

**The Influence of Co-Teaching on Instruction and Second Language Acquisition in an  
Inclusive Classroom**

by

Brianna Torrell

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Supervised by

Dr. Mahmoud Altalouli

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**Abstract**

This project aims to support teachers, special educators, ESOL teachers and administrative staff who work with English Language Learners (ELLs). At Henry Hudson School in the Rochester City School District, ELLs are a growing population that are impacted by the implementation of co-teaching. Co-teaching provides collaboration and engagement of learning for both teachers and students. However, research has identified three main barriers that hinder the use of co-teaching which include limited planning time, conflicting assumptions of teachers, and a lack of adequate teacher preparation. The literature shows these barriers can be improved upon through grade level collaboration, implementation of co-teaching models, and teacher preparation through professional development. To address these problems, there will be a two-day professional development training for all the teachers and staff at the Henry Hudson School. The goal of this professional development is for educators to learn and successfully implement constructive co-teaching practices in the classroom through collaboration among grade level teams. Recommendations for further research and improvement include hosting professional development opportunities to improve co-teaching practices, and implementing monthly meetings with administration and grade level teams.

*Keywords:* English Language Learners, professional development, co-teaching, collaboration

## Chapter 1: Introduction

English Language Learners (ELLs), also known as English Learners (ELs), are increasing in population in U.S schools each year. The U.S. Department of Education shows that the number of ELL students who attended U.S. public schools went from 4.5 million in 2010 to 5 million in 2020 (NCES, 2023). With this growing population of ELL students, there is a need for language and academic support through co-teaching to immerse ELLs in U.S schools. Dove and Honigsfeld (2021) assert that “co-teaching is when the general education teacher (GE), and the English as a New Language (ENL) share the roles of planning, classroom management, and assessing all students to ensure they receive grade level content and achieve their learning goals” (Dove & Honigsfeld, 2021). When Co-teaching is implemented correctly, ELLs gain high achievements (Lenard & Townsend, 2017), develop an engagement in learning (Mofield, 2020), increase in language acquisition and student participation (Dove & Honigsfeld, 2021). When Co-teaching is limited, the academic and social emotional advantages are reduced.

Co-teaching is highly beneficial to both students and teachers. Co-teaching can provide an increase of language acquisition and instruction for ELL students through integrated grade-level content (Mofield, 2020). Co-teaching can also benefit teachers by increasing engagement in teaching, reflection of learning, and creating collaboration among staff. Using co-teaching models, language is a valuable source that provides ELLs to learn grade level content (Schneider & Schneider, 2020). Co-teachers can work together to make the language and vocabulary accessible to increase language acquisition in ELLs.

The ELL population is impacted by co-teaching, or lack of such, in many U.S. school districts, including Henry Hudson School in the Rochester City School District. Working in the district for 20 years as an ENL elementary teacher, Ruth Tanner states that co-teaching has been

a struggle for English Language Learners taught in the Rochester City School District for the past twenty years (personal communication, June 18<sup>th</sup>, 2023). Through my observations in the Rochester City School District, the ENL teachers and GE teachers stated that there is a lack of training regarding co-teaching. Therefore, the GE teacher and the ENL teachers are not trained on how to collaborate effectively to implement language and content instruction in a way that increases ELL language acquisition (Percy, 2017; Schneider & Schneider, 2020). This lack of preparation has serious implications as it decreases their effectiveness in providing linguistic support to students, creating a culturally responsive framework, and collaboration within a school community.

Additionally, some teachers have conflicting assumptions regarding teacher's roles and responsibilities in the classroom. With a lack of planning time among co-teachers, collaboration within instruction is not effective. There are three main barriers limiting co-teaching in the classroom including limited planning time (e.g., Bauler & Kang, 2020; Vintan & Gallagher, 2019), conflicting assumptions among teachers (e.g., Alnasser, 2020; Mofield, 2020), and a lack of teacher preparation (e.g., Chitiyo, 2017; Heineke et al., 2018). Without effective collaboration among co-teachers, ELL students will lack the academic and social support needed to meet their goals.

Thus, the purpose of this capstone project aims to explore how to successfully integrate co-teaching in an inclusive classroom, allowing ELL students to meet their academic and social goals. In Chapter 2, I will review previous theories and studies that have researched this problem along with potential solutions. The literature will help develop the product, discussed in Chapter 3, for this project, which will seek to increase awareness of the six co-teaching models, promote

collaboration among teachers, decrease conflicting assumptions regarding roles and responsibilities in the classroom, and establish creative practices that will increase co-teaching

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

This Chapter reviews the literature that discusses co-teaching and how it influences instruction and language acquisition of ELL students. As stated in Chapter 1, Co-teaching in a bilingual class allows ELLs to learn a new language in the least restrictive environment (LRE) and provides students with access to grade level content that is jointly planned to meet the language and academic goals of each student (Dove & Honigsfeld, 2018; Mofield, 2019). It also allows for more individualized attention, less distraction in learning, and greater ELL engagement in language instruction (Baker & Wright, 2020; Dove & Honigsfeld, 2018). However, implementing co-teaching faces challenges such as lack of teacher preparation, conflicting assumptions, and minimal co-planning time and assessing to provide learning outcomes for ELLs in the classroom (Giles & Yazan, 2020).

Therefore, professional development for classroom teachers, special education, and ESOL teachers is so important to learn how to overcome those barriers to co-teach and collaborate to provide grade level content for our language learners. In this Chapter, I draw upon Vygotsky's (1978) Sociocultural Theory (SCT) that highlights the importance of zone of proximal development (ZPD), scaffolding, and dialogue in influencing instruction for ELLs in an inclusive co-taught classroom. I will also highlight the benefits of co-teaching in an integrated classroom and how it influences instruction and language acquisition in ELLs. Then, I will discuss the challenges and impacts of co-teaching for students, families and teachers followed by strategies to overcome these challenges through professional development for all teachers.

### **Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory**

Vygotsky's (1978) SCT states that learning happens by social interactions between individuals through collaboration in diverse settings. In the classroom setting, social interactions

occur between students and students, as well as students and teachers, which play a role in learning and cognitive development as Vygotsky argues through the zone of proximal development, scaffolding instruction, and dialogue. In fact, the interactions facilitated by the zone of proximal development, scaffolding instruction, and dialogue, can be enhanced through collaborative practices through co-teaching (Cong-Lem, 2022).

The ZPD, a central concept to SCT, is defined as the difference between what a learner can do without help and what he or she can achieve with guidance from peers (Vygotsky, 1978). In other words, it is the zone just beyond the individual's capabilities, which is where students benefit the most. Co-teaching allows for strategies where educators can identify and accommodate the diverse needs and abilities of students (Cong-Lem, 2022) through the collaborative approach of scaffolding. Indeed, scaffolding is important for co-teachers to incorporate to differentiate instruction based on each ELLs need (Percy et al., 2017). Scaffolding or assistance is most effective when the support is matched to the specific needs of the learner. For example, scaffolding can include demonstrating a skill, giving hints, and adapting material (Coppie & Bredekamp, 2009). Co-teaching also allows for more individualized instruction and scaffolding to help each ELL meet their individual language goals (Dove & Honigsfeld, 2018). Assessing the current academic level of each learning and then relating the content to students' background knowledge is a part of scaffolding, which produces quick results and created autonomous problem-solving for ELL students (Cong-Lem, 2022).

Furthermore, co-teaching promotes increased opportunities for dialogue among students and between students and teachers. According to Vygotsky (1978), much important learning by the child occurs through social interaction with a skillful tutor. A student aims to understand the actions or dialogue provided by a skilled peer or adult, then processes the information and uses



the knowledge to guide their own performance. Vygotsky views social interaction with peers as a beneficial way of learning new skills and strategies. He suggests that teachers use dialogue learning exercises where less competent children develop with help from more skillful peers all within the zone of proximal development. ELL students who are at lower levels of English proficiency can learn through dialogue with other ELL students at higher levels. Thus, to improve ELLs' cognitive development, ELLs must have social interactions with other students and teachers (Peercy et al., 2017).

### **Benefits of Co-teaching**

Co-teaching in education offers significant advantages for both ELL students and teachers. Teachers benefit from increased engagement, opportunities for learning and capacity building, and improved teacher relationships. On the other hand, students experience enhanced academic achievement and engagement because of co-teaching

#### **Benefits for Teachers**

##### ***Engagement***

Co-teaching allows teachers to have more engagement within teaching. York-Barr et al. (2007) implemented a three-year study on an inclusive co-taught classroom. Findings from teacher interviews stated that teachers were more engaged and creative in their instruction (2007). In the same way, Ricci and Fingon's (2018) teacher surveys showed that the co-teachers were more engaged in their teaching practices. The Co-teachers saw collaboration as "an opportunity to share insights and experiences with our students (Ricci & Fingon, 2018). With these new experiences, co-teaching creates a high level of engagement for teachers.

##### ***Teacher Learning and Capacity Building***

Co-teaching also allows for teaching learning and capacity building. Dove and Honigsfeld (2021) found that collaboration with another co-teacher for an extended amount of time leads to acquiring each other's knowledge and skills. Teachers gain a better reflection on their teaching practices when they are working with another teacher. Similarly, in the co-teaching study done by Mofield, 64% of all the participants stated that collaboration allowed teachers to grow in the way they differentiate instruction. Indeed, teachers can grow when they set joint goals and differentiate instruction to support ELLs through learning from each other (Percy et al., 2017). One teacher in Mofield's study noted that the collaboration with another co-teacher provides new insights on designing lessons and promotes higher level thinking within planning instruction. Also, Friend et al (2010) discovered that teachers had more time to reflect on teaching and a combination of areas of expertise while teaching. Teachers gain an opportunity to grow in their own learning and teaching when they are working with a co-teacher.

### ***Teacher Relationships***

Additionally, co-teaching within an integrated classroom has a positive impact on teacher relationships. Teachers form new relationships and experiences with each other in a co-taught classroom. Honigsfeld and Dove (2021) concluded that co-teaching with an English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher establishes positive relationships between ESL and mainstream teachers. Friend (2010) also stated that peer support is highly beneficial to co-teaching. In a co-teaching study between one GE and one SPED done by Ricci and Fingon (2018), teacher interviews stated that working together a joint project was a way to learn more about each other and form connections through a relationship. Teachers can form new positive relationships with other colleagues through co-teaching.

Furthermore, collaboration provides educators with support to meet the learning needs of ELLS in our schools (Vintan & Gallagher, 2019). Through collaboration, teachers can differentiate their teaching methods to aid in the development of ELs (Bauler et al., 2019). Collaboration offers educators a strong support system (Vintan & Gallagher, 2019) For instance, there is a shared role of instruction which aids in the planning, designing, and assessing content for ELLs. The content teacher can help the ESOL design grade level lessons while the ESOL teacher can help with meeting the specific needs of language learners.

### **Benefits of Co-teaching for Students**

#### ***Academic Achievement***

For one, research suggests that there is a strong association between co-teaching and academic achievement for students. For one, a collaborative environment through co-teaching leads to ELL' high achievements. Causton-Theoharis and Theohar (2008) found an increase in reading scores in ELL students and as a result the school removed pull out services and made it full inclusion for all students. Likewise, in a study conducted by Almon and Feng (2012), ELLs' math achievement had a positive impact due to co-teaching. Students in co-taught classroom often "outperformed" their peers in the general education classroom (Lenard & Townsend, 2017). A study done by Fu et al. (2007). showed that when one ESOL teacher and one content teacher engaged in curriculum collaboration, assessment progress, and structured co-teaching, Chinese-speaking students' English literacy skills improved dramatically. In other words, co-teaching leads to high academic achievements for ELLs.

Similarly, ELL students can increase in their language acquisition due to collaboration among co-teachers in the classroom. Dove and Honigsfeld (2021) showed that ELLs made achievements in their language acquisition due to the inclusive collaboration within the co-taught

classroom. Friend et al (2010) also discovered there was more continuity to the learning of a new language in a co-taught class as opposed to pull out ELL instruction. The ESOL teacher is able to focus on linguistic and cultural aspects of the lesson to improve language acquisition in ELLs in a co-taught classroom (Bauler et al., 2019) Collaboration in instruction allowed ELLs to learn grade-level content and a new language at the same time to gain proficiency in English (Dove & Honigsfeld, 2021).

### ***Engagement***

Additionally, collaboration through co-teaching provides an increased engagement in learning for ELLs. In Masso's (2004) study of co-teaching with gifted education teachers and general education teachers, results showed that co-teaching provides more individualized attention to each ELL's academic needs in the classroom. Students shared when they were given personalized mathematical challenges in small groups, they felt less distracted and more actively engaged in math. Additionally, St. Cloud University (2014) highlights that there is a better student/teacher ratio in a co-taught classroom which can increase instructional engagement for all students. In the same way, a co-teaching study conducted by Almon and Feng (2012), showed that students in the co-taught class spent more instruction time engaged in the learning compared to the solo class. Students are more engaged in their learning since it is planned on their individual level in a co-taught classroom (Mofield, 2020).

Finally, co-teaching allows for greater participation in learning. In the three-year study of a co-taught inclusive program model for ELLs, Dove and Honigsfeld (2021) found students were advantaged by the co-teaching instructional models both academically and socially. They also found positive achievement gains due to the collaborative practices. Furthermore, an inclusive bilingual classroom gives ELLs a collaborative learning environment to converse with their peers

(Dove & Honigsfeld, 2021). ELLs can develop social relationships with their friends which provides a feeling of acceptance in learning (Vintan & Gallagher, 2019) Co-teaching creates a culture for student participation (Dove & Honigsfeld, 2021). Co-teaching extends beyond just academic achievement; it also impacts a child's peer relationships and engagement in learning.

### **Barriers to Co-teaching**

The barriers limiting co-teaching and collaboration are based on a variety of factors that impact ELL's language acquisition and instruction. The barriers include 1) varying views and expectations of co-teaching; 2) lack of culturally responsive teachers 3) limited planning time for co-teachers; and 3) a lack of teacher preparation. All of these barriers contribute to limited co-teaching in the classroom. I will discuss the challenges of co-teaching followed by strategies to overcome these challenges through professional development for all teachers.

### **Varying Views and Expectations of Co-teaching**

#### ***Role of teachers***

Various research has shown that there are discrepancies between how teachers define their roles in co-teaching. Bauler and Kang's (2020) findings coincided with this remark as 54% of the teachers marked in a survey that teachers had a conflicting perception of their role in a co-taught classroom. Co-teaching negatively impact ELLs' learning outcomes when the two teachers' roles are not clearly defined due to an unequal contribution of effort (Bauler & Kang, 2020). In the same way, collaborative teaching becomes challenging when there is an inequality of responsibilities in the classroom (Peercy et al., 2017). One teacher stated that she tried co teaching, and on certain occasions, she felt that the other teacher did not fully understand her role. Some teachers even asked that she handled the entire lesson for the day so they could attend to other tasks, such as preparing copies for their next class.

Furthermore, Simmons and Magiera (2007) investigated the effectiveness of co-teaching, the results also showed that both co-teachers had conflicting perceptions regarding roles in the classroom. The research showed that the general education teacher often took the lead; and, that the primary role of the other co-teacher teacher was to prepare the materials for the lesson. Thus, teachers have conflicting definitions of their roles and expectations regarding their role in co-teaching.

It is important to educate teachers on their roles in co-teaching through professional development opportunities. Research shows when both co-teachers equally share roles in supporting an inclusive classroom environment, ELLs can meet their academic and social goals (Bauler et al., 2019). In a successful co-taught inclusive classroom, the ENL and the GE teacher equally design and implement instruction that meets the linguistic and cultural needs of ELLs. Additionally, school administrators need to help clarify teacher roles in co-teaching to improve the learning outcomes of ELLs (Peercy et al., 2017).

### ***Collaboration***

Furthermore, ENL and GE teachers do not always collaborate effectively to meet the needs of ELL students (Mofield, 2020). Rabin's (2019) study on co-teaching programs found that today's school environments for collaboration are not supportive, very competitive, and isolating from each other. In fact, Beninghof and Leensvaart (2016) stated that many content teachers had difficulty with sharing instructional time, giving up control, and recognizing the value of ENL teachers, which limits ENL teachers from supporting ELLs in their academic goals (Bauler et al., 2019). These finding show that co-teachers need to recognize and value each other's expertise to support ELL students in the classroom.

Therefore, educators need to realize that co-teaching is a collaboration of shared responsibilities for educating all students. Collaboration means that all educators need to be actively engaged in planning, teaching, assessing language and grade-level content with differentiation to support ELL students (Dove & Honigsfeld, 2021). The trends in teachers' practices over three years showed that collaboration worked best is when teachers naturally shared and implemented ideas together (Bauler & Kang, 2020). Moreover, with collaboration, co-teachers can design instructional strategies and differentiation for ELL students (Mofield, 2020). In a successful co-taught classroom, the ENL teacher can take the role of language instruction and cultural pedagogy to help content teachers focus on the linguistic and cultural aspects of instruction (Bauler et al., 2019).

Similarly, in Landrum's (2001) study, results showed teachers increased their skills in differentiating instruction with collaboration, which led to better student achievements. Her findings also showed that collaboration gave co-teachers a shared responsibility of co-planning, delivering lessons, and future assessments for students. (Landrum, 2001; Mofield, 2020). Both teachers should be actively engaged in grade-level content with differentiation to support ELL students.

### ***Co-teaching Models***

Another area that misaligned between ELL and GE teachers is how to correctly implement the co-teaching models. For instance, in a co-teaching study done by Mofield, interviews and teacher surveys showed that 64% of respondents expressed that there was a conflicting assumption regarding which co-teaching models to use in the classroom. Several ESOL teachers and general educators had differing opinions with which co-teaching model to

incorporate in the classroom (Mofield, 2020). Thus, it is imperative to educate teachers on the various co-teaching models and how to implement them correctly.

Incorporating the various co-teaching models correctly in the classroom will help ELL students meet their academic and social goals. Cook and Friend (1995), stated there are six co-teaching approaches, which include: (a) one teaching/one assisting; (b) one teaching/one observing; (c) parallel teaching; (d) station teaching; (e) team teaching; and, (f) alternative teaching. However, even though the one teach, one assist model is more popular than the others, co-teachers should use different types of co-teaching models (Solis et al., 2012). Incorporating these co-teaching models will influence language acquisition and instruction in ELLs; however, it takes training and practice to implement these co-teaching practices (Friend et al., 2010).

Using these six co-teaching models, language is a valuable source that provides ELLs to learn grade level content. Co-teachers can work together to make the language and vocabulary accessible to increase language acquisition in ELLs. These models of co-teaching provide a more diverse learning environment and build a great sense of community within the classroom (Schneider & Schneider, 2020). When ELL students feel like an equal member in their classroom community, they are able to develop academic language (Schneider & Schneider, 2020).

### **Lack of Culturally Responsive Teachers**

Our education system needs linguistically and culturally proficient educators to implement a successful co-teaching model. It is challenging for GE teachers alone to meet the linguistic and cultural differences of all our learners and many teachers are unaware of their students' diverse needs (Heineke et al., 2018). According to Ellerbrock, culturally responsive discussions in teacher preparation programs is "less plentiful" (Ellerbrock, 2016). Many teacher preparation programs lack the learning opportunities to become informed on the issues of



diversity and culturally relevant pedagogy in beneficial ways that can translate to practice (Ellerbrock, 2016; Mofield, 2020).

In order to overcome this barrier, it is necessary for all educators to attend professional development on culturally responsible teaching. Research done by Meskill & Oliveira (2019) looked at two co-teachers, one science teacher and one ESOL teacher that taught in a New York high school with a population of 256 ELLs. Interviews and briefings stated that after receiving professional development on culturally responsive teaching, both of these co-teachers learned how to be linguistically sensitive to the needs of their students (Meskill & Oliveira, 2019). Thus, it is imperative for all teachers to be trained through professional development on how to be a culturally responsive teacher in a co-taught classroom.

Co-teachers can demonstrate culturally responsive teaching by learning about student's linguistic, cultural, and academic backgrounds (Bauler et al., 2019). This allows teachers to support ELLs both academically and socially by creating a strong co-taught classroom community. Students will feel safe and accepted in a culturally responsive co-taught classroom which is imperative for ELLs (Bauler & Kang, 2020). Both GE teachers and ENL teachers need to highlight the importance of incorporating their student's diverse cultures and languages into instruction to meet the needs of ELLs. Teachers need to incorporate linguistic and cultural knowledge into designing lessons to promote equitable educational (Quezada & Alexandrowicz, 2019). Culturally responsive teaching includes having culturally proficient teachers who are accessing cultural knowledge, emphasize and adapt to diversity, and promote cultural knowledge (Quezada & Alexandrowicz, 2019).

### **Limited Time**

One of the most widespread challenges is the limited co-planning time that exists between typically GE and ENL teachers. Co-teaching requires more planning and preparation with very little time for teachers to work together (Mofield, 2020). In Mofield's study of co-teaching, 98% of all the respondents stated that the lack of time was a major barrier for collaboration (2020). Similarly, in a study done by Clara, results showed that in one teacher survey on co-teaching barriers, 70% of all respondents identified no planning time as a major challenge with co-teaching. Teachers felt they needed more time to work together to plan instruction, analyze student work, and create differentiated lessons together (Bauler & Kang, 2020). Findings coincided with a report done by Lenard & Townsend (2017), which stated that lack of time to co-plan was a major barrier with co-teaching.

Without that joint planning time GE teachers and ENL teachers could not effectively plan which portions of the lesson would be taught by whom, and how to deliver the lesson in a culturally and linguistically way to the ELL students (Friend et al, 2010). These situations often led to teachers using the One Teach, One Observe Method, which is considered to be the least effective co-teaching method (Friend, 2014). The planning portion of co-teaching is valuable to the whole process of collaboration and should not be rushed.

Some schools turn to administration to give teachers an extra planning time throughout the day or afterschool meeting time to co-plan, unfortunately, this is an imperfect solution. For one, the schedules of GE teachers do not always align with those of the ENL teachers, which makes it harder to find a common planning time (Lenard & Townsend, 2017). Secondly, not all schools have access to extra help to cover all teachers for an extra planning period throughout the day. Some administration is also not informed on co-teaching, and they lack an understanding of

the time it requires to successfully co-teach. Additionally, several teachers have family commitments afterschool and do not have the time to stay after.

Providing quality time to co-plan is crucial for teachers, not only to design co-taught lessons together, but also to increase the collaboration and relationship among each co-teaching partner. Friend et al (2010) cited that finding a joint planning time is one of the most important factors to an effective co-teaching relationship. Finding a designated time for planning and debriefing for both the ENL teacher and the GE teacher is so important to meet the needs of ELLs (Percy et al., 2017; Vintan & Gallagher, 2019). Both the GE and ENL teacher needs to make time to discuss, analyze, develop and ask questions regarding improving lessons and assessments for their students (Bauler & Kang, 2020). Administration needs professional development on co-teaching as well, and should be supportive of creating time for planning among co-teachers. Without efficient co-planning time to collaborate, it is difficult to meet the diverse needs of ELL students.

### **Lack of Teacher Preparation**

Teacher preparation in the field of ESOL is insufficient in the United States (Mofield, 2020; Wood et al., 2018). The skills that ENL teachers needs extend beyond teaching methodology; ELLs require connection building through dialogue, peer interactions, and engagement in learning (Dove & Honigsfeld, 2021). Teacher preparation programs do not always prepare students for interacting with other co-teachers and teaching ELLs (Pancsofar & Petroff, 2013). Regarding individual barriers, almost all of the participants of the study done by Chitiyo indicated that their university teacher preparation program did not prepare them for co-teaching (Chitiyo, 2017).

Therefore, there is an urgent need for student teachers to be trained properly on co-teaching. Teachers are faced to implement co-teaching without the professional development they need for success. In fact, Wijaya and Santosa (2022) conducted a study on co-teaching ELLS. The interviews and surveys showed that some of the barriers that co-teachers faced was a lack of teacher preparation of their students' needs. Likewise, in a study done by Chitiyo on co-teaching, more than half of the teachers stated they had no university training in co-teaching (Chitiyo, 2017). Okhremtchouk and Sellu (2019) even noted that among the 444 participants in a co-teaching study done in Arizona showed that students are feeling unprepared of the knowledge of the ELL population, how languages are acquired, and assessments in co-teaching. This is problematic when teachers enter the workforce with little to no training on co-teaching and collaboration in the classroom.

A professional development for teachers needs to be collaborative, rigorous, job-focused, and classroom-embedded (Moefield, 2015). In Rabin's (2019) study of teacher preparation, the teacher interviews and surveys showed that co-teaching with a mentor teacher had positive effects on collaboration, preparation, and building relationships for new teachers (2019). Furthermore, both of the teacher-candidates and their mentor-teachers formed strong relationships with each other and balanced the different power dynamics in the classrooms. Similarly, job-embedded professional development (JEPD) is a new approach to improving co-teaching practices (Semon et al., 2020). The analysis of Drewes et al.'s (2022) survey to measure both clinical supervisor and the student teachers' beliefs and experiences with co-teaching showed that the student teacher worked together with their clinical educator to co plan, co-teach, and co-assess to practice a shared responsibility for student learning. Drewes et al. also showed

that the student teachers were able to learn how to maintain professional relationships with other co-teachers.

In fact, Martínez-Álvarez (2021) researched how teacher education preparation effects co-teaching partnerships in inclusive classroom. Findings showed that teacher education programs can better equip teachers to understand and respond to the diverse needs of ELLs. Also, teacher preparation programs help address the differences in culture or language that could affect learning. According to Martínez-Álvarez, participating in these teacher preparation program aids educators in co-teaching and collaboration efforts. Professional development for educators needs to be practical, rigorous, and job focused to prepare teachers for co-teaching.

Additionally, administration is key to implementation to a successful co-teaching program within school. A study done by Scruggs et al. (2007) on co-teaching in inclusive classrooms demonstrated that administrative support plays an important role in meeting the needs of co-teaching including appropriate training on co-teaching. The administration should give support by incorporating professional development on collaboration, designing master schedules for collaboration, solving issues with planning time (Mofield, 2020).

### **Summary**

Using this research as support, it is clear that co-teaching is highly beneficial to students and teachers; however, currently educators face barriers that limit co-teaching. For one, teachers have conflicting views of roles and responsibilities in a co-taught classroom. Secondly, limited planning time leads to ineffective collaboration and instruction for ELLs. Additionally, teachers are not always prepared to collaborate with other co-teachers and support the diverse needs of ELLs. The research shows that co-teaching improves academic achievement, engagement in learning, student and teacher relationships,

Using this research as evidence, monthly professional development on co-teaching is required. The goal of this monthly professional development is to improve teachers' understandings of co-teaching and the various co-teaching models. This professional development will improve collaboration as a school community and allow teachers to learn from one another to eliminate some of the co-teaching barriers that currently exist. This monthly PD would be a mixture of informing teachers on new co-teaching strategies and practices, having all members engage in dialogue and create goals for their ELL students. This professional development will allow all parties to learn from one another, and open the lines of communication for future collaboration in the classroom.

### **Chapter 3: Description of the Product and Tools**

Research in Chapter 2 has shown barriers with co-teaching relationships and lack of teacher preparation. In this chapter I will present a professional development strategy that seeks to improve co-teaching for ELLs at Henry Hudson School in the Rochester City School District. Henry Hudson School #28 has a total of 8 ENL teachers and 638 students. Working in the district for 1 year as an English as a New Language (ENL) fourth grade teacher, I have seen firsthand that many teachers are not given the training or background to teach ELL students to meet their cultural and linguistic needs. Susan Ladd, the principal at Henry Hudson School, states that co-teaching has been a struggle for English Language Learners within our school (personal communication, 2023). I have reviewed this problem in accordance with literature. It was stated that there are several areas of deficit with co-teaching partnerships within the school environment that hinder instruction for ELL students. The goal of the product was based on actions and changes that can be implemented immediately.

The next segments present solutions to the problem of co-teaching at Henry Hudson School. For one, there is an overview of the professional development plan. Then, I will discuss the new tools for educators to implement. These includes co-teaching models, lesson plan templates for co-teachers, co-teaching personality survey, and monthly meeting with teachers and administration. To improve instruction and language acquisition for ELLs, co-teaching relationships need to be improved in the school climate.

#### **Description of the Professional Development**

The professional development plan will be delivered at the Summer professional development meetings on August 29<sup>th</sup>, 2023 and August 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023. This professional development will happen over two days at Henry Hudson School, #28 to implement co-teaching

methods. This engaging and interactive professional development will be 1 hour 30 minutes long each day. The participants of this professional development will consist of general education teachers, ESOL, special education, and administration at the k-8<sup>th</sup> grade level. The format of this training will be in a slideshow presentation along with handouts and engaging activities for faculty. The title of the training is called “Constructive Co-teaching in the Classroom” since it designed to support all teachers to implement co-teaching in a way that benefits ELL instruction. The first day will consist of a co-teaching past experience survey and an overview of the various co-teaching models. The second day will emphasize co-teaching lesson plans, teacher personality survey, and monthly meetings. Each component discussed in the following sections will include a description of the training, reasoning, and strategies to overcome any barriers to co-teaching to meet the needs of all students.

### **Day 1: Co-Teaching Models**

The first day of training is to provide teachers with an understanding of co-teaching and the co-teaching models so they can better understand how to implement them on day two of the PD. First, I will start out with giving each teacher a google survey questionnaire (Appendix C) to complete about their co-teaching experiences. They will have 15 minutes to fill out the five-question questionnaire. The goal of this questionnaire is to gather information regarding teachers’ past experiences and how they implemented co-teaching in the past. This questionnaire will help guide how Day 2 session will focus on. Starting off the Professional Development with a pre-questionnaire is valuable since co-teaching with GE and ESOL teachers impacts academic and linguistic content for ELLs (Dove & Honigsfeld, 2021)

Next, each teacher will receive paper handout providing details about the co-teaching models (Appendix B). First, I will do a brief introduction about co-teaching and the benefits to



co-teaching. I will handout my papers on What Co-teaching Is and What Co-Teaching is Not (Appendix D). We will briefly go over the handout and allow any teacher to share their own past experiences with co-teaching.

Next, I will give each teacher post it notes and have them jot down which co-teaching model they prefer as we watch a YouTube video called “Essential Elements - The Six Models of Co-Teaching”. I will then split groups into grade level teams and have them discuss the different co-teaching models as a team. I will give each group 15 minutes to go over the different co-teaching models. I will give each group chart paper and markers to highlight one of the six co-teaching model. They will share on the benefits or challenges associated with this co-teaching model. Then, the groups will share their findings and ideas on implementing the various co-teaching models in the classroom.

This first day is an overview of the benefits implementing the co-teaching models in instruction. To promote co-teaching implementation in the classroom, co-teaching should be discussed in all teacher training programs (Sundqvist et al., 2020). My goal for the first day of this professional development is to go over the co-teaching models and how to implement them successfully. I will end this day with a google survey exit ticket “what further questions do you have regarding co-teaching/ co-teaching models?”(Appendix E) This allows me to look over the questions and answer them on the second day of the training.

## **Day 2: Co-Teacher Survey**

To start session Two, I will have a QR code to a link to an online teacher survey to identify what type of teacher personality each teacher has (Appendix G). This survey will focus on helping each educator determine what type of teacher they are and what type of personalities they work good with. The results tell you what type of personality you have as a teacher. It tells

you pros and cons of your personality and how you work with others. After finding the results I would like each grade level team to share their results with their colleagues or grade level team for 10 minutes. This will allow each team to find any shared characteristics with other teachers. We will come together and allow for a time to share out any similarities or differences we noticed in our teacher personalities.

### **Lesson Plan Template for Co-teachers**

The next goal for the professional development training is discussing a lesson plan template for co-teachers. An important aspect for co-teaching is creating differentiated lesson plans for each co-teacher (Appendix F). Educators need lesson plans to support both the language goals and grade level content for each ELL (Bauler & Kang, 2020). Based on literature review in chapter 2, teachers need to plan their individual responsibility, define their roles in instruction and collaborate to meet the academic and language goals for each student (Bauler & Kang, 2020). Having the same lesson plan template throughout grade levels will create a sense of unity in the school community and allow for more collaboration.

I will first give an example of the lesson plan template filled out for a co-taught lesson on the slides. Then I will give each grade level team 30 minutes to look over the lesson plan template and practice filling them out for one day with a mock lesson. During this time, I will be going around to each grade level team and supporting with any questions if needed. We will then come together and allow time for each grade level to present their co-taught lesson. Other grade levels will be able to implement new ideas from other grade level teams on co-teaching. This will help give teachers clear roles for instruction and promote collaboration as a team. This session will end by providing the teachers a Padlet link in which they will write one or two ways you will implement Co-teaching in the classroom (Appendix H)

### **Monthly Meeting with Teachers and Administration**

As discussed in Chapter 2, administrators need to communicate with teachers on co-teaching and sustaining culturally responsive teaching (Moefield, 2020). This monthly meeting will be a time for faculty to share opinions and ideas on how to implement co-teaching in their classroom. When educators can connect with other staff and share their ideas, it will support our ELL learners and their needs across the school board. School administrators can support co-teaching by providing teachers with professional development opportunities to learn about coteaching, conflict resolution, and collaboration.

Each month, a co-teaching team will share their ideas on how to modify instruction to support ELLs. During this monthly meeting, teams will share a slideshow or learning activity or concept that has worked well in their classroom. This will allow educators to learn from other co-workers and learn new ideas and strategies to implement into co-teaching. This promotes collaboration among staff and unity throughout a team. This can also reduce any misunderstanding among teachers.

### **Intended Outcomes of “Constructive Co-teaching in the Classroom”**

There are many positive outcomes of this professional development among staff at Henry Hudson School #28. First, it will give both content teachers and ESOL teachers new information and strategies to become a stronger co-teaching team that collaborates to meet the academic and social needs of ELLs. Additionally, all educators will have a greater understanding of co-teaching and the various co-teaching models that would benefit their relationships with staff and students. Finally, it teaches faculty how to collaborate to meet the academic and social needs of all ELLs. Through this professional development, educators will receive the education they need to create a strong school community. The goal of the training is to create collaboration among

the staff and to educate all teachers to improve in their co-teaching practices which will help meet the diverse needs of ELL students in a co-taught classroom. Each year, there will be more implementations and trainings to support co-teaching in the classroom. Teachers can always improve in their teaching practices through professional development. In the next Chapter, I will talk about conclusions made about this project and the implications of co-teaching on ELLs instruction and language acquisition.

## Chapter 4: Conclusion

The purpose of this research was to identify and address how co-teaching influences language acquisition and instruction in ELLs. When Co-teaching is implemented correctly, ELLs gain high achievements (Lenard & Townsend, 2017), develop an engagement in learning (Moefield, 2020), increase in language acquisition and student participation (Dove & Honigsfeld, 2021). When Co-teaching is limited, the academic and social emotional advantages are reduced. The questions that lead this research include the following: (1) What are the benefits of co-teaching for teachers? (2) How does co-teaching benefit ELL students? (3) What are some barriers to co-teaching? (4) What are some strategies to overcome the barriers of coteaching? And (5) How can districts better support teachers with implementing co-teaching? In this Chapter, I will first summarize literature. Next, I will discuss implications for teaching ELLs and will conclude with recommendations for future research.

### Summary

Co-teaching is highly beneficial to students and teachers. Co-teaching can provide an increase of language acquisition and instruction for ELL students through integrated grade-level content (Moefield, 2020). Co-teaching can also benefit teachers by increasing engagement in teaching, reflection of learning, and creating collaboration among staff. However, many schools may have co-teaching practices in place to support ELLs, but these are not always effective. For instance, some teachers have conflicting assumptions regarding teacher's roles and responsibilities in the classroom. Additionally, with a lack of planning time among co-teachers, collaboration within instruction is not effective. There are three main barriers limiting co-teaching in the classroom. These barriers include limited planning time (Bauler & Kang, 2020; Lenard & Townsend, 2017; Moefield, 2020; Peercy et al., 2017; Vintan & Gallagher, 2019),

conflicting assumptions among teachers (Alnasser, 2020; Bauler, & Kang, 2020; Mofield, 2020), and a lack of teacher preparation (Chitiyo, 2017; Heineke et al., 2018; Pancsofar & Petroff, 2013).

Furthermore, many general education teachers, and even some ESOL teachers, are not prepared to teach linguistically and culturally diverse students. Teacher preparation programs are not adequately preparing educators for the role they must play to effectively reach and support ELL students. This lack of preparation has serious implications as it decreases their effectiveness in providing linguistic support to students, creating a culturally responsive framework, and collaboration within a school community.

Overall, this project concludes that solving this problem requires a multidimensional approach. For one, teachers must be educated directly in order to support their learning in how to implement co-teaching practices. Communication can be improved among teachers and administration. This can be achieved through monthly meetings with grade level teams and administration to discuss co-teaching practices in the classroom. Lastly, professional development training should be held once a month on co-teaching improvements in the classroom.

### **Implications**

Several implications and recommendations for student learning and co-teaching based on research findings have been established. Strategies are now in place for ELL integration in and out of the classroom. All teachers, regardless of their certification will benefit from the concepts and ideas of co-teaching in this professional development plan and tools. Currently, there are eight ENL teachers at Henry Hudson School that work in an inclusive classroom. Each ENL teacher has a different way of implementing co-teaching. This professional development will

help unite our school community in a way that will benefit the needs of all ELL students. The ELL co-teaching lesson plans will help assist all educators in designing effective lessons for ELLs (Appendix F) Achieving content and language objectives at the same time provides the instruction ELL students need (Dove & Honigsfeld, 2021). This co-teaching template can help teachers distinguish roles and responsibilities for each lesson.

Implementing these co-teaching models taught in the professional development allows teachers to experiment with new teaching methodologies, build collaboration among staff, and meet the needs of ELLs while providing grade level content (Dove & Honigsfeld, 2021). Collaborative co-teaching allows educators to focus on joint lesson planning, sharing responsibilities of instruction, and a collaborative assessment of student work (Moefield, 2020). Overall, research shows that implementing co-teaching models leads to high achievements in ELLs and a strong engagement of learning.

Professional development is important for all school staff, especially those with no experience with co-teaching, to increase collaboration at a school level. Therefore, monthly in-house professional development can give all educators new ideas on co-teaching to implement in the classroom and a place to share any new information. This training will provide educators with self-efficiency in improving approaches related to co-teaching.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

The professional development plan is a great way to implement change in co-teaching practices at the Henry Hudson School. In the future, more work related to co-teaching can be achieved. First, monthly meetings between teachers and administration can be given to discuss co-teaching lesson planning, strategies, and implementation ideas. This will be a time where

educators can share their ideas in their own classroom in how they implement co-teaching strategies.

Further research can assist in determining additional platforms to co-teaching at the Henry Hudson School. They should be based on the needs of ELL students and educators. Examples of programs that can be developed include co-taught after-school programs, transition programs, and ESL programs for parents and families. Furthermore, research can be given to provide professional development for co-teachers to teach them of new trends and gain insight to best practices in the curriculum that can affect ELLs. Administrators can bring in other educators from other schools to share their strategies regarding co-teaching.

Moreover, there should be follow up studies regarding if the co-teaching training is making a positive change in language acquisition and instruction for ELLs. This study can measure if students are maintaining the same trajectory in classroom engagement and language acquisition. This study can be carried out by teacher and student surveys regarding how they think co-teaching is working in the classroom and what changes can be made.

### **Final Thoughts**

ELL student population is growing each year, and ELL students are impacted by co-teaching, or a lack of such, in many U.S. schools such as Henry Hudson School in the RCSD. With this increase of ELL students, there is a need for language and academic support from teachers in education. However, the lack of instructional approaches and training between GE, SE, and ENL teachers inhibits co-teaching collaboration. Thus, successful integration of co-teaching in ELL students in the classroom is important, in order to allow ELL students to engage with instruction and increase in their language proficiency.



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**Appendix A**

**The Professional Development Presentation**

<https://voicethread.com/myvoice/thread/23260057>

## Appendix B

### Co-Teaching Models (Cook & Friend, 1995)

#### One Teach, One Observe

One teacher teaches, the other makes observations

**Works best for:**

- Observing each other's teaching styles
- Recording individual student behavior for RTI, IEP or parent meetings
- Recording student's response rates

#### Parallel Teaching

Both teachers must teach the same lesson to two different groups of students at the same time

**Works best for:**

- splitting up very large classes
- Teaching the same lesson using modified materials
- Teaching different perspectives to then come back together for a debate, discussion or share out

#### Team Teaching

Both teachers teach the same lesson to the whole class together, taking turns delivering instruction

**Works best for:**

- Breaking up responsibilities in a lesson
- Using different delivery methods of direct instruction at the same time

#### One Teach, One Assist

One teacher teaches the lesson while the other assists the teacher or a certain student

**Works best for:**

- Making individual modifications
- When a lot of materials need to be managed simultaneously
- When one teacher needs to be walking around or monitoring

#### Station Teaching

Each teacher works with a particular station at the same time

**Works best for:**

- meaningful learning stations
- Close monitoring of student learning
- personal interaction with each student

#### Alternative Teaching

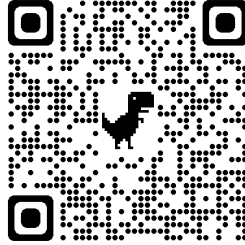
One teacher teaches the lesson, while the other does individual pull out or push in.

**Works best for:**

- Individual students who need: One on One attention, academic remediation, behavior support, or direct instruction
- Differentiated lessons to support individual needs

## Appendix C

### Co-teaching Questionnaire



1. How do you share your teaching time during the school year?
2. How do you collaborate with other teachers?
3. What challenges have you dealt with when working with other co-teachers?
4. What do you find beneficial regarding co-teaching?
5. What improvements would you recommend in co-teaching programs in your school?

## Appendix D

### Co-Teaching Handout (Mofield, 2020)

#### What it IS, what it is NOT, and How to implement it

##### What it IS

- Two professionals who teach as equals
- An inclusive model of education that provides support for all students
- Two teachers who SHARE planning, instruction, and assessment
- An opportunity for smaller student-teacher ratio teaching alone
- Requires time for co-planning

##### What it is NOT

- It is not one “main” teacher and one “assistant”
- Not a general education class with “special” kids
- It is not lowered standards
- It not less work or time
- It is not easy

#### CLEAR EXPECTATIONS

Co-teachers and administration need to have pre-observation meetings to establish clear expectations of what a co-teaching relationship will look like and how it will function

#### TIME

Co-teachers need to be given time to talk, co-plan, troubleshoot, and create differentiated lessons together

#### SPACE

Co-teachers must share a classroom, supplies, and material. They need a designated space to work together

#### RESPONSIBILITY

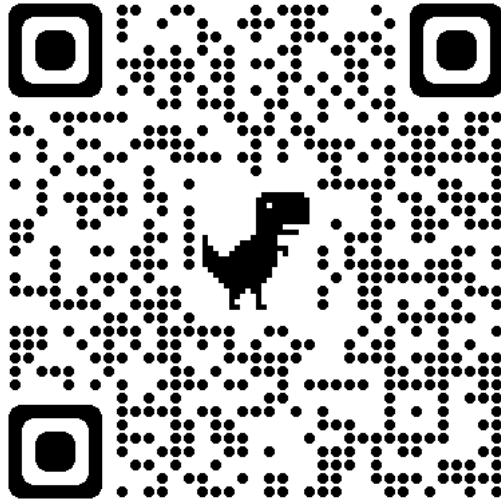
Co-Teachers need to agree how to share all responsibilities of teaching, grading, and disciplining all students in the class



Appendix E

Exit Ticket Google Survey

What further questions do you have regarding co-teaching?



**Appendix F**

**Co-Teaching Lesson Plan**

Subject: \_\_\_\_\_

Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

**Essential Questions:**

**Standards:**

**Language Objectives:**

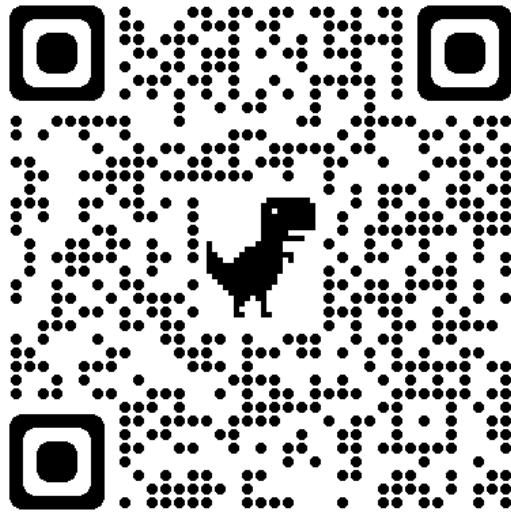
**Content Vocabulary:**

**Materials & Assessments**

Day	Co-teaching Model	Lesson activities	Teacher duty:	Exit Ticket:
			Teacher 1:  Teacher 2:	

**Appendix G**

**Teacher Personality Survey**



## Appendix H

### Padlet link

Write one of two ways you will implement co-teaching in the classroom

