

Drawing Upon the Power of Two



Making Things Grow

"What will happen if I am assigned to be a co-teacher?"

what is good for children, not necessarily what teachers want or prefer. In fact, when it comes to actual matrimony, it is noteworthy that arranged marriages are statistically more successful than unions wherein both partners choose one another. We state this to emphasize that there is more than one way of successfully doing business.

In the next section, we further expand upon how inclusive education can benefit all constituents—general and special education teachers and general and special education students. In subsequent sections, we focus on ways in which professional relationships between teachers are formed, developed, and maintained.

Benefits of Collaborative Team Teaching

In this section, we outline the benefits of collaborative team teaching for general educators, special educators, general education students, and special education students.

Benefits for general educators

1. *The opportunity to exchange knowledge with the special educator.*
Both teachers are able to understand each other's strengths and areas of expertise. As the grade levels rise, general education teachers are often content area specialists. Special educators, in turn, help the general educator to customize content to the needs of particular students.
2. *More time to focus on content and less on individual problems.*
Some teachers appreciate the possibility of primarily focusing on the content of their teaching, and for a stretch of time to be "freed up" from requests of individuals. The special educator can circulate and help *all* students on an as-needed basis.
3. *Twice as much opportunity to assist students.*
By the same token, both teachers can always be available to help all students. It is imperative that the initial feelings of "your students" and "my students" dissipate into those of "our students."
4. *Assistance to nonidentified students who need more help.*
Oftentimes, students without disabilities need help. All classrooms have students, variously labeled as "slow learners," "at risk," "English Language Learners," or "truant," who benefit from different levels of support based on a variety of factors that include learning styles, teaching format, content, personal interest, and so on.
5. *Awareness of different successful teaching strategies.*
The special educator is grounded in flexible pedagogy, ready to approach the task of teaching to students who need alternative methods, differently formatted materials, and opportunities to demonstrate knowledge in a variety of ways.
6. *Use of special education teachers to monitor organizational skills.*
While the general educator focuses on content, the special educator can primarily focus on aspects of organization, including student readiness, preparedness, ability to preplan assignments, ability to follow multi-step activities, and participation in collaborative group work.
7. *Use of special education teachers to coordinate and/or support home-school partnerships.*

"Back in the day . . ." (meaning when we both started our careers in education), teaching was a solitary profession. A single person was expected to plan lessons; prepare materials; and know, teach, evaluate, and assess each student, while managing the whole class. This often translated to a "make or break" experience for many new teachers. Those who made it found hitherto unknown strengths, new depths of self-questioning, and a shift from imagined expectations to those grounded in actual experiences. In an effort to reach the most students in one fell swoop, teachers largely taught to the middle. This "typical" teacher profile is one of strength, hard work, and resolve in the face of thousands of daily decisions at the micro, meso, and macro levels. Despite the energy required, the sheer hard work, and seemingly countless tasks, teachers eventually grew to hone their efficiency. However, during the same time, they developed an insular view of teaching. As the old "in-house" education saying goes, "Once the classroom door is closed, a teacher can do whatever she wants."

In Darwinian terms, teachers adapted to their environment, largely becoming individual units within a large institution. As such, teachers came to view themselves as essentially solitary creatures, who sometimes conferred, often commiserated, yet rarely collaborated. Often perceived by the administration as rugged individuals, they carved their turf within four walls and were singularly responsible for their lot. Given this history of how teaching has been traditionally organized in public institutions, the very idea of sharing space—indeed, a simple concept—posed major challenges to the existing educational landscape. A question of concern for all of us is this: Can sharing a classroom be a good change? While we understand some of the *potential* pitfalls and drawbacks of sharing, all in all, we argue, "Yes."

Returning to "back in the day" when no one co-taught, our worlds were rocked when special educators who taught in segregated spaces became assigned to classrooms in which "our students" with disabilities became mixed with "the other teachers' students" in general education. Hence, we understand the many anxieties that may ensue, including questions like this: Whose kids do I teach? How do I teach with someone else in the room? Who is responsible for what? When and how will we plan on a regular basis? What if our styles are so different? What if I'm seen as the "bad cop" and my partner is seen as the "good cop"? Furthermore, our administrators had never team taught and were not quite sure how best to guide us. Not to mention that our graduate programs did not contain any information on team teaching! Thankfully, much has changed in the last two decades. Many administrators, once teachers, have experienced team teaching; some college courses now feature team teaching; student-teacher placements within inclusive classrooms are commonplace; a larger body of research on collaborative education exists;¹ and commercial materials are widely available.² Within our own classes of graduate students who are already teaching full-time, at least one-third work within a team teaching environment.

We note that the fears and anxieties listed above are very real, and do not make light of them. However, on closer inspection, most of these concerns are initially about the *teacher(s)*. It is worth calling attention to this central point: inclusive practices are grounded in the considerations of others. To state the obvious, of primary concern are *children and youth being educated*. In addition, consideration should always be given to one's teaching partner; it can be quite humbling to check one's ego at the door. Sharing a classroom has often been compared to a professional marriage. "But I didn't ask to be married!" a professional may complain. Once again, collaborative teaching is about

The home-school partnership is of paramount importance in ensuring that all students receive support "at both ends." The special educator may take on the role of contacting parents, particularly to share good news about how their children are doing in school. In addition, the special educator can coordinate homework and inform parents how they can best help through practicing skills or reinforcing new content knowledge.

8. *Increased understanding of students with special needs.*

Given the segregated nature of their own schooling (including most teacher education programs), and the public school system that in many ways is still bifurcated,³ some general educators feel they are not equipped to work with students who have disabilities.⁴ When collaborating with another professional who is "at home" working with students with disabilities, the general educator comes to learn that these students are much more like students without disabilities than dissimilar from them. To be fair, at times, some teachers continue to struggle, realizing that there may be no quick or easy answers.⁵

9. *Opportunity to become better equipped to help special education students.*

Collaboration gives general education teachers the opportunity to observe how special educators view, interact with, teach, and evaluate students with disabilities. For some, students with disabilities become demystified, as general educators realize little (if any) differences exist, while others come to understand and appreciate noticeable differences about human diversity within our citizenry.

10. *Professional growth: greater personal satisfaction in teaching.*

Many educators assigned to teach in collaborative classes have come to recognize that sharing perspectives, responsibilities, hopes, fears, and questions with a trusted professional partner provides fertile ground for continued professional growth. Indeed, while staff development is often perceived as an add-on, collaborative team teaching provides the opportunity for professional development to occur every day.

Benefits for special educators

1. *The opportunity to increase knowledge of one or more specific content areas.*

Special educators sometimes feel constrained by a skills-driven curriculum. Many teacher education programs continue to emphasize a "drill for skills" approach to teaching and learning, at the expense of content knowledge and methodology.⁶ Keeping connected to content knowledge helps both teachers support their students.

2. *More opportunities to learn specialized skills.*

Although proficient in managing smaller groups of twelve or six, or even individual students, special educators have traditionally had little or no experience in teaching and managing larger groups. Working in a general education classroom allows special educators to expand their skills in both pedagogy and classroom management.

3. *Awareness of daily life and expectations in a general education setting.*

It can be argued that special educators who enter the field without access to what happens in general education can grow to have a "distorted" sense of academic levels and behaviors of students. Consequently, the everyday standards for academics and behavior in a general classroom provide a yardstick of expectations for students.

4. *Exposure to general education students and curriculum, generating more realistic goals.*

Academic and behavioral goals for students with Individual Education Plans (IEPs) within collaborative classrooms are more in tune with the general education curriculum. Traditionally, IEP goals and objectives have been generic, pro forma, computerized—in brief, not individualized according to the original intent of the law.

5. *Mutual learning and appreciation of each other's expertise.*

Some special educators have reported feelings of lower status compared to their general education colleagues, as well as incidences of being stigmatized because of their connection with disability.⁷ On the other hand, general educators are frequently characterized as preoccupied with pushing through “a mile-wide, inch-thick curriculum.” Working together permits each educator to see up close how the other uses his expertise to ensure that students are taught necessary knowledge and skills.

6. *Rewards of seeing students succeed and establish friendships among their peers.*

Students with disabilities who have been taught in segregated settings are often teased or spurned by non-disabled peers.⁸ If students with disabilities spend all of their time in segregated classes, then the majority, if not all, of their friendships are with other disabled students. The inclusion of students with disabilities creates opportunities for friendships with non-disabled students to evolve naturally.

7. *Moral support from a colleague.*

Working together as a team provides much-needed moral support, especially when things do not go well. In addition, colleagues are there to share breakthroughs with children, and to celebrate what has been achieved. A trustworthy colleague with whom to swap ideas, check in at the end of class, compare notes, brainstorm, and develop plans can substantially lessen the pressures of teaching in isolation.

8. *Observation of improved student behaviors.*

Granted, inclusion does not transform all students; however, it can have a significant impact on self-esteem that, in turn, impacts behavior. Stereotypically, special education classes are often associated with misbehaving students. Ironically, students placed in special education classes sometimes misbehave because they believe they are expected to.⁹

9. *Ability to spend more time and energy helping students develop motivation, effort, and responsibility for their own learning.*

While the general educator is teaching content, the special educator may hone in on individual students, attending to their specific needs, customizing verbal feedback, or creating on-the-spot modified instruction.

10. *Opportunity to be not a content expert but a skills specialist.*

Special educators do not have to lose their identity. They can maintain a primary focus on targeted, individualized instruction as needed. Yet at the same time, constant exposure to a rich, content-driven curriculum allows the special educator to actively implement skills in order to help students in the unpredictable arena of the classroom.

Benefits for general education students

1. *Better preparation for examinations.*

All students potentially benefit from the expertise of two educators. General education students in collaborative classrooms have been known to perform better on standardized tests because of the detailed care special educators take in analyzing tasks, providing scaffolded support, and using multiple approaches.¹⁰

2. *Availability of diverse learning techniques.*

When given equal status with a general educator, a special educator can explain, discuss, and model various ways to teach and learn. In addition, both teachers can see which students succeed and which struggle, adapting instruction accordingly for individuals, small groups, or even the entire class.

3. *Better understanding of students with different abilities.*

Although diversity in terms of multiculturalism, gender, nationality, sexual orientation, and so on, are addressed to varying degrees throughout the K-12 curriculum, diverse abilities are not yet given equal weight. Cognitive, physical, emotional, and behavioral diversity, often understood beneath the broad (and contentious) umbrella of "disability," come to be known through real-life interactions and experiences of classmates. Misunderstanding and fear of disability can be undone by students learning together.

4. *More productive learning experiences.*

"Two teacher heads together" can create a synergy that gives rise to new ways of teaching and learning. Both teachers and students benefit from the continual flow of ideas exchanged by two professionals who constantly monitor "how things are going" in terms of student learning.

5. *Strong emphasis placed on learning skills and organization.*

As previously noted, general education classes may contain large numbers of students who are several grade levels behind or considered "at risk," "slow learners," English Language Learners, and so on. Once again, all students, but especially struggling learners (who can be in the majority, or in some cases the entire class) benefit from a clear focus on specific skills and organizational strategies and routines.¹¹ Teaching and practicing organizational skills is considered time well spent by classroom teachers.¹²

6. *Opportunities for leadership through peer tutoring.*

Students with disabilities are able to learn from non-disabled peers and vice versa. Depending upon the degree and severity of the disability, students can play active roles in peer tutoring and other socially mediated strategies.

7. *More contact time with teachers for school and personal issues.*

General education students who are interviewed about the benefits of having two teachers frequently cite that they *know* they can always have access to a teacher at any time during class, for a variety of purposes, including clarification, reexplanation, contextualization, or "catch up" if they are late.

8. *Unique learning needs met to the greatest extent possible.*

Circulating among all students, teachers can customize responses and support, regardless of whether or not a student has a disability label. Teachers also gain a shared knowledge of each child, and can use their observations to co-plan future support.

9. *More time spent working cooperatively to acquire knowledge, and learning more about ways individuals can make positive contributions.*

Cooperative learning is a staple teaching methodology used in inclusive classrooms. Through creating and supporting various groups, teachers provide multiple opportunities for students to problem solve and demonstrate their strengths to one another.¹³

10. *Flexible approaches used by two teachers.*

All students are able to observe and experience how a partnership between adults—either personal (think marriage or partnership) or professional (think police officers, surgeons, lawyers) is configured. Based on mutual respect and acknowledgement of give-and-take in everyday situations, students witness how responsibilities are shared and everyday problems resolved.

11. *Instruction maintained, even when one staff member is absent.*

Instructional time is paramount, and when a teacher is absent for a good reason (sickness, emergency, family crisis), not only is time “lost,” but reentry into the curriculum can be difficult when momentum has been waylaid or lost. With two teachers, one can always maintain a focus on the curriculum and provide consistency of instruction (with a substitute teacher for additional help).

Benefits for special education students

1. *Increased expectations.*

A long-time and pervasive critique of special education has been its lack of high expectations placed upon students with disabilities.¹⁴ Many students with disabilities confirm that being in the general education environment makes them have higher expectations for themselves,¹⁵ including access to formal exams that determine whether a student is eligible to apply for college.

2. *Improved self-esteem.*

Students with disabilities who are educated in segregated settings often feel they are “not good enough,” “less than,” or “inferior” when compared to students in general education classes.¹⁶ The majority of students feel a sense of accomplishment and a restoration to equal status when transitioned into general education,¹⁷ although they still manage their stigma of disability to different degrees.

3. *Increased independence and responsibility.*

Students with disabilities who are supported in a general education classroom do not experience the “learned helplessness” that plagues students who have been in segregated settings for all their school careers. The climate in inclusive classes is also nurturing, but it cultivates participation in a more rigorous curriculum in which students work both for themselves, and with other students.

4. *Strong emphasis on learning skills and organization.*

The focus for students with disabilities, like that of their non-disabled peers, is on content and organizational skills. In segregated classes, the emphasis is often upon “life skills,” which are undeniably important and should be taught, but not at the expense of a rich, full curriculum of valuable knowledge.

5. *Better preparation for examinations.*

Before the passing of NCLB, students with disabilities were not required to take standardized examinations. The value of these examinations is highly controversial, and many students are forced to sit for them with little chance of passing. However, not being given access to exams is equally problematic, skewing national and local data through inflating scores by literally not counting all children.¹⁸ The number of students with disabilities passing exams has risen marginally,¹⁹ yet the dropout rate of students with disabilities has not been adequately documented,²⁰ despite historically dismal results.²¹ Clearly, having high-stakes examinations is a complex issue as the exams benefit some students, while proving harmful to others.

6. *Exposure to students with appropriate behaviors and successful learning skills.*

The experiences of students in segregated settings are often limited by their exposure only to other students with disabilities. Thus students with disabilities have been denied access to divergent ways of thinking and doing, problem solving and socializing. Learning and behavior can be significantly stultified in some segregated environments, even causing regression. In contrast, in the inclusive classroom, students with "inappropriate" behaviors are surrounded by peers modeling acceptable actions, and students with (and without) learning disabilities are able to recognize there are different ways to understand and demonstrate knowledge.

7. *Realization that effort is recognized.*

Fairness is a concept that must be examined and discussed between teachers and among students in inclusive classrooms. It is important for all students to know that effort is valued and factored into student evaluations. Some students may never do what others are able to do, yet they need to be encouraged to always do their best and told that their efforts will be respected and counted.

8. *Increased contact with a variety of teachers.*

Segregated settings have traditionally signaled a lack of variety of teachers. It is not unusual for students in such circumstances to have the same teacher for all subjects, sometimes year after year. Obviously, the content knowledge of such a teacher cannot compete with the expertise of many who are qualified in a variety of areas.

9. *Opportunity to learn and grow in the least restrictive environment.*

Receiving an appropriate education in the least restrictive environment is a right of all students with disabilities. However, the word "appropriate" has often been interpreted in terms of degree of segregation, and not the original intent of the law.²² To many advocates, it is a civil right of all students to have the chance to be educated in a general education classroom with non-disabled peers.²³

10. *Facilitation of friendships with non-disabled students.*

As mentioned earlier, students with disabilities are no longer ghettoized into separate settings, and the opportunity to make friends is optimized. Viewed from another angle, a student with a disability and a non-disabled student from the same neighborhood who are already friends can now attend the same class in school.

11. *Simulation of the real world.*

There is no special education world with separate shops, restaurants, workplaces, cinemas, and water fountains. The permanent segregation of

students is an artificial structure that seems to benefit how schools are organized rather than accommodate the actual diversity of the population. Thus inclusion with non-disabled peers is how students already experience the rest of the world *outside* of school.

Understanding the Relationship as a Process

Although wise administrators plan pairings with insight and knowledge about each educator's strengths, there is always the possibility that two people assigned to work together may be total strangers. Like personal relationships, professional pairings are complex phenomena full of nuances that are best viewed as works constantly in progress. Indeed, there are many parallels between personal and professional relationships, leading Gately and Gately to develop a useful framework consisting of three broad stages to help understand the process of initiating, developing, and maintaining a partnership.²⁴ First, there is the *beginning stage*, in which there are guarded exchanges and careful communication as individuals get to know each other. Next is a *compromising stage* in which give and take is evident, with individuals accepting that they have to give up certain things in order to get others. Finally, there is the *collaborative stage*, in which the partnership has evolved into open communication and interactions with clear mutual respect.

Beginning Stage

In the beginning stages of co-teaching, two teachers often feel like separate entities placed together, sometimes experiencing awkwardness with one another, even anxiety. Others may immediately feel "open" to this arrangement, and embrace it from day one. However, teachers have been enculturated to think of themselves as solitary creatures, and sharing (students, space, materials, responsibilities) may not always come easily. Communication, therefore, may start in a tentative way as individuals develop a sense of boundaries and begin a good-faith attempt to establish a professional working relationship. Interestingly, moving from a social to a professional relationship with a colleague may be difficult for some pairs of teachers. At first, some general educators may experience feelings of intrusion and invasion. Similarly, special educators may feel "out of place," uncomfortable, detached, and even excluded. During the beginning stage, teachers may tread more slowly as they work to determine role expectations. Communication may be polite, guarded, and infrequent. Unless there is a clear sense of the developmental process and the goal of collaboration is a mutual one, teachers may get "stuck" at this level. It can be argued that much of the dissatisfaction noted in the literature regarding co-teaching is expressed by teachers who continue to interact at the beginning level.²⁵

Compromising Stage

In the compromising stage, teachers who have adequate work relationships come to be more open and interactive in their communication. Although students benefit from this increase in communication, teachers are still "finding their way," albeit with more confidence and a greater sense of self-knowledge. Compromise pervades at this level. In addition, the special education teacher may be taking a more active role in the classroom teaching, but, in doing so, may have had to "give up" something in return (such as solely focusing on students with IEPs). The compromises made at this stage help the

co-teachers to build a level of trust that is necessary for them to move beyond their current way of doing things to ultimately develop to a more collaborative partnership. Open and honest "give and take" is the essence of the third stage.

Collaborative Stage

At the collaborative level, teachers openly converse and interact. Communication, humor, and a high degree of comfort are telling in their co-teaching. Teachers, students, paraprofessionals, and visitors to the classroom are able to recognize this high level of comfort. The two teachers work together and complement each other, one picking up where the other left off, adding additional information, and appearing intuitively "in tune" with one another. At this stage, it is often difficult for outsiders to discern which teacher is the special educator and which is the general educator. The ideal relationship is achieved through working hard to make it work. Some expert co-teachers have likened their skills to those of a doubles tennis team. Each teacher becomes in tune with the other to maneuver the ebbs and flows of classroom dynamics. Both are ready for whatever comes their way, though each has a designed area for which she has primary responsibility.

In addition to this framework for understanding the process of collaboration, Gately and Gately identified eight areas integral to sharing classroom life: interpersonal communication, physical arrangement of the room, familiarity with the curriculum, sharing curriculum goals and modifications, planning instruction, executing instructional presentation, classroom management, and assessment.²⁶ In the following sections, we highlight how the beginning, compromising, and collaboration stage may look in each of these areas.

Contemplating how to work with these components is essential to a well-run partnered classroom. No two collaborative relationships are the same, as different components usually vary in importance for individual teachers. In addition, collaborative pairs may vary in different stages of the eight components. For example, teachers may be in the compromising stage for management and the beginning stage for assessment. Conversely, teachers may be in the collaboration stage for interpersonal communication, but may be in the compromising stage about the physical arrangement of the room. Some teachers fly from the start, while others need more time to take off. Occasionally, teachers do not want to venture beyond the beginning stage. It is important to remember that this is the *choice* of the individuals, and support from caring administrators, including ongoing professional development, can be a way for teachers to overcome initial resistance to an inclusive classroom.

"Push In" Model

"Push in" means that the special educator provides service in a general education classroom. This can be instructional or behavioral support and should be done in conjunction with the general educator. For example, the special educator may help students by focusing on organizational skills, note-taking methods, or problem solving in the *context* of curriculum (essay writing, lectures, math). A special educator who does this may work with several general educators during the course of a day. In these cases, the special educator must work on building multiple relationships simultaneously. The benefits of this "itinerant" model include the special educator's having a clear understanding of the scope and depth of the school's curriculum, the ability to help many students to different degrees, and the maintaining of a visible profile as a collaborative educator who supports struggling

Interpersonal communication	
Beginning Stage	• Teachers treat each other in a guarded manner • Teachers seek to correctly interpret verbal and nonverbal messages • Possible lack of openness • Possible clash of communication styles • Possible dissatisfaction, stated or unstated
Compromising Stage	• More open and interactive • Increase in amount of communication • Teachers begin to give and take ideas • Teachers develop respect for a different communication style • Increased appreciation of humor in classroom situations • Increase of own humor in communication
Collaboration Stage	• Effective use of verbal, nonverbal, and social skills • Teachers use more nonverbal communication • Development of specific signals to communicate ideas • Positive role models of effective communication skills for students (students need to develop more effective social interactive skills) • Teachers model effective ways to communicate, solve problems • Effective communication between sexes is demonstrated
Physical arrangement of the room	
Beginning Stage	• May convey separateness • Students with disabilities sit together or close to one another • Little ownership of materials or space by special educators • Special educator doesn't feel free to access or share materials (asks permission) • Special educator brings own materials • In assigning space, the general educator may allot the special educator a place or a desk • Special educator elects to choose a separate space, e.g., back of the room • Feels like "a classroom within a classroom"
Compromising Stage	• More movement and shared space • Materials are shared • Territoriality becomes evident • Special educator moves freely throughout the room but rarely takes center stage
Collaboration Stage	• Student seating arrangements become intentionally interspersed through the classroom for whole-group lessons • All students participate in cooperative grouping assignments • Teachers are more fluid in their positioning in the classroom

(continued)

	• Both teachers control space and are aware of each other's position in the room • The classroom is always effectively "covered" • Fluid movement is planned and natural
Familiarity with curriculum	
Beginning Stage	• Special educator may be unfamiliar with the content or methodology used by the general education teacher • Lack of knowledge creates lack of confidence • General educator may have limited confidence in the special educator and does not want to "give over the chalk" • A lack of confidence by the general educator toward the special educator makes it difficult for the special educator to suggest modifications
Compromising Stage	• Special educator grows in confidence when engaging in the curriculum • General educator is more accepting of suggestions by special educator
Collaboration Stage	• General educator grows in willingness to modify the curriculum and share in planning and teaching • Each teacher appreciates his partner's specific curriculum competencies
Curriculum goals and modifications	
Beginning Stage	• Programs are driven by textbooks and standards • Goals are test driven • Modifications and accommodations are restricted to students with IEPs • Special educator is viewed as a "helper" • Little interaction takes place between teachers at this stage
Compromising Stage	• Need for additional modifications and accommodations are observed and discussed, particularly for students with more "visible" or "evident" special needs • General educators interpret their acceptance of modifications as "giving up" or "watering down the curriculum" • Some teachers may still not appreciate that some students need modifications
Collaboration Stage	• Both teachers differentiate concepts that all students <i>must</i> know from concepts that students <i>should</i> know • From this differentiation, modifications of content, activities, homework assignments, and tests become the norm for students who require them

Instructional planning	
Beginning Stage	• Often two types of service delivery are initially observed, related to two distinct separate curriculums being taught within the classroom to individuals or small groups of students • Separate curriculums do not parallel each other and do not lend themselves to occasional large-group instruction • Special educator cast as an "assistant" • Shared planning time is essential. Without it, the special educator does not know how the lesson is organized and how it will proceed
Compromising Stage	• More give and take is evident in the planning • More planning is shared
Collaboration Stage	• Planning is ongoing and shared • Teachers continually plan outside of the classroom, as well as during the instructional lesson • Comfort level exhibited as "on-the-spot" change occurs in order to accommodate learners who may be struggling with the concept presented • Sharing of ideas becomes the norm
Instructional presentation	
Beginning Stage	• Teachers often may present separate lessons • One teacher looks like "the boss" who "holds the chalk," and the other looks like "second fiddle"
Compromising Stage	• Lesson structuring and presentation are shared • Both teachers may direct some of the activities in the classroom • Special educator may offer mini-lessons that clarify strategies that students could use
Collaboration Stage	• Both teachers participate in the presentation of the lesson, provide instruction, and structure learning activities • The chalk (or other materials) passes freely between the teachers, because both are engaged in presentation and activities • Students address questions and discuss concerns with both teachers
Classroom management	
Beginning Stage	• Special educator sometimes assumes the role of behavior manager, so the other teacher can "teach." This undermines the role of the special educator. • The general educator may still assume the role of "chief behavior manager"

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Compromising Stage	• More communication • Mutual development of roles and routines for the classroom • May be some discussion (and resistance) to individual behavior plans in favor of group management • May be some resistance to individualizing behavior expectations
Collaboration Stage	• Teachers develop a common management system that benefits all students • Rules, routines, and expectations are mutually developed • Individual behavior plans are not uncommon • May include contracts, rewards, reinforcers—as well as community building
Assessment	
Beginning Stage	• Two separate grading systems, each separately maintained by two teachers • Sometimes one grading system exclusively managed by general educator • Measures for evaluation tend to be objective in nature and solely examine the students' knowledge of content
Compromising Stage	• Two teachers begin to explore alternative assessment ideas • Discuss how to effectively capture student's progress • Number and quality of measures change, with more performance measures used
Collaboration Stage	• Both teachers appreciate the need for a variety of options when assessing student progress • May include individualization of grading procedures for all students, specific progress monitoring, and use of objective and subjective standards for grading • Both teachers consider ways to integrate the goals and objectives written into student IEPs

students. The downside may be that teachers can become overextended if spread too thinly, and need to be proactive in negotiating schedules and expectations. Above all, they must still operate as the advocates and supporters of students with disabilities.

Planning, Preparing, and Maintaining Collaborative Classes

We believe teachers should be as prepared as possible before embarking on team teaching. Part of the preparation is to understand *why* team teaching exists as a means to include students with disabilities for the right reasons, such as ensuring access to a quality education with non-disabled peers (and not as a cost-saving measure). In addition, it

is crucial that teachers know ways in which school administration will support them in this assignment, such as providing shared planning time.

Getting to Know Your Future Partner

It is recommended that you get to know your partner before sharing a classroom. This can be done by inviting your future partner to see you teach, and likewise suggesting that you visit her classroom. Together, you can put some time aside to compare your own teaching and learning styles, discuss similarities and differences, and identify your own strengths and weaknesses. Special educators can also discuss their level of personal comfort in a specific content area, and general educators can talk about their knowledge and experiences in working with students with disabilities. Indeed, the more educators discuss matters "up front," the more they are able to begin planning and preparing. Other recommended broad areas to discuss with a future partner might include these:

- Prior team teaching experiences.
- Belief systems about education.
- Perceptions of what constitutes equality between educators.
- Student variation.
- Adaptations and modifications used in the past.
- Most commonly used strategies.
- Grading policy.
- Classroom management and rules.
- Potential student-teacher contracts.
- Knowledge base of team-teaching methodologies.
- Existing support systems for students.
- IEP goals and objectives (in general).
- Possible roles and responsibilities.
- Preparation of students for "re-entry."
- Planning time (establishing and honoring).
- Preparation for introduction to the class.
- Rules for teacher-to-teacher behavior while class is in session ("collaborative etiquette").
- Shaping classroom climate.
- Support from district/professional development.
- Reviewing curriculum.
- Designing customized materials.
- Personal quirks (What can't you stand? What don't you mind?).
- Problem solving.
- Flexibility.

Planning Around Core Issues and Creating an Agreement with Each Other

As a result of your discussions, you can now plan around core issues in order to create an agreement with each other. Friend and Cook recommend that partners address the following issues:²⁷

1. *Instructional Content:* What have you selected and why have you selected it?
2. *Planning:* What goals have you set?

3. *Instructional Format*: In what ways will the content be taught?
4. *Parity*: How will you establish and maintain equality in the eyes of students?
5. *Space*: How will the room be arranged?
6. *Noise*: What will be the procedure when noise increases to unacceptable levels?
7. *Routines*: Who will do what? (Attendance, homework, notebook check, note taking, etc.)
8. *Discipline*: What will be your mutually agreed-upon policy that must be adhered to?
9. *Feedback*: When and how will both teachers be able to dialogue about how the lesson went?
10. *Student evaluation*: In what ways will students be evaluated?
11. *Teaching chores*: Who will do the "nitty gritty" tasks such as cleaning the board?
12. *Confidentiality*: How can trust be established and maintained?
13. *Pet Peeves*: What is a definite "no-no" for each other?

Note that many of these issues can begin to be negotiated through co-planning (see Figure 8-1 for Template: Planning to Co-teach).

Daily "Check-In" about How Things Are Going

Once the semester begins, time is always of the essence. For most teachers even having 48 hours a day would not feel like enough time to do what is expected to be done. That said, collaborative teachers should always touch base with each other, even if briefly. Each day presents an opportunity to talk about new or ongoing issues, concerns, ideas, observations, and celebrations. It can be done before or after class starts. Some areas to touch base about may include these:

- Have you both honored the time set aside for co-planning?
- Have you both adequately prepared materials (texts, readings, cooperative learning structures, etc.)?
- Have you discussed individual students?
- Have you shared the responsibility for lesson planning?
- Have you clarified how selected points in the lesson are chosen?
- Have you established which *format(s)* of team teaching will be used?
- Have you clarified who will be grading, returning student work, and keeping records?
- Have you reminded each other (on an as-needed basis) of goals, objectives, previously made plans and decisions?
- In a particular day, have you decided who
 - (a) starts the class?
 - (b) reviews homework?
 - (c) reviews yesterday's lesson?
 - (d) initiates motivating questions or activities?
 - (e) maintains activities?
 - (f) clarifies or reemphasizes in an alternative manner?

FIGURE 8-1 *Template: Planning To Co-teach*

CLASS/SUBJECT AREA/SEMESTER _____	
GENERAL EDUCATION TEAM MEMBER _____	
SPECIAL EDUCATION TEAM MEMBER _____	
<u>WHEN IS YOUR WEEKLY PLANNING TIME SCHEDULED?</u>	
	Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday / From _____ to _____
HOW WILL TEACHER EQUITY BE ESTABLISHED IN CLASS?	
TEXTBOOK(S)	
INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS	
STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES	
CLASSROOM RULES	
DISCIPLINE PLAN	
Notes:	
Permission to copy for teachers	
<i>(continued)</i>	

PREFERRED
TEAM TEACHING
MODEL(S)

One teach, one observe
One teach, one drift

Station Teaching
Parallel Teaching

Alternative Teaching
Tag Team Teaching

Other: _____

Primary Responsibilities of
General Educator

Primary Responsibilities of
Special Educator

Joint Responsibilities

INSTRUCTIONAL
FORMATS

STUDENT
EVALUATION

ARRANGEMENT
OF ROOM

PEER FEEDBACK

This agreement should be reviewed periodically for necessary adjustments on a mutually agreed upon basis.

Permission to copy for teachers

- (g) preps for a test?
- (h) gives a quiz?
- (i) takes which half of the debate group, etc.?

The Importance of Ongoing Dialogue

In addition to daily check-ins, it is imperative to have ongoing dialogue that could take place during a set period of mutually agreed-upon co-planning time (for example, between 3 and 4 p.m. every Thursday). Because collaborative education is a work in progress, committed teachers are always striving to improve co-planning, co-teaching, and co-assessing all students. Many collaborative pairs are also willing to meet on an "as needed" basis. Some examples of ongoing, open dialogue include these:

- Prioritizing issues to talk about (e.g., student results, student behavior, individual students).
- Reviewing "how it went."
- Examining and discussing student work.
- Maintaining flexibility.
- Reflecting upon the things that went well and the things that could be changed for the better.
- Reviewing classroom protocols (e.g., a "correction" policy between teachers for occasions when one makes a mistake).
- Discussing commonplace issues such as student behaviors, resistance, motivation.
- Exploring possible responses for times when student use abusive language regarding gender, ability, race, ethnicity, or sexual orientation.
- Planning possible modifications and adaptations as needed.
- Monitoring that instruction is appropriate and differentiated as needed.

Collaborative teachers have a variety of teaching formats to choose from. Each team is able to explore various models to consider in relation to the specific goals and objectives of both educators. Six models were developed by Marilyn Friend that reflect instructional formats for co-teachers.²⁸ Each one has advantages and disadvantages and should never be used all of the time. Instead, combining and alternating approaches provides for a rich and meaningful classroom where instructors are flexible toward the needs of their students.

Marilyn Friend's Six Models of Co-teaching

The models briefly described below represent optional arrangements in co-teaching that many educators find to be useful.

Model 1: One Teach, One Observe

One teacher teaches the content of the lesson while the other teacher observes students as they respond to information and engage in work. Teachers decide in advance what type of information they desire students to know, and analyze these data together after class.

Model 2: One Teach, One Assist

One teacher has a primary responsibility for teaching the content material while the other professional circulates through the room, providing assistance to all students as needed.

Model 3: Station Teaching

In this co-teaching approach, teachers divide content and students. Each teaches the content to one group and subsequently repeats the instruction for the other group. If appropriate, a third "station" could give students an opportunity to work independently.

Model 4: Parallel Teaching

Teachers divide the class evenly in half, teaching the same content. This allows the option of sharing or comparing information toward the end of class, thus expanding the opportunity to cover more information.

Model 5: Alternative Teaching

In most class groups, occasions arise in which several students need specialized instruction. In alternative teaching, one teacher takes responsibility for the large group, while the other works with a smaller group.

Model 6: Teaming

In this model, both teachers actively deliver the same information at the same time. It is a very fluid approach to teaching that requires both teachers to be synchronized, but also somewhat spontaneous in delivery.

Good Things Happen in Co-taught Classrooms

In this chapter, we have elaborated upon the benefits of a collaborative classroom for special and general educators, and for special and general education students. We have also emphasized that a collaborative relationship is an ongoing process that requires flexibility and openness to refining pedagogical practice. Working together with another teacher helps when interfacing with other professionals in many other school situations, including psychologists, counselors, occupational therapists, paraprofessionals, and so on. We realize that collaboration does not always come easily or even "naturally" to some educators, but believe that the needs and rights of students come first—and all professionals should bear that in mind. We believe in teachers as problem solvers and creative thinkers who are willing to make changes from the way things are to the way things can be. Finally, the lesson plan in Figure 8-2 reflects many of the components that we have addressed thus far. It is but one example of how teachers can co-plan. We encourage you to develop a format that works best for your particular partnership and students.

FIGURE 8-2 *Template: Sample Lesson Plan*