDEA creates

a presumption in favor of educating students with disabilities with those who do not have disabilities. A clear progressive trend toward greater inclusion has been witnessed since 1984–1985, when the U.S. Department of Education first started collecting inclusion data (U.S. Department of Education, 2001). The shared expertise of both teachers is needed to differentiate or individualize instruction in such classrooms. However, not every inclusion class will have a co-teacher. Many districts have guidelines regarding the number or percentage of students with disabilities placed into a general education class that warrants a co-teacher.

Finally, co-teaching occurs *within a shared physical space.* Although on occasion, one teacher may remove a student or small group from the main instructional area for a specific purpose, such as remediation or assessment, both teachers and all students typically share a common physical space for the majority of instruction. Consistently separating or removing the same students from their peers, even if their instruction is different, is inconsistent with the co-teaching model. Further, both teachers should have equal opportunities to plan and provide instruction to all students within the same space. Clearly, the special education teacher was not placed in the inclusion classroom only to teach the students with disabilities.

WHAT CO-TEACHING IS NOT

Based on the co-teaching definition, then, we propose that co-teaching is not any of the following:

- Teaching with a paraprofessional, volunteer, or other noncertified assistant
- Implementing the same lessons in the same way you taught when you did not have a co-teacher
- Having two certified teachers provide instruction to a homogeneous class
- Grouping students with disabilities or language differences to work with the special education teacher or the English as a second language teacher at the back table or removing them to receive instruction in their special or separate classroom

WHAT ARE SOME PREREQUISITES FOR CO-TEACHING?

Many people view co-teaching as being like a marriage. Therefore, co-teaching, like any collaborative relationship, rests on the following principles.

Parity

A co-teaching partnership is based on a spirit of equality. Years of teaching experience, degree, or age do not place one teacher in a higher position of authority over the other. Decisions are made mutually and are mutually agreed upon. Each teacher has an equal role in planning,

executing, and evaluating the lesson. Admittedly, teachers have different strengths, skills, experiences, and knowledge to bring to the co-teaching experience, and these should not be minimized. Co-teachers should capitalize on the strengths of each partner without having one monopolize or succumb to the other based on perceived inequality.

Mutual Respect

Co-teachers need to be respected for their unique skills. Often, general educators have skill and experience with whole group instruction, group management systems, inquiry- or problem-based learning, and specific content knowledge within the general education curriculum. Special educators often have skills and experience in individualizing instruction, developing individual behavior systems, diagnosing, and sequencing skills. When their knowledge and skills are respected within a spirit of parity, both teachers are free to offer their areas of expertise and creative ideas without fear or humiliation.

Specific Mutual Goals

Co-teaching rests on shared goals. First and foremost, these goals are student based. Student-based goals often refer to increased academic skills, improved behavior or social skills, or increased access to the general education curriculum. Admittedly, co-teachers may be operating from different standards. For example, a math teacher may be using math standards, while an English as a second language (ESL) teacher may be using ESL standards. Through collaboration, lessons would apply to both sets of standards. Specifically articulating student goals early in the co-teaching partnership provides direction and purpose for co-teaching and offers a measure of accountability and growth. Co-teachers may also have professional reasons for co-teaching, such as the enjoyment of learning from a peer and the camaraderie of working closely with a colleague. Certainly, one advantage of co-teaching is professional growth from sharing ideas, strategies, methods, and materials.

Shared Accountability for Outcomes

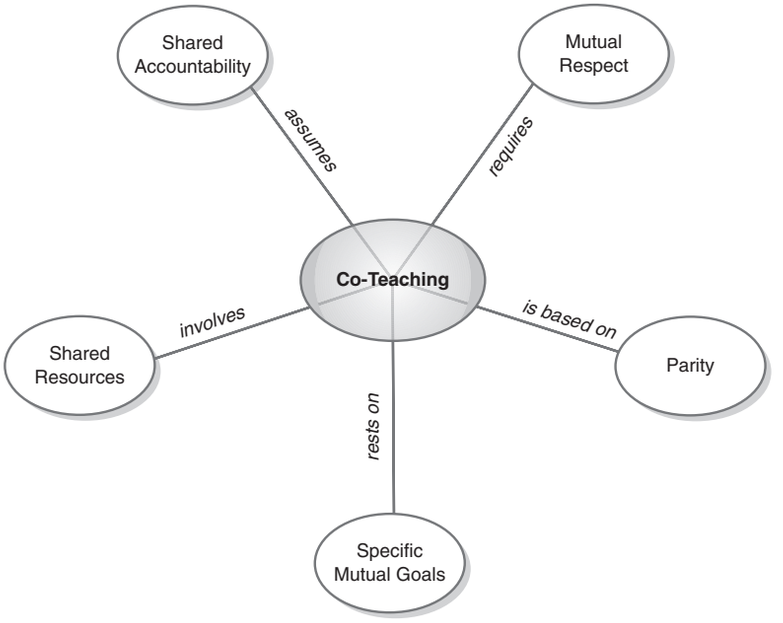
When co-teachers teach, they become joint owners of the classroom. No longer is this "Mr. Ginther's classroom" or "the IEP kids" or "Miss Kristie's students." Similarly, the lesson is not "Mr. Ginther's lesson," even if he took a lead in developing it. If the lesson was successful, both teachers celebrate. Likewise, if the lesson was unsuccessful, both teachers reflect on what could be done differently in the future. In co-teaching, both teachers share instructional and behavioral accountability for all students.

Shared Resources

Have you known a teacher who hoarded materials and ideas, primarily so she would look good? We have. Some teachers resist sharing their creative ideas with others, but because co-teaching rests on the ideals of parity and shared accountability, a co-teaching partnership is characterized by openly sharing materials, ideas, methods, strategies, and approaches. For example, the general educator should feel free to share an activity that has

been successful with students in the past. Similarly, the special educator may be aware of ways to modify written work for students who have handwriting, fine motor, or written language issues. The shared resources and expertise of both teachers embody the spirit of co-teaching. Figure 1.1 shows a visual summarizing these co-teaching requisites.

Figure 1.1 Visual of Co-Teaching Requisites



ADDITIONAL FACTORS TO CONSIDER BEFORE TAKING THE PLUNGE

Co-teaching does not occur in a vacuum, and successful co-teaching does not occur overnight. Some additional factors to consider when co-teaching include the following.

School Climate

Is your school characterized by a spirit of collaboration? Do teachers already freely share ideas and resources? Are students with disabilities considered part of the general population and, therefore, everyone's responsibility? If a collaborative culture does not already exist, co-teaching may be more challenging. Roy and O'Brien (1989) developed ten statements for individuals or teams to consider as they reflect on the collaborative nature of their school. The statements include the following:

1. The staff share a common language about instructional techniques.
2. The staff often observe each other in their classrooms and offer feedback about instruction.
3. The staff frequently discuss instructional techniques and methods.

4. The staff work together to master new instructional methods or strategies.
5. The staff plan and design educational materials together.
6. The staff pool expertise and share resources with each other.
7. The staff learn from and with each other.
8. Time is devoted during staff meetings to demonstrate and discuss innovative educational techniques, materials, and strategies.
9. Discussion in the staff lounge or workroom focuses mostly on instructional practices rather than social issues or student complaints.
10. Time is specifically provided for professional staff to plan and problem solve together.

We encourage grade-level and department teams, as well as the entire staff, to review these statements as they evaluate their school culture.

Administrative Support

Do your administrators support the co-teaching model? Will they provide necessary planning time and resources? Will they advocate for you if parents or other teachers have concerns about this model? Will they listen to issues regarding the co-teaching situation and offer support and guidance if you have unresolved conflict? Villa, Thousand, and Nevin (2004) note that administrators can ensure that all faculty receive appropriate training in collaborative planning, co-teaching models, differentiation, universal design, and cooperative learning; co-teachers are offered incentives receive needed resources; and state department personnel, faculty of institutions of higher education, and personnel from school districts form partnerships. Further, these authors note that administrators can support co-teaching by publicly articulating the rationale for co-teaching, redefining staff roles, assessing the staff's need for collaboration, creating a master schedule that allows for collaboration, and educating others about the accomplishments of collaborative planning and teaching teams. Administrators can also provide access for both teachers to student files, grading programs, and other student information that is critical for instructional purposes.

Parent Support

How do parents feel about the co-teaching model? Have you involved them? Have you supplied them with information about co-teaching on your Web site, through flyers or by other means? Do they understand how co-teaching is different from other, perhaps previously implemented special education instructional models? Involving parents in and informing and educating them about co-teaching empowers them to be equal partners in articulating the needs of their children.

Student Perspective

Have student needs—rather than the co-teaching model—dictated student Individualized Education Plans (IEPs)? Have you considered student needs and preferences when assigning students to the co-taught classroom? Have you prepared all students for the co-teaching approach?

Just as most adults appreciate being prepared for and involved with change, students also appreciate being involved in changes that affect them.

Personal Characteristics

Are you really ready or prepared to co-teach? Do you have the personal characteristics that enable you to work well with another adult in a shared space? Can you provide a safe learning environment—not only for students but also for your co-teacher? Are you willing to share "your" classroom and materials with someone else? What are you willing to give up to co-teach? Reflect on your co-teaching readiness by taking the survey in Figure 1.2, Willingness and Readiness for Co-Teaching.

WHY SHOULD I CO-TEACH?

Teachers co-teach for a variety of reasons. Following are some of them:

- Their administrator told them they had to (probably not the best reason).
- They believe that students with disabilities can learn more by remaining in the general education classroom with supports joining them.
- They believe students without disabilities also benefit from co-teaching.
- They have not been pleased with the results from their pull-out special education service delivery model.
- Their school district embraces inclusive practices.
- They believe they have skills that benefit all students.
- They are excited about working with all students.
- They want to grow professionally by learning from and with another colleague.

WHAT ARE THE CO-TEACHING STAGES?

Co-teaching is first and foremost a relationship. Like any relationship, co-teaching moves though stages, from the first "getting to know you" stage to the final "thinking as one" stage. The relationship develops as co-teachers get to know each other, build their trust and common repertoire, and work toward the final goal of collaboration. As in any relationship, teachers will experience different starting points and different timetables. Sometimes teachers volunteer to co-teach together. In this situation, the relationship probably started long before the co-teaching experience, even though that relationship may only have been social. At the other extreme, co-teachers with only a nodding acquaintance, if any, may be assigned to teach together. In this situation, the teachers must build their relationship from scratch.

Knowing the co-teaching stages is helpful, so you can identify where you are, the challenges you will face, and actions you can take to meet them to advance to the next stage. Some co-teaching partnerships move through the phases quickly, arriving at the final "thinking-as-one" stage in a few months, while others take several years of working together to get to this stage. Much depends upon where the relationship was when co-teaching began.

Gately and Gately (2001) identify three stages of co-teaching: beginning, compromising, and collaborating. Co-teachers with a limited work relationship prior to the co-teaching experience will start at the beginning

Figure 1.2 Willingness and Readiness for Co-Teaching

Rate yourself on the following scale: 1 = very 2 = somewhat 3 = not

How willing am I to . . .	*1*	*2*	*3*
• Work closely with another teacher?			
• Spend time coplanning and discussing activities and lessons?			
• Have someone else in the classroom while I am teaching?			
• Have someone else watch me teach?			
• Have someone else teach content to students?			
• Compromise on how things should be done in the classroom in terms of instruction?			
• Compromise on how things should be done in the classroom in terms of management?			
• Compromise on how things should be done in the classroom in terms of assessment of student learning?			
• Compromise on how things should be done in the classroom in terms of overall structure and expectations?			
• Compromise about classroom procedures?			
• Collaborate with someone else to make good decisions concerning curriculum?			
• Collaborate with someone else to make good decisions concerning management?			
• Collaborate with someone else to make good decisions concerning assessment of student learning?			
• Include a special education perspective on teaching and management?			
How prepared am I to work with children with disabilities?			
How comfortable am I having a special education teacher in the classroom observing and modifying current curricular instruction and behavioral practices?			

Source: Stump, C. S. (1999, March). *Understanding collaboration: What makes it work?* Paper presented at the Spring Tonic Conference at Silver Lake College, Manitowoc, WI.

stage and probably progress through the stages more slowly than teachers with a previously established relationship. This is to be expected. Care must be taken to understand the developmental progression of co-teaching and accept the realities and challenges of each stage.

Beginning Stage

This stage is the "getting-to-know-you" stage, in which you attempt to establish a new relationship—that of co-teachers. As in any relationship, this stage brings a certain amount of awkwardness as you get to know yourself and your co-teaching partner from a new perspective. If you are the general education teacher, you may feel rather possessive toward your classroom, students, and subject matter. This is normal and to be expected. After all, this has been your classroom for a number of years, and you are the content area expert. You may sense that the "other teacher" is intruding. Conversely, if you are the special education teacher, you may feel like an unwelcome guest: unimportant, excluded, and not in control of the situation. You may feel that you are at the whim of the general education teacher, following his lead, without opportunity for meaningful professional input. Often, at this stage, special education teachers report they feel more like instructional assistants than teachers. Indeed, at this level, often parents and students consider the "other teacher" to be the helper rather than a teacher.

One obvious indication of this stage is the use of space. Typically, the "other teacher" is relegated to a certain spot in the classroom, usually in the back, with little sense of ownership of space or access to materials. As Gately and Gately (2001) so aptly note, "There often appear to be invisible walls separating the space of the two teachers" (p. 41).

Communication at this stage may be polite, avoiding areas of conflict, as you both attempt to establish your fledging relationship. As one colleague noted, you may feel paralyzed, unable to move forward, because you really do not know what to do. However, realize that this getting-to-know-you beginning stage is normal and critical to the overall success of the co-teaching partnership. If you can get through the "opening willies," freely acknowledge your difficulties, and have understanding and empathy for your partner, you will be able to progress to the next stages. If you cannot begin an open honest dialogue, however, you may remain at this level, which will be very unsatisfying for both of you. The keys to success at this level are honesty, empathy, communication, and—above all—patience.

Compromising Stage

This stage is characterized by a "my-turn-your-turn" relationship. A "you teach this, and I will teach this" teaching arrangement may be seen at this level. Co-teachers may decide to divide teaching responsibilities, each taking charge of a certain curricular area. Professional communication is more expanded than in the beginning stage but not as fully established and interdependent as in the collaborative stage. The use of space changes slightly, as the "other teacher" moves to a different area of the classroom to teach a segment of the lesson, but that teacher often returns to her relegated spot. The "other teacher" rarely takes center stage, but territoriality becomes less evident (Gately & Gately, 2001). At this stage, students recognize both partners as teachers, but they still clearly identify one as the main teacher and the other as the "helper teacher."

Collaborative Stage

This is the jewel of co-teaching. At this level, both teachers are truly collaborative, often thinking as one. Here, the "image emerges," and the wonderful rewards of co-teaching begin. Both partners experience a high comfort level, humor, communication, and acceptance. Students, parents, and classroom visitors often are unable to distinguish the special education from the general education teacher. Both teachers are fluid, move around the classroom, occupy all spaces, and interact with all students. You can identify your co-teaching stage by viewing the Stages of Co-Teaching chart, shown in Figure 1.3.

You may find that your relationship has several characteristics in more than one section. That means you are moving forward. If all your characteristics are in one section, you may be "stuck." You need to identify an area to work on and get moving! Co-teachers may also want to track their progress by using the "How Are We Doing?" form, given in Figure 1.4. Independently, each co-teacher completes the form and shares his perceptions with his partner. Completed forms can be used as talking points for developing future co-teaching goals. Also, the variables on this form can be modified to reflect areas important to you and your co-teacher.

■ OUR MODEL OF CO-TEACHING

Many variables contribute to the success or failure of the co-teaching experience. Sometimes two teachers just do not get along—that is, their personalities are so different that co-teaching is a struggle rather than a joy. Perhaps one teacher is very controlling or another is gossipy. Perhaps the two teachers' communication styles are vastly different. In these instances, interpersonal issues may interfere with the co-teaching endeavor. Therefore, one component of our model of co-teaching involves each teacher's interpersonal skills. In this component of our model, we include the teacher's communication skills, approach to conflict, social skills, listening skills, and use of humor or sarcasm. You can imagine the difficulty a quiet, timid, serious teacher would have while co-teaching with a colleague who is bold, loud, and "in your face." We tend to like and work well with people who are like us—and we tend to be less comfortable with those who behave in ways that are vastly different than our own. Clearly, co-teachers need to be aware of their own interpersonal styles and the styles of their partners. They also need to be willing to modify their interpersonal styles, as needed, to make co-teaching work and make their partners welcome and comfortable. In short, co-teachers need to be aware of their own communication styles and those of their partners'. Figure 1.5 provides a communication skills survey for both co-teachers to complete before co-teaching to assess their communication styles. Knowing your own communication style and your strengths, needs, and weaker areas—as well as those of your partner—is a necessary initial step in taking the co-teaching plunge, so that misunderstandings can be minimized.

Another component in successful co-teaching is each teacher's content knowledge—or area of expertise. General education teachers—especially those at the middle or high school level—have expertise in one or more content areas, such as math or science. They enjoy the study of their discipline and are very knowledgeable in their content areas. In contrast, special educators or other service providers typically do not have expertise in a particular content area. Their preparation focused on methods that

Figure 1.3 Stages of Co-Teaching

	Beginning	*Compromising*	*Collaborative*
Description	Getting-to-know-you	My-turn, your-turn	Thinking-as-one
Interpersonal relationship	Awkward, guarded, and polite; limited professional discussions	Increase in professional communication; some give-and-take	Humor, comfort, ongoing; interdependent
Physical space	Limited mobility, back of the room	Some mobility but not center stage; return to relegated spot	Space jointly owned
Familiarity with curriculum	Special ed teacher unfamiliar with content or methodology; general teacher reluctant to release control, has lack of confidence in special ed teacher's skills	Special ed teacher beginning to have some knowledge of some curricular areas; general teacher becoming more confident of special ed teacher's skills	Both teachers fully appreciate the competencies each brings to co-teaching.
Materials	Special ed teacher has no access; brings own materials	Limited access to some materials	Full access to everything in the room
Recognized as . . .	Helper	Assistant teacher	Both are recognized as main teachers. Students accept both teachers as equal partners.
Students with whom you work	Special ed teacher only works with and only responsible for students with disabilities. "My kids, your kids" mentality prevails.	Special ed teacher may work with some students without disabilities, but he is still primarily responsible for students with IEPs. Special ed teacher may be seen as able to work with students who need support, but students who are higher performers remain the concern of the general ed teacher.	Both teachers work with all students. Both teachers responsible for the success of all students. "Our class, our students" mentality.
Planning	Limited to no joint planning, special ed teacher has limited to no knowledge of how lesson is organized or the lesson goals.	Some joint planning with general ed teacher taking the lead or each teacher taking responsibility for different sections of the lesson.	Teachers share responsibility for planning. Both are aware of the lesson goals and are responsible for making modifications for all students.
Service delivery	Separate curriculum taught to students with disabilities in the back of the room. Special ed teacher circulates and assists students with disabilities as needed.	Alternate teaching. Teachers divide the responsibility for planning and delivering specific lesson segments to the entire group. Special ed teacher may offer mini lessons or clarify strategies.	Both teachers participate in the presentation of the lesson and provide instruction to the entire group. Extra instruction or mini lessons are provided equally by both teachers.

Figure 1.4 Progress Check: How Are We Doing?

Date: _____ Co-Teachers: _____

Directions: Independently rate your perceptions of the co-teaching situation in the following areas using this scale: (1) I am feeling confident in this category, and no changes are needed at this time; (2) I am doing OK in this category, but we need to collaborate a bit more here; (3) I am feeling less confident in this category and need some assistance. In the final column, note conclusions from your discussion regarding your plan to address any concerns.

Category	*My thoughts (1, 2, or 3)*	*My co-teacher's thoughts (1, 2, or 3)*	*Plan to address concerns:*
Parity in the co-teaching relationship			
Communication between co-teachers			
Knowledge about the curriculum			
Instructional methods			
Classroom management			
Student achievement			
Other: List			
Other: List			

help students with disabilities overcome or compensate for their disability and that help such students access the general education curriculum. Therefore, co-teachers may find themselves with different levels of preparedness, familiarity, and comfort in core subjects. Clearly, though, each teacher has a strong skill set to bring to co-teaching.

Some co-teachers use effective and open communication skills and respect each other's difference in content preparation, but they are unsuccessful in

Figure 1.5 Communication Styles Inventory

This is an informal survey designed to determine how you usually act in everyday situations. The goal is to get a clear description of how you see yourself. On a sheet of paper, circle *A* or *B* in each pair of statements below, indicating the one that *most* describes you.

1. (A) I am usually open to getting to know people personally and establishing relationships with them.
   (B) I am not usually open to getting to know people personally and establishing relationships with them.
2. (A) I usually react slowly and deliberately.
   (B) I usually react quickly and spontaneously.
3. (A) I am usually guarded about other people's use of my time.
   (B) I am usually open to other people's use of my time.
4. (A) I usually introduce myself at social gatherings.
   (B) I usually wait for others to introduce themselves to me at social gatherings.
5. (A) I usually focus my conversations on the interests of people involved, even if that means straying from the business or subject at hand.
   (B) I usually focus my conversations on the tasks, issues, business, or subject at hand.
6. (A) I am usually not assertive, and I can be patient with a slow pace.
   (B) I am usually assertive, and at times I can be impatient with a slow pace.
7. (A) I usually make decisions based on facts or evidence.
   (B) I usually make decisions based on feelings, experiences, or relationships.
8. (A) I usually contribute frequently to group conversations.
   (B) I usually contribute infrequently to group conversations.
9. (A) I usually prefer to work with and through others, providing support when possible.
   (B) I usually prefer to work independently or dictate the conditions in terms of how others are involved.
10. (A) I usually ask questions or speak tentatively and indirectly.
    (B) I usually make empathic statements or directly expressed opinions.
11. (A) I usually focus primarily on ideas, concepts, or results.
    (B) I usually focus primarily on persons, interactions, and feelings.
12. (A) I usually use gestures, facial expression, and voice intonations to emphasize points.
    (B) I usually do not use gestures, facial expressions, and voice intonations to emphasize points.
13. (A) I usually accept others' points of view (ideas, feelings, and concerns).
    (B) I usually don't accept others' points of view (ideas, feelings, and concerns).
14. (A) I usually respond to risk and change in a cautious or predictable manner.
    (B) I usually respond to risk and change in dynamic or unpredictable manner.
15. (A) I usually prefer to keep personal feelings and thoughts private, sharing only when I wish to do to.
    (B) I usually find it natural and easy to share and discuss my feelings with others.
16. (A) I usually seek out new or different experiences and situations.
    (B) I usually choose known or similar situations and relationships.
17. (A) I am usually responsive to others' agendas, interests, and concerns.
    (B) I am usually directed toward my own agendas, interests, and concerns.
18. (A) I usually respond to conflict slowly and indirectly.
    (B) I usually respond to conflict quickly and directly.

(Continued)

Figure 1.5 (Continued)

Answer Sheet

	O	G	D	I
	1A	1B	2B	2A
	3B	3A	4A	4B
	5A	5B	6B	6A
	7B	7A	8A	8B
	9A	9B	10B	10A
	11B	11A	12A	12B
	13A	13B	14B	14A
	15B	15A	16A	16B
	17A	17B	18B	18A
TOTALS	_____	_____	_____	_____

Total the numbers of items circled in each column and write that number on the spaces above.

Now, compare the *O* column with the *G* column and circle the letter that has the highest total:

O or G

Then compare the *D* column with the *I* column and circle the letter that has the highest total:

D or I

So What Is the Verdict?

If you circled the *G* and *D,* you tend toward being a Controller/Director.

If you circled the *O* and *D,* you show many qualities of a Promoter/Socializer.

If you circled the *O* and *I,* you are predominantly a Supporter/Relater.

If you circled the *G* and *I,* you have lots of Analyzer/Thinker characteristics.

Supporter/Relater

- Harmonizer
- Values acceptance and stability in circumstances
- Slow with big decisions; dislikes change
- Builds networks of friends to help do work
- Good listener; timid about voicing contrary opinions; concerned for others' feelings
- Easygoing; likes slow, steady pace
- Friendly and sensitive; no person is unlovable
- Relationship oriented

Analyzer/Thinker

- Assessor
- Values accuracy in details and being right
- Plans thoroughly before deciding to act
- Prefers to work alone
- Introverted; quick to think and slow to speak; closed about personal matters
- Highly organized; even plans spontaneity
- Cautious, logical, thrifty approach
- Thoughtful; no problem is too big to ponder
- Idea oriented

Promoter/Socializer

- Entertainer
- Values enjoyment and helping others with the same
- Full of ideas and impulsive in trying them
- Wants work to be fun for everyone
- Talkative and open about self; asks others' opinions; loves to brainstorm
- Flexible; easily bored with routine
- Intuitive, creative, spontaneous, flamboyant approach
- Optimist; nothing is beyond hope
- Celebration oriented

Controller/Director

- Commander
- Values getting the job done
- Decisive risk taker
- Good at delegating work to others
- Not shy but private about personal matters; comes on strong in conversation
- Likes to be where the action is
- Take-charge, enterprising, competitive, efficient
- Fearless; no obstacle is too big to tackle
- Results oriented

Source: Survey taken from Alessandra, T., & O'Connor, M. J. (1996). *The Platinum Rule.* New York: Warner Brooks. Adapted from Dr. Tony Alessandra's *Platinum Rule®* programs (www.alessandra.com/products/prrsproducts.asp). If you would like to take the *Platinum Rule* online assessment, visit www.platinumrule.com or call (330) 848-0444, ext 1.

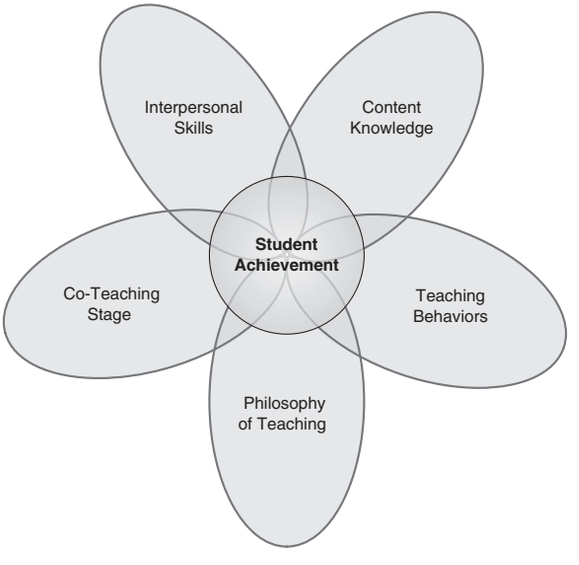
co-teaching because of differences in teaching philosophy. This area includes each teacher's approach to learning and teaching; views on issues such as classroom management, grading, and assessment; and beliefs about the roles of the teacher and student. Imagine two teachers who communicate well but whose views on teaching and learning are vastly different. Perhaps one teacher believes strongly in inquiry-based instruction, while the other uses only a teacher-directed approach. Similarly, some teachers believe in grading every assignment, while others do not believe in grading at all. Some teachers expect all students to be able to monitor themselves regarding behavior and homework, while other teachers believe that such skills must be taught and modeled. Co-teachers need to communicate about these issues and reach agreement on what they can "live with" if they are going to share instructional responsibility for students.

A related component to address in co-teaching is one's specific teaching behaviors. Some teachers are very sequential and detailed in their instruction, while others focus on the big picture. Some teachers have a very relaxed approach, while others are more formal in their presentation. If the styles or approaches of two co-teachers differ greatly, students may have a difficult time negotiating the class. Although each teacher needs to be true to her own style and philosophy, effective teachers employ certain behaviors that have a greater likelihood of ensuring student success—especially in diverse classrooms.

As shown in Figure 1.6, the last component of our co-teaching model refers to the co-teaching stages. This is important to consider, because each stage has unique characteristics. Co-teachers in the beginning stage, for example, face different issues and challenges than those in more advanced stages. The stages indicate a developmental progression that co-teachers and administrators should consider when reflecting upon and assessing the co-teaching experience.

All of these components have one focal point—the academic achievement of each student. These co-teaching components—the interpersonal

Figure 1.6 Model of Co-Teaching



skills of co-teachers, content knowledge, teaching philosophy, teaching behaviors, and co-teaching stages—all share one measure of effectiveness: the achievement of *each, individual student* in the classroom. Co-teachers need to stay clearly focused on this vision. Teachers may need to revisit, retool, and refine each of the various components presented above, but the focus needs to be on students, their individual learning needs, and their achievements. Staying centered on students allows co-teachers to achieve the correct blend of the various components.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Potential co-teachers can respond to questions developed by Murawski and Dieker (2004) for assessing the current environment, moving slowly, involving an administrator, knowing their partners, and creating a workable schedule as they begin initial planning toward their co-teaching efforts. Some of the questions in these categories include these:

1. What type of collaboration currently exists between general and special education?
2. What is our joint understanding of co-teaching as a service delivery model?
3. How will we ensure that support is provided across all content areas, including electives?
4. How shall we ensure that we both are actively involved and neither feels over or underutilized?
5. What schedule would best meet the needs of the class and both instructors?

SUMMARY

Co-teaching is an increasingly popular service delivery option that provides support to students in diverse inclusive classrooms. Co-teaching occurs when two or more professionals jointly deliver substantive instruction to a diverse, blended group of students in a single physical space. Because co-teaching is new, many teachers are taking the plunge and entering this professional partnership by trial and error.

The success of co-teaching rests upon both partners blending their instructional expertise and interpersonal skills. In addition, co-teaching requires that partners display parity and mutual respect, agree on specific mutual goals, and share accountability for outcomes and resources. These components are more likely to occur within a school climate that emphasizes collaborative relationships. Further, as in any relationship, co-teachers grow and become more comfortable with each other, the students, and their responsibilities over time. Co-teachers often follow a three-tiered developmental sequence. Teachers in the beginning stage are hesitant to make independent decisions due to their unfamiliarity with each other, and their interpersonal relationship may appear somewhat awkward. These teachers are still testing the waters. Teachers in the compromising stage are more comfortable with each other and their instructional responsibilities, and often they use the "my turn, your turn" approach. Finally,

teachers in the collaborative stage experience a high level of comfort with each other and the curriculum, and their instruction is blended and fluid. Considering your co-teaching stage is important when reflecting upon and evaluating your co-teaching experience.

A model for co-teaching reflects these critical components by including each teacher's interpersonal skills, content knowledge, philosophy of teaching, teaching behaviors, and stage in the co-teaching experience. Co-teachers integrate these components as they stay clearly centered on the learning achievement of *each* student, which is the barometer of success of the co-teaching endeavor.

■ REFLECTIONS TO APPLICATION

As co-teachers, have we . . .

- Clarified what co-teaching is and is not?
- Examined prerequisites for co-teaching in our situation?
- Considered reasons why we are co-teaching?
- Assessed our current co-teaching stage?
- Discussed the co-teaching model presented here?

■ ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Books

deBettencourt, L., & Howard, L. (2007). *The effective special education teacher: A practical guide for success.* Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson/Merrill-Prentice Hall.

Friend, M., & Cook, L. (2007). *Interactions: Collaboration skills for school professionals* (5th ed.). Boston: Pearson Education.

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

Articles

Cook, L., & Friend, M. (1995). Co-teaching: Guidelines for effective practices. *Focus on Exceptional Children, 28*(3), 1–16.

Cramer, S., & Stivers, J. (2007). Don't give up: Practical strategies for challenging collaborations. *Teaching Exceptional Children, 39*(6), 6–11.

Friend, M., & Cook, L. (1992). The new mainstreaming. *Instructor 101*(7), 30–32, 34, 36.

Reinhiller, N. (1996). Co-teaching: New variations on a not-so-new practice. *Teaching Education and Special Education, 19*(1), 34–48.

Rice, N., Drame, E., Owens, L., & Frattura, E. (2007). Co-instructing at the secondary level: Strategies for success. *Teaching Exceptional Children, 39*(6), 12–18.

Wood, M. (1998). Whose job is it anyway? Educational roles in inclusion. *Exceptional Children, 64,* 181–195.

Videos

Burrello, L. C., Burrello, J. M., & Friend, M. (Producers). (2005). *The power of 2: Making a difference through co-teaching* (2nd ed.). [Video/DVD]. (Available from the Forum on Education, Indiana University, Smith Research Center, Suite 182, 2805 E. Tenth St., Bloomington, IN 47408).