

# INTEGRATED CO-TEACHING<sup>1</sup> IN THE ENGLISH AS A NEW LANGUAGE CLASSROOM

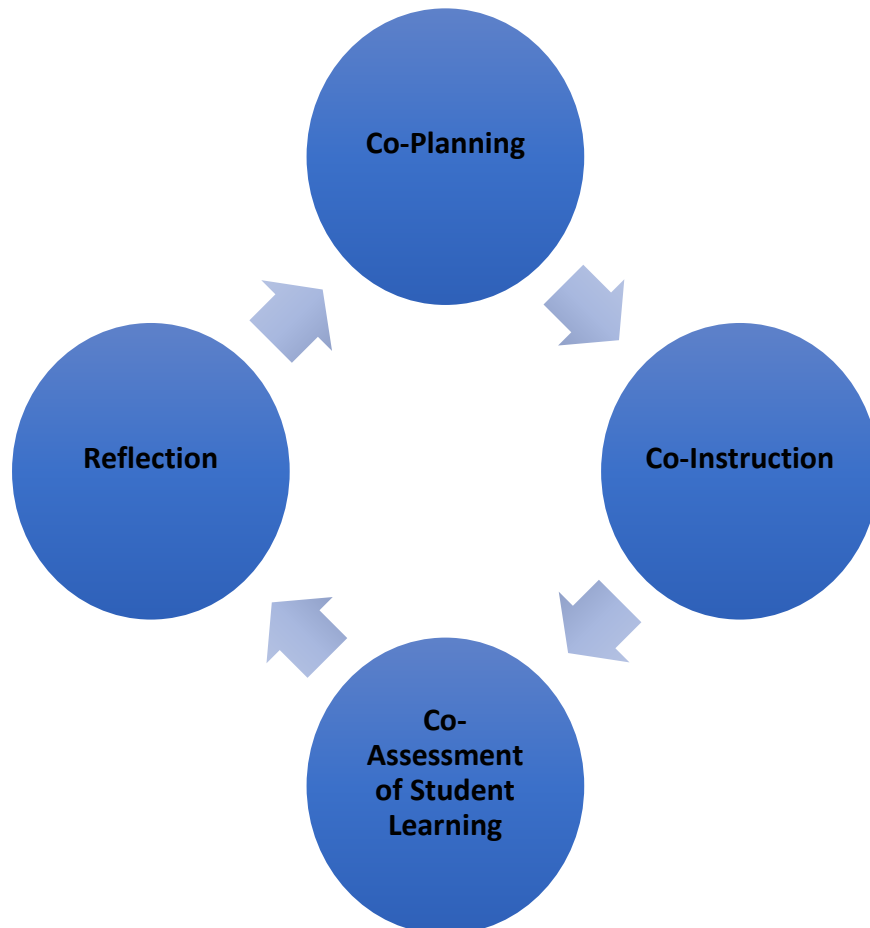
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## Topic Brief #3:

### The Collaborative Instructional Cycle

Co-teaching in Integrated English as a New Language (ENL) classes requires much more than having two or more teachers (one being an English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) specialist) delivering instruction together to classes that generally contain both Multilingual Learners (MLs) and English Language Learners (ELLs) and English-fluent students. It also requires lesson and unit planning, determining ways to support students' social-emotional well-being, joint assessment of student work, and individual and teacher team reflection on both collaborative and instructional practices. To develop practices that support co-teaching for MLs and ELLs, teachers embrace the collaborative instructional cycle, which consists of four interrelated phases: co-planning, co-instruction, co-assessment of student learning, and reflection (See Figure 1). All four phases together maximize teacher effectiveness and impact on MLs' and ELLs' language acquisition, literacy development, content learning, and social-emotional growth.

Figure 1: The Collaborative Instructional Cycle



<sup>1</sup>For the purposes of this document, the term “co-teaching” refers to team-taught Integrated English as a New Language (ENL) classes and should not be confused with other co-teaching models except where otherwise indicated.

Neglecting or bypassing any of the four phases disrupts the balance and continuity of the cycle and negatively impacts students' academic, linguistic, and social-emotional learning. While co-instruction might receive substantial attention, teachers need protected time and structured opportunities to implement the collaborative instructional cycle as they:

- (a) Collaborate to create multi-level, differentiated unit and lesson plans;
- (b) Engage in collecting and analyzing formative and summative student data; and
- (c) Reflect on the teaching-learning process that took place in the class as well as the collaborative relationship of the team.

The following sections provide guidance on each of the four phases of the collaborative instructional cycle (see *Topic Brief #4: Seven Models of Co-Teaching* for a more detailed discussion of the seven co-teaching models introduced here).

## Collaborative Planning or Co-Planning

Careful preparation for co-teaching must include critical conversations around the following dimensions of shared instructional practice:

1. Laying the foundation for sustained collaboration by establishing strong partnerships.
2. Regularly examining student data obtained from multiple sources to reflect on students' academic, linguistic, and social emotional development and to make short-term and long-term instructional decisions. These sources include teacher-created formal and informal assessments—including student observations, and portfolios—as well as the New York State Identification Test for English Language Learners (NYSITELL), the New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT), and other standardized tests.
3. Planning instruction by integrating both content and language goals and maximizing the general education and ESOL teachers' expertise.
4. Expanding impact on student learning through on-going sustained efforts for collaboration.

Co-planning is most frequently focused on a unit of study or lesson, and it involves the cooperation of two or more educators. Co-teachers must be provided ample time for collaborative planning for any effective co-taught instruction to take place in the Integrated ENL class. Common planning time creates a professional context in which teachers can regularly collaborate, because without co-planning, there is no co-teaching.

### Co-Planning Basics and Tools

For effective teacher collaboration, teachers must be prepared to share:

- Expertise of content, knowledge of literacy and language development, and pedagogical skills.
- Instructional resources, technology tools (including those to support virtual/remote instruction), and supplementary materials that are scaffolded and differentiated.
- Instructional strategies that represent research-informed and evidence-based best practices.
- Approaches to co-teaching—ways to group student and optimize classroom space for instructional delivery.

Essential tools and resources to support successful co-planning include:

- [New York State Next Generation English Language Arts Learning Standards.](#)

- [Bilingual Common Core Progressions](#).
- Additional New York State Standards:
  - [New York State Next Generation Mathematics Learning Standards](#).
  - [The New York State K-12 Social Studies Framework](#).
  - [The New York State P-12 Science Learning Standards](#).
- Curriculum maps; scope and sequence charts.
- Content-area texts and teachers guides.
- Knowledge and use of technology for co-planning and lesson delivery.
- Co-planning framework or action plan to accomplish co-planning tasks.

### Collaborative Planning Look-Fors

Effective co-teaching requires teachers to regularly engage in collaborative planning (at least one planning period per week in collaboration with others) to engage in a professional dialogue about both the varied needs of students as well as the academic complexities and linguistic demands of the NYS learning standards. During specially designated co-planning times, teachers rely on each other's expertise and resources to accomplish the following:

- Establish integrated learning objectives and instructional procedures for reaching those objectives.
- Target the academic language and literacy development of all learners with special attention to MLs and ELLs.
- Agree on formative assessment tools to be used to inform their instruction.
- Integrate Individualized Education Program (IEP) goals into their lesson plans as needed.
- Determine appropriate modifications and adaptations that will offer the necessary support to students who need them.

## Instructional Delivery Through Co-Teaching

Implementing an integrated service delivery for the instruction of MLs and ELLs through co-teaching (two teachers, same room) requires fidelity to the instructional cycle as well as effective integration of the grade-level/content curricula with language and literacy instruction. The main goal of this type of instructional delivery is to develop the language competencies of MLs and ELLs while simultaneously building their content-area knowledge and skills. Co-teaching partners assume multiple, changing roles within the co-taught class in order to deliver instruction that meet the needs of all students within the same classroom. At times, one teacher may undertake a leading role while the other teacher supports the lead teacher's instruction in various ways. At other times, both teachers may take on similar roles and responsibilities (see models below).

### Co-Teaching Models

There are at least seven configurations, also referred to as models of instruction, from which educators can choose to configure classes for co-teaching instruction in an Integrated ENL classroom. A description of each of these models identifies, in a broad sense, the particular roles and responsibilities of each teacher as well as how students in the class are grouped for instruction. In general, none of these models should be used for an entire class period. Each of these class configurations needs to be carefully selected based on the nature of the lesson objectives and the needs of the students.

These seven co-teaching models are:

1. One Group: One Leads, One "Teaches on Purpose"
2. One Group: Two Teach Same Content

3. One Group: One Teaches, One Assesses
4. Two Groups: Two Teach Same Content
5. Two Groups: One Pre-teaches, One Teaches Alternative Information
6. Two Groups: One Reteaches, One Teaches Alternative Information
7. Multiple Groups: Two Monitor and Teach

In the first three models, the students remain as one large group while each teacher's purpose is varied. In the next three models, the students are divided into two groups (although they may not be divided equally) while each teacher assumes a different role. Finally, in the last model, students are divided into multiple groups—from three to eight student clusters depending upon the size of the class, the lesson's purpose, and the tasks to be completed—while both teachers facilitate.

Determining and selecting co-teaching models for instruction can be compared with recognizing different styles of dancing. Each style—be it ballet, ballroom, disco, hip-hop, jazz, modern, tap, etc.—has a series of dance steps and techniques that identify each of them by name. Yet, no two people dance any selected style in exactly the same way. Such is the case when deciding on and implementing various co-teaching models. Each of the models has its basic framework. However, based on the grade level or content area being addressed, variations of the way students are grouped as well as the roles and responsibilities of each teacher will become apparent in order to accommodate students' needs, the instructional activities devised, and each co-teacher's particular style of teaching. In addition, each co-teaching model will present its own set of advantages and challenges. Many of these will be addressed as each model is described in more detail in *Topic Brief #4: Seven Models of Co-Teaching*.

### Collaborative Assessment

While collaborative assessment practices may focus on co-designing end-of-unit tests, creating performance-based assessments that require students to complete comprehensive projects, or gathering and graphing summative assessment student data, they most frequently concern day-to-day instructional outcomes. Collaborating teachers need meaningful, accurate, and actionable information about their MLs' and ELLs' language development and content attainment, so they can plan more effective lessons, differentiate instruction more purposefully, and integrate content learning with language development opportunities across the four domains of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Examining formative assessments and planning a course of action as a result is among the most significant interventions. To help teachers gain a more meaningful connection between their instructional practices and student learning, we suggest the use of pre-established protocols, the goal of which is for participating teachers to develop mutual respect for each other's expertise while taking time to examine and discuss student progress. While engaging in collaborative assessment, teachers often do the following:

- Identify and analyze students' strengths and areas of need;
- Design the most appropriate instructional strategies that will enhance students' strengths;
- Generate possible explanations for student performance levels from multiple points of view;
- Discuss research-based best practices and promising strategies they wish to implement, and
- Plan coordinated interventions.

Collaborative assessment is highly structured and cyclical—each time new data are collected, students' progress and performance are reassessed. Thus, teachers have the opportunity to reflect on their students' academic learning as well as socioemotional and linguistic development. Co-assessment and

shared reflection time can also help determine whether the modifications and accommodations teachers planned and executed offered the necessary support or not, and what additional instruction or interventions are needed. The literature on the co-assessment of student work offers several different protocols to follow when examining student work, as well as those that specifically examine work by MLs and ELLs—their cultural and linguistic challenges as well as academic and language development.

## Reflection

The collaborative instructional cycle would not be complete without sustained opportunities for co-teachers to reflect on the challenges and successes they have with the Integrated ENL program model. When reflecting on the co-teaching practice, coaching, or observing co-teachers, the following look-fors can offer guidance:

- **Parity:** Do both teachers participate equitably in the lesson (not equally)?
- **Integration of language skills:** Do both teachers provide instruction and support for content and language development?
- **Opportunities to talk:** Does the smaller student-teacher ratio lead to higher levels of student-to-student interaction and more student talk for academic purposes?
- **Engagement:** Do both teachers provide students with meaningful, challenging learning activities that make engagement visible?
- **Formative assessment use:** Do the co-teachers collect and respond to formative assessment data to offer immediate intervention as needed, and as a result maximize the benefits of co-teaching?

Additional questions to guide both team and individual reflection can be found in Table 1.

*Table 1: Four Critical Steps for Reflective Questions*

<p><b>1. What happened?</b> (Description)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What did I do? What did others (e.g., co-teachers, students, adults) do?</li> <li>• What was my effect at the time? What was their effect?</li> <li>• What was going on around us? Where were we? When during the day did it occur? Was there anything unusual happening?</li> </ul>	<p><b>2. Why?</b> (Analysis, interpretation)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why do I think things happened in this way?</li> <li>• How might the context have influenced the experience?</li> <li>• Are there other potential contributing factors?</li> <li>• What are my hunches about why things happened the way they did?</li> </ul>
<p><b>3. So what?</b> (Overall meaning and application)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why did this seem like a significant event to reflect on?</li> <li>• What have I learned from this? How could I improve?</li> <li>• How might this change my future thinking, behavior, or interactions?</li> <li>• What questions remain?</li> </ul>	<p><b>4. Now what?</b> (Implications for action)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who should be actively included in reflecting on this event?</li> <li>• The next time a situation like this presents itself, how do I want to behave?</li> <li>• How can I set up conditions to increase the likelihood of productive interactions and learning?</li> </ul>