

Tiffany Royal is a fifth-grade teacher at Flamingo Elementary School in Miami. For the past 3 years she has co-taught language arts and social studies for part of the school day with Joyce Duryea, a special education teacher. For both teachers, the idea of working collaboratively with another teacher was not part of their original plan for teaching. Joyce said:

When I was preparing to be a special education teacher it never occurred to me that I would need to know how to co-teach in a general education classroom. I always thought I would have my group of students with special needs and that is the way it would be.

Tiffany felt the training she received to become an elementary teacher did little to prepare her for her present position. She commented:

I was taught about curriculum and classroom management, but not co-teaching. I suppose these changes took everyone by surprise.

Tiffany and Joyce are part of a growing number of teachers whose "solo" teaching roles have changed in the past few years. For both Joyce and Tiffany, the changes are for the better. Tiffany said:

We learn so much from each other. Really, Joyce has taught me how to implement strategies that are good for other students in the class, not just the students with special needs. It is wonderful to have a partner to bounce ideas off who really understands the kids.

Joyce put it this way:

I think I'm a better teacher now, and I definitely have a much better understanding of what goes on in the general education classroom and what kinds of expectations I need to have for my students.

Both teachers agree that their co-teaching has had real benefits for the students. They are convinced that the benefits are not just for students with special needs but for all students. As Joyce, the special education teacher, said:

I am able to provide some support for all of the students in the class. Mind you, I never lose sight of why I'm in here, to assist the students with identified special needs, but there are benefits for other students, as well.

Both Joyce and Tiffany feel lucky to work with each other, but are also aware that co-teaching is not always so mutually satisfying. They know of other teachers who are working in co-teaching situations where the partnerships are not nearly as successful. Co-teaching is a bit like a marriage. Both partners have to feel that they are giving 100% and have to want things to work out. This is particularly true when their philosophies about teaching and discipline are different (see box page 9, “Common Co-Teaching Issues”).



Modifying Models for Co-Teaching Roles

Tiffany and Joyce are not unusual in that they had little preparation for co-teaching. As experienced teachers, both had good ideas about how they would establish their classrooms and instruct their students. They were just not clear about how they would do it together.

What roles do teachers often implement when co-teaching? Having observed in more than 70 co-teaching classrooms, we have identified several typical practices that teachers implement. We feel that when these practices are refined, they provide more effective and efficient uses of teachers’ time and skills. Two practices that need modification are grazing and tag-team-teaching.

Grazing

In grazing, one teacher stands in front of the room providing an explanation or instruction, and the other teacher moves from student to student checking to see if they are paying attention or following along. Often, in co-teaching situations, teachers are involved in grazing; and yet they report to us that they are not sure it is a good use of their time. Unfortunately, they are uncertain about what else they could be doing during this time that would be more effective.

We suggest that teachers replace grazing with *teaching on purpose*—giving 60-second, 2-minute, or 5-minute lessons to individual students, pairs of students, or

even a small group of students. Teaching on purpose often involves a follow-up to a previous lesson or a check and extension of what is presently being taught. Teachers who implement “teaching on purpose” keep a written log of information for each special education student who needs follow-up. Sometimes this follow-up work is related to key ideas, concepts, or vocabulary from the lesson or unit. Teachers may realize that selected students are still unsure of critical information; during “teaching on purpose” lessons, they approach the student, check for understanding, and then follow up with a mini-lesson.

You may wonder how students can pay attention to the presentation at hand if the co-teacher is moving from student to student and “teaching on purpose.” Students quickly adjust to the role of the second teacher and, in fact, often want the teacher to check in with them.

Tag-Team-Teaching

In this familiar scenario, one teacher stands in the front of the room providing a lesson or presentation, and the other teacher either stands in the back of the room or sits at a desk involved in another activity. When the first teacher has completed the lesson, he or she moves to the back of the room or sits at a desk, and the second teacher takes over. Teachers often use tag-team-teaching because they are unsure of how else they can deliver instruction to the class as a whole. Further, they have been provided few alternative models for how two teachers might effectively teach together.

We have identified several alternative models—Plans A through D—to grazing and tag-team-teaching. We suggest that you try *all* the models—not just select the one that makes most sense to your teaching team (Bauwens, Hourcade, & Friend, 1989).

A: One Group—One Lead Teacher, One Teacher “Teaching on Purpose”

As we previously suggested, *teaching on purpose* is an effective alternative to usual models of co-teaching. Also called “Supportive Learning Activities” (Bauwens & Hourcade, 1995), Plan A provides effective roles for both teachers.

In this structure, the general education teacher does not always assume the lead role, nor does the special education teacher solely serve in the role of teaching on purpose. Teachers can use the Planning Pyramid Unit or Daily Lesson Form (see Schumm, Vaughn, & Harris, 1997; Schumm, Vaughn, & Leavell, 1994) to record the key ideas they want every student to know and then monitor the progress of students with special needs through teaching on purpose. Teachers can also use the Co-Teaching Daily Lesson Plan Form (Figure 1 shows sample items from this form with teachers’ plans added) provided in Figure 2.

B: Two Groups: Two Teachers Teach Same Content

In Plan B, the students in the class form two heterogeneous groups, and each teacher works with one of the groups. The purpose of using two smaller groups is to provide additional opportunities for the students in each group to interact, provide answers, and to have their responses and knowledge monitored by the teacher. This co-teaching arrangement is often used as a follow-up to the whole-group structure in Plan A. Because small-group discussions and teacher instruction always result in somewhat different material being addressed in each group, teachers may want to pull the groups together to do a *wrap-up*. The purpose of a wrap-up is to summarize the key points that were addressed in each group, therefore familiarizing the whole class with the same material. A wrap-up also assists students in learning to critically summarize key information.

Some teachers wonder whether students must always be heterogeneously grouped or if it ever makes sense to group students based on their knowledge and expertise about the designated topic. We feel that it does; the next co-teaching model addresses that issue.

C: Two Groups: One Teacher Re-teaches, One Teacher Teaches Alternative Information

In Plan C, teachers assign students to one of two groups, based on their levels of knowledge and skills for the designated

Figure 1

CO-TEACHING DAILY LESSON PLANS

General Educator **Ms. Royal**

Special Educator **Ms. Puryea**

Date	What are you going to teach?	Which co-teaching technique will you use?	What are the specific tasks of both teachers?	What materials are needed?	How will you evaluate learning?	Information about students who need follow-up work
10/5/97	Roots and stems	Plan D: Assign students to different groups.	Ms. P: Work with one group. Ms. R: Monitor the other groups.	Celery stalks, carrots, colored water, lab notebook, short video.	- Completion of lab report. - Following procedures.	Raul: Have Raul paraphrase steps before beginning procedures.
10/6/97	Photosynthesis	Plan B: Two heterogeneous groups; wrap-up last 10 minutes.	Each teacher works with one group of students.	Various types of plants, library books on plants, colored transparencies.	- Weekly quiz. - Learning logs.	John and Julie: Review vocabulary words one-on-one or with partner. Sally W.: Reread library book to improve fluency.
10/7/97	Leaves: transpiration and water regulation	Plan A: One lead, one teaching on purpose. Plan C: One re-teaches, one teaches alternative information (last 30 minutes).	Ms. P: Lead. Ms. R: Teach on purpose. Ms. P: Re-teach. Ms. R: Alternative information.	Textbook: Broad-leaf plants, Vaseline, lab notebook, colors.	- KWL Sheet. - Diagram of observation. - Lab report.	Pablo T. and Joan: Retype lab report on computer using spellcheck to assist with handwriting and spelling.

Figure 2

CO-TEACHING DAILY LESSON PLANS

COPY ME!

General Educator _____

Special Educator _____

Date	What are you going to teach?	Which co-teaching technique will you use?	What are the specific tasks of both teachers?	What materials are needed?	How will you evaluate learning?	Information about students who need follow-up work

topic. Although students with special needs are often in the group that requires re-teaching, this is not always true. The criterion for group assignment is not ability but skill level on the designated topic. Though ability and skill level for the designated topic are often related, they are not the same. This is often referred to as *flexible grouping*, because the group to which students are assigned is temporary and relates solely to their knowledge and skills for the designated topic. As the topic and skills that are addressed change, so does group composition.

In a co-teaching situation, it is tempting to have the special education teacher always provide instruction for students in the re-teaching group and to have the general education teacher provide instruction for students who are ready for alternative information. In our experience, the special and general education teachers find it most effective to alternate between groups. This allows both teachers an opportunity to work with the full range of students and curriculum content.

D: Multiple Groups: Two Teachers Monitor/Teach; Content May Vary

Plan D is much like using learning centers or cooperative learning groups. Activities related to the topic or lesson are arranged in designated areas throughout the classroom. (One area may have computers, another may have audio equipment, etc.) Groups of students either alternate working in each of the designated areas, or are assigned to work in a particular area that responds to their specific needs. Teachers can perform one of several roles:

- Monitoring student progress.
- Providing mini-lessons to individual students or small groups of students.
- Working with one group of students during the entire period while the other teacher monitors the remaining students and activities.

This multiple-group format allows all or most students to work in heterogeneous groups, with selected students pulled for specific instruction. Plan D can be particularly effective in language arts when students with specific reading disabilities require specific and intensive small-group instruction.

E: One Group: Two Teachers Teach Same Content

Plan E is perhaps the most difficult to implement and certainly extremely challenging for teachers who are first learning to co-teach. In Plan E, two teachers are directing a whole class of students, and both teachers are working cooperatively and teaching the same lesson at the same time. For example, in one classroom where this was implemented, a general education science teacher was presenting a lesson on anatomy; and the special education teacher interjected with examples and extensions of the key ideas. The special education teacher also provided strategies to assist the students in better remembering and organizing the information that was presented.



A Co-Teaching Plan of Action

As mentioned earlier, these five approaches to co-teaching are part of a coordinated effort to implement multiple types of co-teaching and grouping procedures that can and *should* be implemented.

Let's visit Tiffany and Joyce again to see how they are planning for effective co-teaching.

Tiffany and Joyce co-plan to determine the critical information they want to cover for selected units. Using a pyramid plan, they consider information they think all students should know, most students should know, and some students should know. They organize this information in writing (see Schumm et al., 1997). Tiffany and Joyce then consider the activities that they will implement to ensure learning on the part of all students. While considering classroom activities, they think about the materials they need and the co-teaching structures they intend to use. Because both teachers are highly familiar with the five co-teaching alternatives described in this article, they refer to them by their letter names (A, B, C, D, or E) and then decide which teacher will play which role. Decisions about the co-teaching structure

Tiffany and Joyce will implement are closely related to learning goals and activities. The following is a typical plan for a unit of study:

1. Plan A is commonly implemented during the first and second day of a new unit. In this way, one teacher can provide critical information to the class as a whole, and the second teacher can provide mini-lessons.

2. On the third day of the unit, Tiffany and Joyce have decided to use Plan B, which allows most students to interact with the new material. The teachers can also ascertain which students understand the new material and at what level of understanding they are operating. Plan B provides key opportunities for the teachers to expand, clarify, and extend learning.

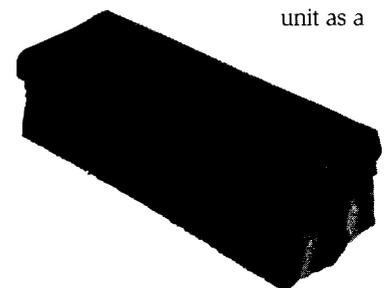
3. On Days 4 and 5, the teachers decide to implement a whole-class project in which students are asked to work in heterogeneous groups (Plan D). One teacher takes the lead to explain the project, while the second teacher assists the students with special needs to ensure they are following the directions. When students form small groups, both teachers work actively with each group. At the end of Day 5, the teachers provide a brief quiz covering the material presented during the week. The information from this quiz is then used to determine their co-teaching activities for the following week.

4. Because six students performed poorly on the quiz, the teachers use Plan C on Day 6. While one teacher re-teaches the students who performed poorly, the other teacher provides an alternative lesson to the rest of the class.

5. During Day 7, they return to the whole-group structure of Plan A.

6. For Days 8 and 9, the teachers use learning centers and small groups (Plan D).

Thus, designing the co-teaching structures they intend to implement each day is an integral part of planning and instruction for Tiffany and Joyce. When planning for the unit as a



whole, both teachers consider how they will teach the critical information and the roles each teacher will play. Like most teachers, Tiffany and Joyce often have to make changes as they teach, but they always feel they have a common roadmap or understanding of where and how they want students to learn and the roles they can play to facilitate that learning.

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TIPS FOR CO-TEACHING

Grading

Dieker and Barnett (1996) suggest having both teachers check, discuss, and then assign grades for student work. This process allows teachers to become familiar with each other's standards and is especially helpful when student's work is borderline.

Space

To avoid issues related to territory, both teachers should move into a different classroom rather than one teacher moving into the other's space (Bauwens & Hourcade, 1995; Kluwin, Gonsler, Silver, & Samuels, 1996).

Planning

Asking community volunteers or university students who are majoring in education to direct certain classroom activities or accompany students to schools assemblies may allow for some extra planning time (Bauwens & Hourcade, 1995).

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