

## Frequently Asked Questions on Co-Teaching

1. Q: What is the difference between inclusion and Integrated Co-teaching

A: Inclusion and Integrated co-teaching have been used as interchangeable terms. However, this is not accurate. Inclusion is a belief system or philosophy that all students should be welcomed as a member of a learning community and that all students are part of the classroom even if their abilities differ. Integrated co-teaching is a service model which means a general education teacher and a special education teacher jointly providing instruction to a class that includes both students with and students without disabilities to meet the diverse learning needs of all students in a class.

2. Q: What is the maximum number of students with disabilities in a co-teaching class?

A: The regulatory maximum number of students with disabilities receiving integrated co-teaching services in a class is 12 students. The total of 12 students includes any student with a disability in that class, regardless of whether all of the students are recommended for integrated co-teaching services.

3. Q: Can you give an example of what # 2 means?

A: For example, if two students with disabilities in a class are recommended for resource room and related services and ten are recommended for integrated co-teaching services, there are 12 students with disabilities in the classroom. Effective December 8, 2010, the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education were amended to provide for variance procedures that would authorize a school district to increase the maximum number of students with disabilities in such classes by not more than two additional students.

4. Q: Why do schools use co-teaching as a service delivery option?

A: Co-teaching is:

- one way to deliver services to students with disabilities or other special needs as part of a philosophy of inclusive practices:
  - It reduces the stigma for students with special needs
  - Increases the understanding and respect for students with special needs on the part of other students
  - Fosters the development of a sense of heterogeneously-based classroom community
- In co-taught classrooms:
  - **ALL** students can receive improved instruction. This includes students who are academically gifted or talented, students who have average ability, students who are at-risk for school failure as well as students who are identified special needs

- In co-teaching, students benefit by not having to leave the classroom to receive services. At the same time, the special education teacher has a better understanding of the curriculum being addressed in the general education classroom and the expectations for both academics and behavior.
- Co-teachers often report that one of the most noticeable advantages of sharing a classroom is the sense of support it fosters to all students.

5. Q: What is the rationale for Co-Teaching?

A: Co-teaching:

- Meets the state and federal requirements for the continuum of services
- Provides individualized attention to all students to meet the common core learning standards
- Reduces the stigma attached to pull-out programs
- Provides opportunities for flexible scheduling
- Creates positive social interactions

6. Q: What does co-teaching look like?

A: Co-teaching is two teachers who:

- Share teaching responsibility
  - Special education teacher- learning strategy specialist
  - General education teacher- content area specialist
- Deliver instruction to a diverse group of students
  - respond to the diverse range of needs of their students
  - lower student/teacher ratio
  - expand professional expertise
  - Share classroom space

7. Q: What is a skills class? Is it still an option?

A. A skills class does not exist on the continuum of services. However, students who require additional support will have the option to have a Special Class Support for individual subject areas as needed. The Special Class Support is designed to meet the IEP goals needed to access the general education curriculum. This class is in place of the exploratory classes in the Middle School and Electives in the High School. Students will be recommended for the Special Class Support daily or every other day in the Middle School. In the High School the students will have the Special class support daily or 3X in a 6 day cycle.

8. Q: How do General Education students benefit from Integrated Co-Teaching?

A: They have a second teacher in the room:

- All students in integrated co-teaching classrooms benefit from a second teacher
- Both teachers help support students who may be struggling at any given time

9. Q: What are additional benefits of Co-Teaching?

A: School Benefits:

- Decreased referrals for intensive special education services
- Increased overall student achievement
- Decreased referrals for behavioral problems

<b>Co-teaching</b>	
<b>Is...</b>	<b>Is Not....</b>
Both teachers: Are present in class	Special Education teacher comes to class only when available. One teacher is always in the classroom but the other partner may use the time for meetings, running copies or planning
Both teachers: Teach ALL students	General Education teacher teaches while Special Education teacher serves as an assistant with special education students
Both teachers: Strategically plan lessons together while focusing on accommodations and modifications necessary to meet the needs of all learners	General Education teachers maintain all teaching, planning and assessment responsibilities.
Both teachers: Accept responsibility for ALL students.	Special Educator works with only the special education students.

## Vocabulary Chart

<p><b>Collaboration</b> "is a style for direct interaction between at least two coequal parties voluntarily engaged in shared decision making as they work toward a common goal" (Friend, 2007, p. 7).</p>	
<p><b>Example</b> "We collaborated to develop a lesson plan in math to meet the needs of all our students."</p>	<p><b>Non-example</b> "I teach a 'collab' class." <b>Comment:</b> Collaboration is not a service delivery option; it is a style of interaction (Friend &amp; Cook, 2007).</p>
<p><b>Inclusion</b> is a belief system "in which everyone belongs, is accepted, supports, and is supported by his or her peers and other members of the school community in the course of having his or her educational needs met" (Stainback &amp; Stainback, 1990, p. 3).</p>	
<p><b>Example</b> "We believe all our students should have opportunities to participate in all aspects of school life."</p>	<p><b>Non-example</b> "We believe our students with disabilities can be included in the general education classes when they can handle the content and behave appropriately." <b>Comment:</b> "Students should never have to earn their way into a general education environment" (Schwarz, 2007, p. 40).</p>
<p><b>Co-teaching</b> is two or more educators who jointly deliver substantive instruction to a diverse group of students in a single space (Friend &amp; Pope, 2005).</p>	
<p><b>Example</b> "The general educator and I share the responsibility of planning, preparing materials, and delivering the content to our 5th-period English class."</p>	<p><b>Non-example</b> "My co-teacher and I don't have the time to plan together so I work with the students with disabilities in a small group in the back of the class." <b>Comment:</b> There is more to co-teaching than placing two teachers in the same classroom space at the same time.</p>
<p><b>Effective inclusive practices</b> are practices that provide students with disabilities appropriate education within general education classrooms of their neighborhood school, with the supports and accommodations that promote success.</p>	
<p><b>Example</b> "We plan to use graphic organizers and add a motivational component to enhance core-content classes to support students with emotional disabilities."</p>	<p><b>Non-example</b> "We put our inclusion students in classes with other at-risk learners because it will be easier to address all their needs." <b>Comment:</b> It is important to schedule students and teachers in a thoughtful way based on student needs (Walther-Thomas, Korinek, McLaughlin, &amp; Williams, 2000).</p>

## **Advantages to Co-Teaching**

### **Advantages to the General Educator**

1. Learning opportunities to reach ALL students.
2. More time to focus on content and less on individual problems.
3. With help of special educator, meet the needs of individual student learning styles.
4. More time to learn, share and use learning strategies.
5. 2X the opportunity to assist students.
6. Background info on special education students is provided.
7. Assistance for ALL students labels or not.
8. Support for students who need organizational strategies!
9. Peer pressure for appropriate behavior--negative behaviors are decreased.
10. Professional growth . . . greater personal satisfaction!

### **Advantages for the Special Educator**

1. Time effective
2. Teach with a content area expert and learn the expectations of the general education classroom.
3. Spend more time and energy in assisting students to develop motivation, effort, and responsibility for their own learning.
4. Have more opportunities to use learning strategies within content areas and to move toward generalization.
5. "Reality check" for student goals within the general education setting.
6. Partnership with a colleague in support of student IEP goals.
7. Rewards of viewing first hand students' success and establishing credibility among their peers.
8. Improved student behaviors.
9. Mutual learning and appreciation for each other's expertise.
10. Professional growth . . . greater personal satisfaction!

### **Advantages for ALL Students**

1. More time spent working cooperatively, learning content, and understanding students with different abilities.
2. Strong emphasis on learning skills, organizational responsibility and preparedness.
3. Diverse learning techniques and teaching techniques available.
4. More contact time with teachers for school and personal issues.
5. Unique learning needs met to the greatest extent possible
6. Improved self-esteem.
7. Opportunities for leadership and growth within the least restrictive environment.
8. Less fear of failure due to successful experiences.
9. Enhanced sense of responsibility.
10. Better / more meaningful grades

DRAFT  
Potential Student Schedules  
WMS Co Teaching 12-13

<b>6TH GRADE</b>				
Team consists of:				
2 General Education Teachers				
2 Special Education Teachers ( 1 and 2)				
1 Special Education Teacher (3) -Special Class Support only				
PERIOD				
1	ELA	Special Education Teacher 1		Special Education Teacher 2
2	Social Studies	Special Education Teacher 1		Special Education Teacher 2
3	Interd. Lit./ELA	Special Education Teacher 1		Special Education Teacher 2
4	SC Support/Exploratories	Special Education Teacher 3/	SC Support/Exploratories	Special Education Teacher 3/
5	Lunch		Lunch	
6	Math	Special Education Teacher 1		Special Education Teacher 2
7	Science	Special Education Teacher 1		Special Education Teacher 2
8	Exploratories		Exploratories	
<b>7TH GRADE and 8th GRADE</b>				
Team consists of:				
4 General Education Teachers				
1 Special Education Teacher Math/Science /Special Class Support - (Special Education Teacher MSSC)				
1 Special Education Teacher English/Social Studies /Special Class Support (Special Education Teacher ESSC)				
1	Science	Special Education Teacher MSSC	Language Arts	Special Education Teacher ESSC
2	Skills/Skills	Special Education Teacher ESSC/MSSC	Science	Special Education Teacher MSSC
3	Exploratories		LOTE	
4	LOTE		Lunch	
5	Math	Special Education Teacher MSSC	Math	Special Education Teacher MSSC
6	Lunch		Exploratories	
7	Social Studies	Special Education Teacher ESSC	Skills/Skills	Special Education Teacher ESSC/MSSC
8	ELA	Special Education Teacher ESSC	Social Studies	Special Education Teacher ESSC