

The Impact of Integrated Co-Teaching on Special Education Students in the High School English
Language Arts Classroom

By

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Abstract

In many classrooms across the country, the integration of special education students has become widely accepted and common. In these situations, students with disabilities are expected to meet the same requirements and standards as general education students with less individualized time for instruction to close learning gaps. Consequently, these students are struggling and falling farther behind in the classroom, often leaving them frustrated and unwilling to participate in school work. These challenges increase in the English Language Arts classroom, where the progress of students with disabilities is often impeded by low reading levels, challenges with writing, and inability to access the provided materials and curriculum. Improving the classroom conditions for students with disabilities under the Next Generation State Standards needs to become a top priority for educators across the country. Using a unit plan adapted from a successful unit taught in a co-taught ELA classroom and research, this paper indicates that co-teaching is the best instructional model of education available to meet the needs of all students in an integrated classroom. Accessing the expertise of both a special education teacher and a content-area teacher allows for students to utilize both skillsets to find success in the ELA classroom.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Problem Statement: When the CCSS and NGSS were introduced into the curriculum, students with disabilities' needs were not being met by the current traditional model of education imposed by the standards and will require alternate forms of education, such as co-teaching, to meet these needs.

Teaching English Language Arts classes is an art form that takes many years to become proficient at. However, there are multiple different challenges that commonly occur in the classroom that create complicated situations for these teachers. One such complication is the Next Generation State Standards (NGSS), which are replacing the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) after a poor introduction and implementation for the latter. Many teachers are still becoming familiar with these new standards and how they should be included in the classroom curriculum.

Why is this particularly challenging? Many educators teach special education students who have a variance in disabilities. These students often struggle in the classroom and are unable to meet the rigorous pace of the general education classroom. Put struggling students and struggling teachers together and we have a classroom that is running on chaos and misunderstandings.

Significance of the Problem:

So why do these challenges for special education students matter to the English Language Arts teacher? With the more modern movement of inclusion occurring in education, students with disabilities are becoming more integrated into the general education classroom. There are several different ways for this inclusion to happen but it becomes the concern of the ELA teacher to be sure that the needs of these students are met at each point in the lesson. These teachers are

not often trained in working with students with disabilities, and even if they are, that training is likely limited. As such, these ELA educators may find it difficult to accurately know how to deal with disabilities in a manner that is fully inclusive.

It is not just the instruction that needs to change, but also the materials in the ELA classroom. Many students with disabilities struggle to read on grade-level and as such have a difficult time accessing grade-level whole-class texts. It is not easy to teach a lesson when all of the students in the classroom are at different levels entirely. Many teachers feel as though they do not have any knowledge as to how materials must be adapted to meet both the NGSS and the academic needs of a special education student.

With challenges facing them in both the materials needed for their lessons and the actual instruction itself when it comes to teaching English Language Arts to special education students, many ELA teachers can easily become overwhelmed by the additional workload that is placed upon them without any additional support being given. Few districts across New York State are providing the necessary supports and training for these teachers and time to interact with special education teachers is limited. This leads to additional struggles for the ELA teachers that ultimately will impact the education of students with disabilities.

Purpose:

In the application section, I hope to shed some light on a style of co-teaching that positively affects all of the students in the English Language Arts classroom. By including lesson plans that incorporate different methods of co-teaching with supports for special education students built-in, the reader will have access to ideas and examples to spawn more discussion of co-teaching in their own districts. Each lesson plan will include an analysis that will help the reader to understand the purpose of each point in the lesson, as well as how the supports are

implemented and the general effect on the classroom. There will be a modicum of different ideas to foster brainstorming of new thoughts and concepts that can improve co-teaching for both special educators and content-area educators as well.

By including co-teaching in the classroom as it is meant to be done, there is a multitude of positive outcomes that take place in the classroom. While in many classroom special educators that are deemed ‘co-teachers’ simply sit in the back of the room until needed by a student with disabilities, this thesis will elaborate on the benefits of a true co-teaching model on a high school English Language Arts classroom. Teachers need to work together in order to ensure that all students are able to reach ideal levels of academic success and rigor and co-teaching allows for this partnership to grow and foster change in school districts. The high levels of inclusion also allow students with disabilities to feel as though they are a true part of the academic world in their schools.

Rationale:

So, why does co-teaching matter when it comes to supporting students with disabilities in the English Language Arts classroom? Across the state, teachers are struggling with the growing numbers of identified students with disabilities in their classrooms. As we as educators learn more about the different needs of these students, we become more aware of how poorly we are meeting their needs when we try to include the NGSS in our curriculum. Students with disabilities are different, not lesser than their non-special education peers, and need to be treated as equals in the classroom.

The NGSS are more inclusive than the CCSS were, but there are still a lot of challenges to meet the needs of these students. These students may struggle to meet the curriculum but this is the time where educators need to make the necessary changes to allow all students equal

access to academics to the best of their ability. When students have the chance to succeed, they often will if they feel supported enough. It is our duty as educators to enable students to feel that support.

Definition of Terms:

- Common Core State Standards (CCSS)--a list of standards meant to keep classrooms accountable for student success. Implemented in 2013, these standards were created by Pearson and are accompanied by assessments.
- Next Generation State Standards (NGSS)--these standards were written by a team of educators, administrators, parents, and other academic professionals as a response to the CCSS. They will begin to be tested on in the 2020-2021 school year.
- English Language Arts (ELA)--Also known as English class, this class includes reading, writing, and speaking skills utilizing various texts.
- Special Educator--Teachers that teach special education students and have students on their caseloads in order to monitor their IEPs.
- Content-Area Teacher--A teacher that teaches one of the four main content areas (ELA, Math, Science, Social Studies).
- Curriculum--A series of lesson plans, unit plans, and instruction that is given to students over the course of the school year.

Summary Statement:

Students with disabilities are often neglected or not given enough support when teachers are struggling to meet the standards imposed upon them by the state. In the case of the NGSS, there are opportunities for these students to become successful but they need the support of their teachers. Unfortunately, most districts do not provide enough training, so content-area teachers

are struggling to meet the needs of these students. Co-teaching allows students with disabilities to have the support of both the content-area teacher and the special educator in the classroom. This relationship between the two teachers help the students to meet the standards by implementing interventions right into the lesson itself, thus speeding up the academic learning process for them.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Common Core State Standards: What is happening?

Education is a challenging field with several different aspects of the typical day that demand the full attention of the teacher. Each decision has a minimum of one consequence, with many both positive and negative. These struggles are part of the reason why so many teachers have reacted negatively against the implementation of the Common Core State Standards. The Common Core State Standards (known henceforth as CCSS) are a prescribed list of standards that are required to be met by all students in a grade level by the end of the year. The roster of students that the CCSS is applicable for is not only the typical-achieving students in the classroom but also the students with disabilities, the English Language Learners, the exceptional students that require enrichment, and the students who need different levels of academic intervention to meet the standards.

Educators are expected to plan lessons that meet the CCSS on a daily basis that also meet the needs of their students. In the classroom, the CCSS creates far stricter requirements for lesson plans in the integration of texts into the ELA classroom. Educators are required to include these standards, the prescribed texts, and the different rigors that are in the CCSS. This is not easy: “Designing such lessons for the typical student is tough enough for teachers; adapting them to children at wildly varied points on the skills spectrum is tougher still” (Gewertz). Even in the most “normalized” classroom imaginable, the variance of necessary skills is not easy to include in any given lesson plan. Educators often struggle to meet the requirements of the CCSS.

The introduction of the CCSS caused several issues for students with disabilities. These students are often moved through from one grade to the next whilst still struggling with reading and writing disabilities, mathematics disabilities, and academic challenges. The reading levels of

students with disabilities in many cases fall below grade-level requirements but these students are expected to continue moving through the education system. In a review of the CCSS studied by Arkansas State University, the college stated that “Unfortunately, the implementation of CCSS has correlated with an increase in the special education achievement gap” (The Challenges).

The gap is not something to be taken lightly. In the same study, the University claims that “CCSS prescribe grade-level standards, even though a student with disabilities may need more than a grade-year to fully learn everything expected of them. Special education students often fall behind in this scenario, year after year, further widening the achievement gap” (Challenges). While it is important to require the same rigor from special education students as are expected of any student, there is a level of realism that needs to be taken into consideration. Expecting students to fully complete grade-level work that is created to fulfill the CCSS is something that can be challenging to many special education students, particularly those with a form of reading disability, which is relatively common amongst high school students. In addition to expecting the rigor required to meeting the standards, special education students are asked to meet all of the additional requirements placed upon them by the state and district.

What is important to note is that the requirements and demand for the rigor that comes from the CCSS in the ELA classroom were not meant to initially cause issues for the special education students in the country’s academic communities. In their statement about the application of the CCSS to students with disabilities, the Department of Education claims that

Some students with the most significant cognitive disabilities will require substantial supports and accommodations to have meaningful access to certain standards in both instruction and assessments, based on their communication and

academic needs. These supports and accommodations should ensure that students receive access to multiple means of learning and opportunities to demonstrate knowledge, but retain the rigor and high expectations of the Common Core State Standards. (Application)

This may be true for students with cognitive disabilities, especially those with more severe cases, but what about the students who struggle in school?

Many of the special education students that an educator will encounter in the typical high school building are higher functioning and may only struggle with academics and are fully functional both socially and emotionally. Even more, students struggle with a diagnosis of Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD) or other variances of emotional disabilities, such as anxiety disorders or depression. These students, who may test academically at a high enough level to not be considered academically struggling may still require assistance to access the necessary materials to understand the concepts taught by the educator.

These are the students who struggle most under the CCSS--the students with disabilities that are not severely disabled and as such are integrated into the typical classroom setting instead of a separate program. Arkansas State University's study calls this issue into the limelight quite eloquently: "Although the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) attempt to ensure academic achievement in U.S. school systems, critics say the standards fall short of the learning needs of some student groups. This is especially true of special education, which involves customized instruction, learning outcomes and assessments to meet the specific learning needs of each student" (Challenges). These students are trying to work several grade-levels above their capability levels in order to meet the CCSS in the classroom, which leads to not understanding the material, a lack of motivation to complete assignments, and a growing dislike of learning.

So, what can educators do to help these students to succeed? Educators in the United States are already struggling to meet the needs of their general education students under the demands of the CCSS, so oftentimes, the special education students are not having their needs met in the classroom. Indeed, “It can be difficult for a teacher in an inclusive classroom to meet the instructional needs of every student in the classroom while still covering the mandated curriculum students will see on standardized tests” (Challenges). Many of the general education teachers in school buildings do not have any additional training in the field of special education, and as such, are finding themselves challenged when it comes to designing lessons that work with the individual needs of special education students while still challenging the rest of their classroom and meeting the CCSS.

Educators find themselves struggling to meet these demands but the true demands are placed on special education students. In nearly every classroom in the building, these students are asked to complete work that they find exacting and complex, which can often leave them frustrated. The CCSS makes this situation worse for these already overstimulated students. In an article listing teacher complaints about the CCSS, Lauren Mitchell affirms that “Common Core’s development neglected to make provision for special-needs services, which support 13.5 percent of the total student population, according to the U.S. Department of Education”. This is a large percentage of the academic population to be denied proper access to materials and learning. While the CCSS were intended to improve the rigor required from students and teachers, they ultimately came with the perhaps unintentional consequence of making it harder for special education students to find academic success.

These consequences occur because the CCSS requires special education students to reach for the same levels as their non-disabled peers. While for some students this is possible, for many

students with disabilities, learning disabilities or emotional disabilities prevent them from being able to achieve this level of academic success. This can be frustrating for both teachers and students. Indeed, “The Common Core requires special-needs students to achieve the same level of academic proficiency as their nondisabled peers, despite these students needing up to 30-40 additional days of instruction to learn the same material” (Mitchell). Though it is completely possible for special education students to find the same level of academic success, it does often take additional time and various alternative resources and approaches to ensure understanding of the content and material. The challenge is, most of the educators struggle to find this kind of additional time while teaching the CCSS in ELA.

Teachers are under a great amount of stress when teaching to the CCSS, especially if they have not been fully trained in its implementation in the classroom for students. One particular challenge is “how well students are able to meet those expectations [of the CCSS] could affect not only their own academic progress, but judgments on their teachers’ and schools’ performance, and on the standards themselves and the tests that measure them” (Gewertz). As such, educators are not only being judged on their performance through evaluations and observations--they are also being judged on their students’ success with meeting the requirements of the CCSS. However, the CCSS was introduced into the classroom so quickly that most teachers were untrained in the initial launching of the concept.

Even teachers who have exited teacher preparation programs after the implementation of the CCSS in schools struggle with determining how best to write their lessons in such a manner that the CCSS are met every day. The least prepared of all educators are, certainly, the special education teachers: “Much of the emphasis on preparing teachers in CCSS has, not surprisingly, been directed toward general education teachers” (Murphy and Marshall 168). In the CCSS, the

standards are split into different groupings based on the content areas they are applicable to. In the case of special education teachers, their curriculum is all of the content areas, as they provide support for special education students in all areas in which they are struggling. In addition, many special education teachers push into other classrooms or provide consultation teacher services to aid in their students' academic success. If anything, the special education teachers should be the ones with the most training in the CCSS, since they are expected to help move struggling students through the CCSS in all content areas over the course of the typical school year.

In current teacher preparation programs, "The focus appears to be on providing future teachers with instruction and opportunity to apply existing evidence-based practices to the new standards (e.g., Content Enhancement Strategies, curriculum-based measurement" (Murphy and Marshall 169). As such, teachers learn ways to help improve their curriculum to meet the needs of their students, but their struggling students, such as special education students or those who require academic intervention, are still struggling. After all, making a lesson prettier does not necessarily improve student comprehension.

Next-Generation Standards: Time to Fix the Mess

So now what? Special education students (as well as general education students and teachers) are struggling to meet the CCSS on a daily basis. There is still a great amount of confusion surrounding the CCSS and how to involve it in the classroom in a manner that meets the needs of all students while still allowing for the teacher to meet all of the requirements for the lesson. After many complaints from teachers, students, parents, and administration, New York State decided to rewrite the CCSS. On the Teachers' Union website, the Department of Education says

The Next Generation Learning Standards for Mathematics and English Language Arts were developed by a combination of teachers, administrators, and parents. Full alignment of the New York State Common Core Standards began in the 2012-2013 school year. The Common Core Standards implementation reiterated the necessity of teacher involvement in all phases of standards implementation; something that was sorely missing (Facts).

The Next Generation State Standards (hereafter known as NGSS) were developed as a response to the failure of CCSS in school classes. One of the reasons why the CCSS was accepted so negatively was the failure in their creation--there were not educators involved in the process. It is a struggle for teachers to accept curriculum and standards changes when they were not a part of the creation process. When the state decided to begin work on the NGSS, they ensured that “The revamped and renamed standards were drawn up by more than 130 educators and parents over a two-year process. The review committee included 94 teachers; 21 administrators; three library media specialists; four college professors; and 16 parents. No testing companies were involved in the standards revision sessions” (NYSUT United). The inclusion of educators and other specialists who are involved in day-to-day classroom activities allow the NGSS more acceptance amongst the teachers they are being distributed to. Preventing testing companies from becoming involved in the rewriting also helped to build confidence in the NGSS after the chaos that came from Pearson becoming involved with the CCSS.

Not only were they revised, but “The NY State Next Generation ELA and Math Standards (Revised 2017) consist of revisions, additions, deletions, vertical movement and clarifications” (NYSUT Research). There were not just a few changes made, either. In fact, “When the initial revisions came out, State Commissioner MaryEllen Elia said that the state was

not ‘just tinkering around the edges’ and noted that more than half the standards were changed” (Disare). There are both positive and negative implications from that statement. The positive is that the standards were greatly changed, which means that they will become more accessible and workable to teachers in the daily lesson planning and classroom implementation. However, it is also bad news, as the students who went through the CCSS then had an education that needed to be dramatically altered to actually work. This upset many teachers and has led to an uncertain, albeit positive-learning, feeling about the NGSS.

The students that will learn under the NGSS will be learning under an improved system. Generally, “The new standards-which spell out the knowledge and skills students should acquire at each grade level-try to ensure students are learning the right skills at the appropriate grade level and clarify vague or confusing working in the previous standards” (Disare). Some of the major issues of the CCSS included the fact that several of the standards were not assigned in an order that allowed students to grasp concepts in waves and instead were given to them at one time so it was like students were drowning in new information and learning strategies. With the NGSS, the standards have been reorganized in such a manner that the students will be able to better grasp concepts. This will also lead to both horizontally- and vertically-aligned standards that teachers will be able to use in their lessons in a greater capacity.

In addition to the revision in wording, there has also been a revision in the rolling-out of the NGSS: “Unlike common core, which took effect immediately, there will be a three year delay for teachers to learn about the standards before the state begins issuing tests based on them” (Kenmore and Materazzo). With the CCSS, teachers were asked to begin basing their lessons on them immediately and to make drastic changes to their current curriculums without any additional training on how they should proceed. This led to many mistakes in the

implementation and angered teachers, as it left them feeling unsupported and as though they were struggling to do their jobs. Add in students that once succeeded that were no longer able to meet the demands of the curriculum and there is a recipe for disaster and frustration to take over the education committee. Fortunately, New York State learned from these issues and have allowed teachers three years to change their lessons, rewrite their curriculum, and attend professional development sessions that enable them to further understand the NGSS before they need to teach them to their classes.

In addition to the delay in implementation, the state has decided to not test the students on the NGSS immediately. Instead, “Unlike last time, students will not be tested on the new standards until teachers have a chance to incorporate the new standards into new curriculum” (NYSUT United). This allows students a window to learn about the new requirements before forcing them to test on standards that they have not yet fully learned. Since state tests also play a role in teacher evaluations, having a chance for teachers to utilize the NGSS in their curriculum before the students take tests on them allows the teachers to ensure that their students are able to meet the requirements of the standards and understand the tests, which in turn, will raise their grades and by proxy, the teacher’s evaluation scores.

So, how does all of this affect teaching ELA under the NGSS? Well, teachers appear to be happier so far with the NGSS and the change in requirements for the English Language Arts curriculum at each grade level. At this point, “A significant change to the ELA standards includes encouraging a healthier balance of informational reading and literary texts to ensure students read both full-length texts and shorter pieces, as well as to encourage reading for pleasure. Specific reading selections will be local decisions chosen by local educators” (NYSUT United). One of the major issues that ELA educators had with the CCSS was the Common Core

Literary Canon, which limited the novels and readings that teachers were allowed to choose. There was not much success with interesting students in novels and the reading levels of students suffered greatly for many years. With this new balance in place, teachers are able to work with students to find ways to get students to read of their own volition. When teachers allow students to read what they want to read, the students are both more likely to read at all and are more likely to get something out of the book. In addition, students are accessing more than one mode of text, which improves their ability to read and make inferences from their reading.

These changes also shortened the workload for both teachers and students, thus given both more time to focus on lessons and reteach or relearn materials and concepts that were challenging to understand. In the case of ELA: “One of the main suggestions from the ELA educator committee was to avoid redundant standards. The merging of 2011 Reading for Literature and Reading for Information standards was meant to avoid some of the duplications within the previous standards” (NYSED). Since a lot of the standards required the same skills to be utilized but for students to receive instruction on how to do them with multiple different kinds of texts, educators were often teaching the same skill multiple times throughout the school year even if it was unnecessary and their students understood it. This particular change to the NGSS allows teachers more time to focus on the texts themselves instead of the necessary reading skills, which will be able to be taught at the beginning of the year and not necessarily be revisited.

Reading becomes much more important in the NGSS than it was in the CCSS, at least as far as independent reading is concerned. The CCSS was more interested in teaching students how to access non-fiction texts in a manner that supported their learning in other content areas. While this is important, it is also important for students to have the chance to interact with fiction

books that help to build their self-confidence, their reading abilities, and their ability to connect to other people. It is noted in the ELA NGSS revision that “Independent reading is an essential part of English Language Arts and Literacy instruction; it is included in the Next Generation Learning Standards within the Lifelong Practices of Readers and Writers, the Text Complexity Expectations, and the Range of Student Reading Experiences” (NYSED). With so many students lacking in reading ability, especially after growing up under the CCSS, there is a great need for more reading in both the classroom and at home. Consequently, students need more experience with reading so that they will both be more interested in and more motivated to read on their own outside of school,

Creativity is another important aspect of English Language Arts that returned to the classroom under the NGSS. After all, “Some of the positive changes that stand out include an emphasis on developing the habit and love for reading and writing, not just discrete; infusing fictional work back into the English Language Arts curriculum...” (Singer). When students are asked to create their own fictional and non-fiction works, they are able to both better understand how to read and why authors make particular decisions, since they are learning through doing, which is such an important way to learn. By making connections to the text, students can better focus on what it is they are supposed to be learning.

NGSS and CCSS: What does this mean for Special Education Students?

When it came time to create the NGSS and fix the mess created by the CCSS, who was there to fight for the needs of special education students and others that struggle academically? Fortunately, “Educators who work with students with disabilities and English language learners were actively involved in the review process as well” (NYSED). This allowed these teachers,

who often wear more than one hat when it comes to their role in students' lives, to have a voice in the creation of these new standards, which was particularly impactful, given the negative effects the CCSS had on students who receive special education services. With these students often already operating on a deficit in learning, the CCSS further widened the gap and made it harder for special education students to keep up.

One great example is the inclusion of so many informational texts in the CCSS. In an article about teaching students with learning disabilities, the authors state that "The CCSS emphasize students' ability to use evidence from text. For students with language- or reading-based LD, complex text may present a barrier" (Straub and Alias 19). With so many informational texts present in all content areas studied in the typical high school, special education students often struggle to keep up with the rigorous demands in regards to reading and responding to the texts. Unfortunately, the CCSS did not create a way for the students to be able to learn about informational texts throughout a long enough period of time to lead to complete understanding. It appears as though these struggles were recognized by teachers as they were working to create the NGSS, however.

Once teachers became a part of the committee rewriting the CCSS to create the NGSS, more attention was paid to the struggles of special education students. After all, "As known by both special and general education teachers in language arts, writing is a complex task and one of the major areas impacted by language impairments (National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities, 1990)" (Straub and Alias 18). With this knowledge being taken into consideration in the redesign, teachers were able to pay more attention to the needs of students with disabilities in the classroom, both for enrichment and additional support, especially in the English Language Arts Classroom. Teachers looked into how to adapt to learning in such a manner that these

students would better be able to access the necessary reading and writing skills needed to succeed academically. By condensing the standards down in the NGSS, the students are able to better meet standards since more time is spent on each standard.

Another method of improvement was the inclusion (or rewriting) of standards to include skills that can be utilized across different content areas that are focused on in ELA. This allows students with disabilities additional practice with the skills in other areas during their time in the classroom. In an article about working with students with learning disabilities, the authors discuss the concept that “This application across content areas could help provide synergy for the learning of students with disabilities impacted in ELA, but may require special education teachers to provide additional support for students with reading, writing, and language-based disabilities in other content areas” (Straub and Alias 16). Teachers sometimes provide that additional support through direct and indirect consultations with other teachers, but oftentimes that is not enough support for students in the classroom.

One of the up-and-coming ways to provide the necessary support in the classroom for students with disabilities to meet all of the NGSS is to include integrated co-teaching (ICT) into the curriculum. In this model, special education teachers and general education teachers teach together to ensure that all students in the classroom have the necessary supports to meet the demands of the NGSS. In the modern classroom, “It is unlikely to expect that [students with disabilities] will make gains in the general education setting without specialized support from their teachers, including both the [content area teacher] and the [special education teacher] ...” (Wexler et. al. 397). In this model, students with disabilities are receiving instructional support directly in the classroom during instruction, which limits the amount of re-teaching that needs to take place as well as ensuring understanding during the initial lesson itself. Sometimes students

with disabilities, particularly students with learning disabilities, need additional explanations or instruction in order to understand the lesson and having a special education teacher in the classroom allows for those interventions to take place in a timely manner by a teacher that is specifically trained to deal with these potential challenges in the classroom.

This concept is clearly backed up by research. One of many articles about co-teaching in the ELA classroom states “Results demonstrate that [students with disabilities] in co-taught classrooms where the special educators shared responsibility for teaching outperformed [students with disabilities] in classrooms where the special educator taught little or no instructional content” (Wexler et. al. 387). With a true co-teaching model, the special education teacher and the content area teacher plan together and teach together in such a way that the students are learning the information from both of them. This allows for harmony amongst the teachers but also enables the students to learn the lesson from two different perspectives which can aid in understanding. It also allows academic interventions to take place in the middle of the lesson with scaffolding and heterogeneous and homogeneous groupings that allow the students to learn from each other and receive the supports listed on their IEPs.

In addition to providing the interventions right in the classroom during the lesson, “This collaborative approach helps co-teachers avoid unintentionally stigmatizing students with identified needs by meeting the needs of all students in a regular classroom” (Tobin 785). Sometimes, when students are marked as different because they need to attend classes apart from the general population, they are subjected to bullying and stigmas that can be harmful to their developing self-esteem. When students are struggling socially, they are often unable to achieve academically. By keeping these students in the classroom with the rest of their peers, these students are not immediately marked as different which can spare them some of the cruelty of

other students. Also, other students can take advantage of the support of having two capable teachers in the classroom. Struggling learners and students who need more attention or assistance are able to have both daily from two different teachers. In a well-run co-taught classroom, the students are not able to tell who is the content area teacher and who is the general education teacher.

Consequently, writing improves as well with the support of having a second teacher in the classroom. In that same article, Tobin states that “One key advantage of having two professionals in the classroom was the opportunity to engage the students with [learning disabilities] in individual dialogues and to prompt them in their writing using a few simple techniques as they talked about their ideas such as scribing or generating a graphic organizer” (795). With two teachers working on the same lesson, the ability to include these interventions into the initial structure of the lesson allows all students to take advantage of the support if needed. Many times, teachers are so overworked with planning the lesson to meet the NGSS that they do not have a chance to put these supports in at the beginning and instead need to re-teach the same lesson over and over again. With co-teaching comes co-planning, which allows content area teachers to have the support of the special education teacher in planning the lesson. It appears as though that additional support helps the teachers to meet the needs of all students in the classroom.

To this point, in order to meet the needs of special education students, it appears as though the best way to do so under the NGSS is to introduce co-teaching as a mainstream concept in teaching. Adding this kind of support helps to take some of the workload off of each teacher and gives the content area teacher help with lesson planning. It enables students of all kinds to access the academic interventions necessary to help them succeed in the classroom.

Surprisingly, though, there appears to not be a lot of co-teaching taking place in districts across New York State. Why is this? How can we as teachers continue to support our students through the challenges of the NGSS through co-teaching? The answer is clear but perhaps the approach is not.

Chapter Three: Application

Introduction

Unit Lesson Plan: How can we fit it all in?

Coming up with a way to meet the needs of all students in the classroom is challenging, particularly when there is a high percentage of special education students in a general education classroom. Teachers often struggle through consults with special education teachers to find ways to help all students to learn while still working to meet the Next Generation State Standards. Co-teaching enables these teacher teams to work together fully to ensure that each choice in the classroom is deliberate so that all students have access to learning.

Co-teaching is not the general education teacher teaching the regular education students while the special education teacher teaches special education students, but instead both teachers teaching all students until the students are unaware of which teacher holds which role. This works even better in districts that support co-teaching, as special education teachers often have degrees in other content areas as well and often wish they could utilize those degrees.

My co-teacher and I are one of these pairs. She is the tenth-grade English teacher in our district and I am a special education teacher with a degree in English Literature. We were paired together as a co-teaching team by our district so that both of us could utilize our knowledge bases to create lessons that include and meet the needs of all of our students. It has taken some time for us to learn each other's habits and approaches to education, but by this time of the school year, we are beginning to find our groove.

This unit plan is one that is closely modeled after one my co-teacher and I taught our tenth graders on *Night* by Elie Wiesel and book club books about the Holocaust to accompany the class novel. We recently finished the unit plan and found success in working together to

create a learning environment that met the needs of all of our students, so we are planning to model other units after this one.

Our district has block scheduling, so each lesson plan is meant to fill a time slot of 75 minutes. These lessons could be utilized in a district that still uses periods but would need to be edited to fit the allotted time. We also have the luxury of having an academic intervention block built into our school day so that we can meet with struggling students for additional support each day if we need to. Even with this extra time, we still needed to pull some students after school in order to keep them up with the rest of the class or utilize Resource room time to ensure that the special education students were receiving the support they needed.

I often found myself teaching sections of the lesson while my co-teacher ran mini lessons to help specific students and vice versa. We had to work together as a team, and to this day, the students in our classroom still think I'm an extra English teacher, so we must be doing a decent job of it. For these lessons, we worked with students who have reading levels from second grade to eighth grade and had to work around many behavior issues. In addition, the class that this unit was written for has six special education students in the classroom with disabilities ranging from reading disabilities to emotional disabilities, so it is always a toss-up as to how the day is going to go. However, having two teachers in the room allows us to address behavior issues while they come up without stopping the lesson.

For the duration of this unit plan, my co-teacher is referred to as teacher A and I am referred to as teacher B. We did our best to utilize both of our time and talents to help students to gain an understanding of the topics at hand. There are many references to materials created to help students meet the learning standards that were given to struggling learners as well as the

special education students, so at this point, no one in the class knows who is special education and who is not. After all, that is the point of co-teaching!

Following each lesson plan is a brief commentary on the lesson and the thinking behind each choice my co-teacher and I made regarding our lessons when we actually taught this unit plan in our classroom. Being transparent with the thought process is sometimes challenging as no one wants to celebrate ideas that needed tweaking, but it is important to note all of the quick decisions that need to be made during a co-taught class and how those decisions can impact one's students.

Utilizing the skill sets of each teacher was vitally important to the formation of this unit plan. With such a high percentage of special education students and struggling students in the class, the knowledge of the special education teacher was invaluable when it came to designing lessons that would be engaging for all students while still closing the knowledge gaps that inevitably come up when working with a variety of students. In addition, the approaches suggested by the English teacher were exciting and innovative, allowing for refreshing ideas to come into the classroom in ways that allowed both teachers to meet the needs of all students.

Together, we chose to use a reader's/writer's workshop model for the class, as it allows both teachers time to interact with all students. During the reading time, which begins each class in the unit plan, the students are reading texts that have either been carefully chosen by or in conjunction with the teachers so that the reading levels of all the students are being individually met. During reading time, the special education teacher provides access to texts in multitudes of way, be it graphic novel versions of the class novel or book club book, audio versions available to students of all reading levels, or differentiating book assignments based on Lexile scores from benchmark testing the special education students underwent at the beginning of the school year.

This time also allows for both teachers to conference with the students. While conferencing, the teachers take turns interacting with students with disabilities and those without, mixing all students together. The teachers then meet afterwards to discuss the conference notes for the entire class and determine what differentiation is necessary for the next lesson to close gaps. In some cases, mini-lessons were created when groups of students were found to have challenges with the same concept. These groups usually included students with disabilities and struggling learners, so all mini-lesson groups were mixed. In those cases, either teacher was prepared to teach the mini-lesson as they were crafted to meet the needs of all the students in the group.

In many cases, both the special education students and the struggling learners dealt with self-confidence issues when it comes to writing. Including many forms of writing, especially the ungraded quick-writes, allowed for each student to work on writing at their own pace and write based on their own thoughts and ideas. Practicing any skill leads to improvement and the quick-writes allowed students to have that practice time in class. This led to self-confidence and improved writing ability for all students by the end of the unit plan.

The instruction time is sometimes taught by one teacher, sometimes the other, and sometimes in turns. Mini-lessons are also frequently utilized over the course of the unit plan. The responsibility for instruction was not chosen lightly. Instead, the teachers would discuss their own individual approaches to different content and based on the needs of the class at that moment, the approach that would reach the most students was utilized. In many cases, it became a mixture of ideas between the special education teacher and the English teacher that created the final lesson. Some days the instruction is led by the special education teacher because I was able to read the material in a way that was better understood by the struggling learners and the

students with disabilities. In other cases, the instruction is led by the English teacher since her explanations were clearer to the students than my own. Often, we each bounce back and forth, filling in the moment with what is needed based on the mood and participation levels of students on any particular day.

Conferences during writing were often tossed back and forth between the teachers without the students even realizing it. We would quickly realize who was best at explaining what part of the lesson and would often signal to each other that the other needed to take a particular conference. Sometimes, the change was based on the special education student's ability to interact with a particular teacher or a challenge in that student's life that happens outside of class. Most students are more comfortable with one teacher over another, so we used that knowledge to work through discipline issues and understanding issues alike. That ability to rely on the other's strengths and know the other's weaknesses allowed us to be an effective co-teaching team.

Tenth-Grade Unit Plan:

***Night* by Elie Wiesel and Book Club Books: How Does Theme Affect a Novel?**

Name of Lesson: Introduction to <i>Night</i>		
Date: Wk. 5 Day 1	Objective: Today we will read the preface to <i>Night</i> and do a brainstorm carousel so that we can get introduced to <i>Night</i> and analyze quotes to find topics of the novel.	Learning Target: I will be able to identify topics in the novel and analyze quotes I found while reading.
NGS Standards: R1, R4, R5, W1, L4		
Materials: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sticky Notes • What to Write on a Sticky Note Handout • Anchor Chart • Document Camera • Colored Markers • Timer • Video Clip • <i>Night</i> novels 	Formative Assessments: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Teacher/Student Conferences 2. KWL Anchor Chart 3. Student-Provided Quotes 4. Student Share-Outs 	Summative Assessments: None
<p>Opening Activity: Students will read their free reading books for fifteen minutes when they come in the door. They will be given sticky notes and asked to annotate as they read. They will receive a handout at the door that will detail what it means when the teachers are asking the students to annotate that they will be allowed to utilize while reading. Teacher A will be conferencing with students on their MAP testing scores and what they mean while Teacher B conferences with students about any potential missing assignments. When the fifteen minutes are up, students will watch a video clip on the Holocaust (https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/films/holocaust/) and write their thoughts down while watching. Teacher B will lead a discussion about the KWL anchor chart while Teacher A acts as the scribe and comments where needed.</p>		
<p>Instruction: Teacher B will read the preface of <i>Night</i> aloud to the class while Teacher A models annotating with sticky notes on the document camera. The students will be asked to help Teacher A to annotate as she moves through the preface and will be asked comprehension questions by Teacher B as she reads through it.</p>		

Individual/Group Work: The students will be split into groups based on size and asked to begin at a certain table. The students will be asked to come up with as many quotes as they can for a designated time period for each topic before they move through to the next topic. The topic will have been previously designated by the teachers. The teachers will move around the room assisting with quotes while the students are participating in the brainstorm carousel. As the students come up with quotes, they will be adding their quotes to an anchor chart.

Closing Activity: The teachers will move around the room and identify some of the strongest quotes that were found and ask the students to share these quotes with the class. The teachers will initially ask for volunteers and take into consideration the discomfort some students might have with sharing. The teachers will then assign the homework, which is to read section one of the novel. Once the sharing is done, the teachers will readdress the learning target for the day and dismiss students.

In this lesson, the English teacher conferenced with the students on their MAP test scores since she had access to their final reports. She worked on steering them toward free-reading books that best suited their Lexile levels while I conferenced on missing assignments since I could talk to students about utilizing Resource and other accommodations on assignments if necessary. When the students were asked to write down their thoughts on the Holocaust, the teachers wanted the students to begin considering different situations that they had not personally experienced to help students gain the necessary background knowledge to understand the novel.

I read the text to the students since I knew which students had reading comprehension challenges and tailored my reading aloud through inflection and volume to help those students understand the text. The content-area teacher modeled the annotations since the students will be asked to complete annotations at various points throughout the novel and she wanted them to have a clear visual of what it is she was expecting of them. When the students moved on to the brainstorm carousel, the teachers had previously chosen the topics to make sure that the students were able to pull the important information from the text. With both teachers moving around the room to conference, the students were able to get help in looking for quotes from two different sources, which better enabled them to build their knowledge of quote-gathering.

It was important that when the teachers were asking students to share their quotes that they were making sure students were comfortable with sharing. If the students were not comfortable with public speaking, then both teachers offered the students the option to have the teacher share the quote on behalf of the student. In many cases, this compromise was embraced by the students.

Name of Lesson: *Night* Fishbowl

Date: Wk. 5 Day 2

Objective: Today we will do a fishbowl activity so that we can use dialogue to analyze the text more deeply.

Learning Target: I will be able to analyze the text I have read more deeply during the fishbowl activity.

NGS Standards: R1, R2, R3, R6, SL1, SL4, SL6

Materials:

- Sticky Notes
- Example Quick write
- Predetermined Quotes from the Text
- Written Discussion Questions

Formative Assessments:

- Teacher Conferences
- Teacher A's Participation Checklist
- Collected Sticky Notes

Summative Assessments:

N/A

Opening Activity: The students come into the classroom and immediately begin reading their *Night* novels if they were not able to complete the assigned section at home for homework. They will read with sticky notes and follow the same protocol from the last class. Those who read their sections of the novel will be able to read with their free-reading books. Teacher A and Teacher B will conference with students to ensure the students have understood the assigned section and that the students are following the sticky notes process. The students will then be introduced to the quick write by Teacher A while Teacher B models the writing assignment. The students will then write for five minutes.

Instruction: The students will view two different video clips with real footage from the Holocaust that has to do with the sections of the novel that they are currently reading. Teacher B will then introduce the back-to-back, face-to-face activity. Students will be shown quotes on the board from the beginning of the novel and will think with their backs to each other then turn to face each other and discuss why each quote is important to the story. Teacher B will move the activity along and introduce the quotes while Teacher A participates in order to model the activity for the students.

Individual/Group Work: Teacher A will pull half of the class into the center of the circle while Teacher B supervises the outside group. The inside group will discuss the novel using quotes that the students have pulled on their sticky notes during their reading time. If they are stuck, Teacher A or Teacher B have discussion prompts to get the discussion moving and help students to find quotes. When a student feels they have participated enough, they move to the outside of the circle and another student moves in. Teacher A is tracking student participation while Teacher B is assisting the outside group with finding quotes they can use to participate in the discussion.

Closing Activity: The students will be asked to share their strongest sticky notes with the class. They will be allowed to volunteer but the teachers will collect the sticky notes when the bell rings to check for student understanding.

With this lesson, the switching of the teachers back and forth in the role of instructor was deliberate so that the students were working with the teacher that would best suit their needs at any particular moment. Having both teachers conference with the students allows for more students to be reached during the reading time which makes it possible to help prevent any misunderstandings that are occurring with their novels. Having me do the example quick write gave the students another visual example of an entirely different way of thinking, which helped to address the diversity in thought processes present in the classroom.

The face-to-face helped to foster student communication with their peers. Having the English teacher participate in the activity evened out the numbers so that none of the students were left out of the activity. It also meant that at least one pairing would have thoughts to share for each quote. In this case, I was the facilitator for the activity, so I was available for instant help with questions and was able to prompt struggling groups to broaden their thinking. The fishbowl activity followed that same manner of thinking--the content-area teacher was guiding conversation but I was having discussions about the texts with students outside the circle. By the end of the activity, both teachers had seen every student and every student had a chance to ask questions about the text of both teachers which helped to improve understanding.

Name of Lesson: <i>Night</i> Round Table Discussion		
Date: Wk. 5 Day 3	Objective: Today we will do a close reading of an excerpt from <i>Night</i> and do a round table discussion so that we can use annotations and dialogue to further analyze the text.	Learning Target: I will be able to annotate the text so that I can participate in a round table discussion about the text.
NGS Standards: R1, R2, R3, SL1, SL4		
Materials: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What to Write on a Sticky Note Prompt • Sticky Notes • Sticky Note Sheet • Writer’s Notebook • Close Reading Example • Quotes • Discussion Prompts • Timer • Reading Journals • Pens • Journal Prompts • Novel 	Formative Assessments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher Conferences • Close-Reading Examples • Index Cards from Closing Activity 	Summative Assessments: N/A
<p>Opening Activity: The students will come in the classroom and begin to read their <i>Night</i> novels with sticky notes like they have been all of this unit thus far. If students are ahead in their <i>Night</i> readings, they are able to read their free-reading books, as long as they have read with sticky notes for their <i>Night</i> reading. While they are doing this, the teachers will both be conferencing with students about their ability to pull quotes and the strength of their sticky notes, guided by the ticket out from the previous class. When the students are done with this, teacher A will introduce the quick write by explaining what their writing is expected to be, followed by teacher B reading the poem “First they came…” aloud to the students.</p>		
<p>Instruction: Teacher B will explain the activity to the students while Teacher A models using the document camera. The students will be expected to annotate pages from the text, so the teachers both model annotations using the anchor chart on the wall and the sample pages from</p>		

the text under the document camera. While annotating, Teacher A will be discussing her moves aloud so that students can ask questions.

Individual/Group Work: The students will be paired up alphabetically in order to have heterogeneous groups. They will read and annotate their two pages with a partner, looking for two impactful quotes and inferences to go along with them in addition to their regular annotations. Both teachers will be walking around providing assistance to student groups. Once the students have completed their annotations, the students will discuss their annotations moving in the order of the pages in the text with the entire class. By the end of the assignment, the whole class will have listened to annotations of the whole assigned section for the day. Teacher A will be facilitating discussion while Teacher B moves through the conversation keeping everyone on track.

Closing Activity: On a notecard, each student will write down one topic that arose in the section from discussion and a quote that goes along with that topic. These will be handed in to the teachers on the way out of the door as a check for understanding.

For this lesson, it was important that both the content-area teacher and I were conferencing so that our students are getting the chance to check in with at least one teacher during reading time. With a novel with such dense content, it was imperative that the teachers catch misunderstandings early in order to help the students comprehend the story. Like before, I read the poem for the quick write to the students to emphasize impactful moments for the students. We found that the students get more out of listening to me in this particular class, so that is who reads. In the other section of the class, the teachers switch roles for the same reason.

Since the content-area teacher had a specific set of annotation rules and symbols that she wanted used in her classroom, she was the one to show the sample annotation process. Her explanations as to what is required where were much clearer than mine, so we played to our strengths. The other teacher simply introduced the assignment and monitored to ensure that students were understanding the annotation process. When it came time for the students to undergo their own annotation process, both teachers were walking around to make sure that the students were able to conference with a teacher whenever they needed assistance so that the flow of work did not cease. After the students presented their annotations to the group, the group

moved into discussion where the content-area teacher was facilitating and I was moving around and commenting. This allowed both teachers to be engaged in the discussion while I could help some of the students with disabilities or nerves who were not comfortable sharing their thoughts to do just that. The exit ticket allowed the teachers to look over the students' knowledge of topic, which impacted our planning for the next class block.

Name of Lesson: <i>Night</i> Jigsaw Activity		
Date: Wk. 5 Day 4	Objective: Today we will do a jigsaw activity so that we can create a presentation to deeply analyze the topics found in <i>Night</i> using textual evidence.	Learning Target: I will be able to analyze my pages of the text and create a presentation for the rest of the class to teach them about my topic.
NGS Standards: R1, R2, R3, W5, SL1, SL4		
Materials: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What to Write on a Sticky Note Prompt Sheet • Sticky Notes • Sticky Note Sheet • <u>Losing Identity</u> video from Discovery Education • Writer's Notebook • Novel • Chromebooks • Prepared Google Slides Assignment in Google Classroom • Jigsaw Paper 	Formative Assessments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher Conferences • Teacher Observations 	Summative Assessments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final Version of the PowerPoint for Topic
<p>Opening Activity: Students will enter the classroom and read with sticky notes. If they have completed the assigned section of the novel for today, they will need to be reading their free-reading books. Teacher A and Teacher B will be conferencing with students on their comprehension of the novel thus far, as well as their knowledge of topics as they are occurring in the book. Once the conferences are complete, Teacher B will introduce the quick write for the day. The students will be watching a video filmed with the takeover of the concentration camps and writing down their reactions while they watch.</p>		
<p>Instruction: Teacher A will introduce the Jigsaw activity. Each group of students, which has been previously determined based on student reading level to create heterogeneous groupings, will be given a topic that their group needs to deeply analyze. Each group will need to come up with three quotes from the novel and analyze them, then discuss the universal lesson that the readers can learn from each topic in the book. Once this is done, the students will create a</p>		

Google Slides presentation for their topic. The students will be split into separate groups afterwards to present their presentation to their other classmates.

Individual/Group Work: The students will be placed into their predetermined groups and the teachers will walk around, guiding student discussion. As students are talking amongst themselves and looking for quotes, the teachers will both have some pre-selected quotes picked out for each topic so they can help guide students in the right direction if needed. The students will work for the majority of the class time, as the assignment will likely take two classes to complete.

Closing Activity: The students will come back together as a class and share their experiences with the activity. The teachers will both take note and make edits to the assignment for the next class period. Students will also raise their hands and share out universal themes discussed thus far in the novel.

This activity was one of my favorites to do with this class since they all got the chance to act as a teacher, which goes a long way toward building self-confidence for some of our students, especially those with learning disabilities. When we conferenced in the beginning, my co-teacher and I made sure that we each talked to different students than we talked to the previous conference so that we each get to speak with all students over the course of a week. This helps the students to hear different perspectives on the novel and different thought processes behind activities.

During our lesson planning, we made sure to create groups for this lesson based on MAP testing scores. We put higher students together with lower students and made sure that each group had a range of reading levels present to encourage helping each other and deeper thinking. The content-area teacher introduced the lesson to the students while I walked around making clarifying remarks and comments based on how the students were understanding the assignment. The quote slides were an intentional formatting so that all students would have a reference point for teaching their topic to their classmates. As the students began to work, both teachers walked around checking in with each student and making sure that if there were any questions or issues, we were intervening early. As we were moving through the classroom discussing the concept

with students, we had marked down page numbers on a post-it note for each topic so that if the students were struggling to find quotes, we could point them to the right page while still allowing them to determine what quote they wanted to use to fulfill the prompt.

The share-out at the end was a great way for both teachers to see where the students were succeeding and where they were struggling, which enabled us to make changes to the next lesson to fit the needs of the group. These kinds of check-ins, be they conferences, exit tickets, or questions, enable us to tailor each class to the needs of the students and to ensure maximum participation and understanding.

Name of Lesson: *Night* Jigsaw Activity Continued

Date: Wk. 6 Day 5

Objective: Today we will do a jigsaw activity so that we can create a presentation to deeply analyze the topics found in *Night* using textual evidence.

Learning Target: I will be able to analyze my topic in *Night* and help to create a presentation that my group will use to teach our classmates.

NGS Standards: R1, R2, R3, W5, SL1, SL4

Materials:

- What to Write on a Sticky Note Prompt
- Sticky Notes
- Sticky Note Sheet
- Losing Identity from Discovery Education
- Writer's Notebook
- Novel
- Chromebooks
- Prepared Google Slides in Google Classroom
- Google Slides Assignment
- Index Cards

Formative Assessments:

- Teacher Observations
- Teacher Conferences
- Topics Worksheet

Summative Assessments:

- Final version of the PowerPoint Presentation

Opening Activity: The students will enter the classroom and begin reading their books with sticky notes, either finishing up the section of *Night* assigned the night before or their free-reading books. Teacher A and Teacher B will walk around the room conferencing with students about their topics and how their group is doing so far. The teachers will also be checking for student knowledge of the difference between central idea and theme to determine where students stand prior to instruction. Then, the students will begin their quick write, which is to watch more of the Holocaust video and reflect on their thoughts and reactions to seeing real footage of that time period. Both Teacher A and Teacher B will write with the students.

Instruction: Teacher A will give a presentation to the class on the difference between central idea and theme while Teacher B adds commentary where necessary. Then the teachers will switch roles and Teacher B will read aloud both theme statements and statements about the central idea while Teacher A walks the class through identifying which is which. The students will need to explain their reasoning to the class.

Individual/Group Work: The students will get with their original groupings and continue working on their Jigsaw presentations for about ten more minutes. Then, the class will be split into groups so that each group has a student from each different topic. The students will then present their slideshow to their group while the other students fill in sheets that ask them questions based on the teachings of the other students. The students will not have to fill out the section for their own topic. While this is happening, the teachers will both be walking around the room and providing assistance, watching presentations and taking notes on students understanding, and observing student interaction and comprehension of the different topics.

Closing Activity: The students will come together as a class and Teacher A will prompt the class to discuss the universal themes that the presentations covered that are present in the novel while Teacher B hands out index cards. Then, the students will be asked to write down the definitions of central idea, theme and topic on the index card and hand it in to one of the teachers as they leave the room for the day.

Once again, the class begins with reading. This both gets students reading each day to improve their interest in and ability to read but it also ensures that all students are reading the text even if they are not reading at home. Conferencing with students for this lesson meant that both teachers were asking about progress on the Jigsaw Puzzle Assignment as well as the difference between central idea and theme. Both teachers checked in with each other at the end of reading time to see which students had a basic idea of the difference and which didn't so that the instruction time could be changed up last minute if need be. Both the content-area teacher and myself wrote with the students sitting at desks next to them to show them how important writing is and how it should be a part of our lives even as adults. We try to inspire them by modeling as much as possible.

Given that the students would later be working on an assignment that demands the knowledge of central idea and theme, the content-area teacher gave the initial instruction for the two terms while I added commentary based on reading students' faces for confusion and explaining where necessary. Then, I was able to lead a discussion with the class by introducing sentences to them that they needed to determine were either central idea or theme. The content-area teacher was providing instruction where necessary to reinforce the concept.

Work time was really important for this lesson. Based on the exit conversation the class before and the conferences at the beginning of the class, the content-area teacher and I were able to determine that more time was needed for the creation of the presentations and the presentations themselves. I pointed out the groups that were struggling the most and we both sat down with individual groups to provide assistance and instruction where necessary, especially to our lowest readers, who were struggling to find their quotes to contribute. The actual presentations went really well and the special education students were hardly discernible from their general education peers when it came to presenting their topics to their jigsaw groups. To both teachers, this meant the lesson had been successful and the necessary knowledge was gained. Handing in the exit tickets only reinforced this opinion for the teachers.

Name of Lesson: <i>Night</i> Journal Entry		
Date: Wk. 7 Day 6	Objective: Today we will write a <i>Night</i> journal entry so that we can analyze the writing style and different approaches to the theme that the author takes.	Learning Target: I will be able to write a journal entry on writing style and theme using quotes from the text.
NGS Standards: R1, R2, R3, W5, SL1, SL4		
Materials: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What to Write on a Sticky Note Prompt • Sticky Notes • Sticky Note Sheet • Book Club Request Sheet • <u>Losing Identity</u> from Discovery Education • Writer's Notebook • Novels • Chromebooks • Google Docs • Assignment Pre-prepared 	Formative Assessments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher Conferences • Teacher Observations 	Summative Assessments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Journal Entries
<p>Opening Activity: The students will come into the classroom and begin to read their <i>Night</i> novels. At this point, they should be finishing up the novels and beginning to move into reading their free-reading books, though several students are likely behind in reading. While reading, the students will be asked to write sticky notes, focusing on theme. While the students are reading, both teachers will be moving around the room and conferencing with students, checking in on their reading progress as well as their ability to identify the theme of their novel. Discussions will be based on the index cards that students filled out last class. When completed with conferences, students will begin to work on their quick write. Teacher A will read the poem aloud, then teacher B will give students the writing prompt for the poem. Teacher A and Teacher B will then present the options for book club books to the class via book commercials while students write down their top three choices and give them to the teachers.</p>		
<p>Instruction: Teacher A will give instruction from a PowerPoint on the theme continuum while teacher B answers questions and helps come up with connecting ideas to engage students and</p>		

help with understanding. The teachers will work as a team to help close any gaps in student knowledge of theme before introducing the journal entries.

Individual/Group Work: Each student will need to write two journal entries answering writing prompts about theme in their novel *Night*. The students are allowed to choose which prompts they want to answer but the teachers are available to help students to determine which prompt may be the best for them to tackle based on their level of understanding. The students will utilize their knowledge of literary elements to answer the writing prompt while they work independently on their responses.

Closing Activity: The students will jot down a quick response in their journals to the question: How is the central idea different from theme? They will then share with their classmates by raising their hands to see if they all have the same answers.

For this lesson, both teachers determined that conferencing would revolve around both checking reading progress on their books and student understanding of theme, central idea, and topic. Some students were still struggling with the concept, so I retaught the lesson to them in a one-on-one conversation while the content-area teacher was able to make plans for students who were falling behind in reading to come in and read during the school day or after school. The book commercials were a way to present the different options to the students in a fun manner. Each teacher read half of the book club books ahead of time, so the commercials were split evenly between the two of us. The students were then asked to write down their top three choices for our consideration when distributing the books.

Reteaching theme as a whole was determined to be necessary based on the conversations with the students during conferencing, so the content-area teacher went over the presentation on theme quickly while I made connections to real life for the students and answered questions about theme. This switching of roles helped to increase student understanding of theme and we determined that we would utilize my explanations more often.

The journal entries were tricky, so we spent a good deal of time making sure that there were easily accessible prompts for the special education students and lower-achieving students

amongst the prompts given to the whole class. While the students were allowed to pick whichever prompt they chose, both teachers went around the room guiding students towards the correct prompts for their writing ability and understanding of the topic. Writing the journal entries was an independent process, so while the students began to work on them, both teachers were moving around the room conferencing with each student while they were writing to catch any misunderstandings before entire journal entries would need to be rewritten. The exit ticket was a quick way for the teachers to check on student progress before dismissing the class for the day.

Name of Lesson: *Night* Journal Entry Continued

Date: Wk. 8 Day 7

Objective: Today we will write a *Night* journal entry so that we can analyze the writing style and different approaches to theme.

Learning Target: I will be able to write a journal entry on writing style and theme using quotes from the text.

NGS Standards: R1, R2, R3, W5, SL1, SL4

Materials:

- What to Write on a Sticky Note Prompt
- Sticky Notes
- Sticky Note Sheet
- Book Club Book
- Novel
- Writer's Notebook
- Mini Lessons
- Checklists

Formative Assessments:

- Teacher Observations
- Teacher Conferences
- Mini-Lesson Observations

Summative Assessments:

- Journal Entries

Opening Activity: The students will be handed out their book club reading books, which have been chosen by the teachers from each student's top three picks to best suit their reading levels. The students will begin to read their book-club books with sticky notes unless they have not yet finished reading *Night*, which they will then need to do. The teachers will then conference. Teacher A will be taking note of which students are answering which journal questions while teacher B records which student is assigned which book club book and determines where each student is in reading *Night*. The teachers will then bring the class together and present the quick write, which is on the topic of reverse bucket lists. Teacher B will read the example prompt aloud, then teacher A will read her example prompt. Students will then have a chance to create their own reverse bucket lists and share them with the class.

Instruction: The teachers will work together to present a mini-lesson on topic sentences and how to craft them. Teacher B will give the explanations while Teacher A presents the previously constructed examples to the class. Then, both teachers will answer any questions that come up.

Individual/Group Work: The students will then get to work to continue writing their *Night* journal entries. While they are working independently, Teacher A will pull a small group of students for individualized instruction on symbolism while Teacher B pulls a different small group for instruction on conflict. Once these mini-lessons are over, teacher A will pull the final small group for instruction on character change while teacher B moves around the room

conferencing with individual students about their writing. Both teachers will conference until the end of writing time, taking notes as to which students need to be pulled outside of class for more individualized instruction.

Closing Activity: The teachers will have previously identified students who have strong topic sentences while conferencing, so these students will share their topic sentences with the class. The class will then have a mini discussion as to why these are strong topic sentences.

Handing out the book club books took a lot of additional planning on the part of both of the teachers. We needed to take into consideration the reading levels and interests of the students as well as their choices to ensure that they were getting one of their top three choices. It took a lot of maneuvering but we were able to figure it out. During the reading time, the content-area teacher and I split up conversations with the different topics to make sure that we were checking in with each student individually with the information that we needed to know. The quick write was a good one for the special education students that struggled with writing, since it allowed them to write creatively in bullet form so they didn't have to craft longer writing responses. It rejuvenated some of the students to want to write again, which we needed for the journal entries.

Having the special education teacher take over the explanations of topic sentences was intentional to separate topic sentences from the content-area teacher's instruction of thesis. Having different voices and presentation styles talk about these two topics that are so easily confused at this grade level helped the special education and struggling students to separate the two in their minds.

We decided to split the students up into small groups for instruction that was tailored to the journal prompts that they chose to work with, enabling specific instruction for each group and speeding up the amount of time spent on instruction so that the students had more time to write. Each of the teachers took different topics so that between the two of us, we were able to instruct each student on a more specific level and answer any questions that came up. The

sharing of the topic sentences after the lesson helps to improve student self-confidence by celebrating their writing in front of the class. Celebrating writing is a way to ensure a positive classroom environment.

Name of Lesson: Book Club Discussions		
Date: Wk. 9 Day 8	Objective: Today we will engage in book club discussions and writing so that we can identify and analyze the exposition of our book club books.	Learning Target: I will be able to discuss my book club book with my group and analyze the setting and exposition of my book.
NGS Standards: R1, R2, R3, W5, SL1, SL4		
Materials: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Navigate a Story Sheet • Book Club Book Sheet • Book Club Books • Writer’s Notebook • Reading Journal • Sticky Notes 	Formative Assessments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher Conferences • Teacher Observations • Sticky Notes 	Summative Assessments: N/A
Opening Activity: The students will sit wherever they are comfortable in the room and begin to read their book club books if they haven’t already begun to do so. They will be reminded to read with setting in the back of their minds and reminded as well that they will need to bring two discussion questions and two impactful quotes to their book club group discussion. While the students are doing this, the teachers will both be conferencing with students about their book club books to determine student knowledge of setting and their understanding of the book so far. Then, the students will be shown an infographic and asked to respond to it in their quick write section of their journals. The students will likely enjoy this since it is a Halloween infographic.		
Instruction: The students will watch the teachers move through a PowerPoint presentation on setting and the political, social, and economic factors that make up the setting of any book. Teacher A will give an explanation as to what each of these topics entail, while teacher B discusses the setting of the classroom at that particular moment using the political, social, and economic aspects of setting.		
Individual/Group Work: The students will then move into their book club groups and begin their discussion about their novels. The teachers will be moving from group to group taking part in the discussion and helping to further guide discussion where necessary. The students will have their discussion questions and quotes to help guide their conversation. In addition,		

the students will need to work together with their groups to fill out worksheets that discuss the social, political, and economic factors that make up the setting of their book club books.

Closing Activity: On a sticky note, each student will need to jot down one social, one political, and one economic factor that makes up the setting of their novel and place it on the board before leaving the classroom.

Giving the students time to read their book club books in class helps to make sure that the students are actually reading their books instead of just pretending to, which unfortunately was encountered with some students while reading the class novel. The teachers were walking around the room and conferencing with students about their book and checking in on their knowledge of setting to see how much instruction would be necessary on the topic. Splitting the classroom into two groups on a sheet of paper helped both teachers to know for certain that they were reaching the entire class during reading time.

The instruction on setting was a bit creative as to the explanation that was given to the students. While the content-area teacher gave the basic instruction to the students about the definitions of each term, I was able to walk the students through the different aspects of setting by using that particular moment in the classroom and having the students define the aspect of that particular setting. The special education students really seemed to understand setting a lot better with the dual instructions of definitions and real-life examples.

There were multiple students in each class reading the same books so the teachers moved them into their different groups to talk to their classmates about the book. The students were told to bring quotes and discussion questions to the table so that the conversation would flow smoothly about the books. The teachers were floating around the room and sitting with the groups to make sure that the conversation was happening the way that the teachers intended it to and also participating in the discussions with their own thoughts and opinions about the texts. With each teacher having read half of the books beforehand, it was an easy divide as to who

would meet with each group. The students seemed to really engage with the teachers during this discussion time.

Name of Lesson: Book Club Setting Journal Entries		
Date: Wk. 9 Day 9	Objective: Today we will write two journal entries on exposition and its impact on our chosen character so that we can understand the impact setting has on changing the characterization of a chosen character.	Learning Target: I will be able to write journal entries that analyze setting and its impact on characterization.
NGS Standards: R1, R2, R3, W5		
Materials: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Navigate a Story Sheet • Book Club Book Sheet • Book Club Books • Writer’s Notebook • Reading Journal • Sticky Notes • Chromebooks • Prepared Google Docs Assignment 	Formative Assessments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher Conferences • Teacher Observations 	Summative Assessments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Journal Entry
<p>Opening Activity: When students enter the room, they will be asked to continue reading their book club novel. They will need to have two discussion questions and two impactful quotes pulled from the assigned section for today’s class, so this is a good time for the students to make those up if they forgot to do them at home. The teacher will be moving around the room checking in with each student to see if they are keeping up with their reading outside of class, as well as their working knowledge of setting after the lesson on setting the previous class. The students will then come together as a class for a quick reminder to keep up with their reading.</p>		
<p>Instruction: Teacher A will introduce the idea of indirect and direct characterization using a clip from the movie <i>Mean Girls</i>. The students will work with teacher A to create a list of characterization based on those two categories, which teacher B will be recording on the board. Teacher B will then ask questions to ensure that the students have placed the elements of characterization under the correct categories.</p>		
<p>Individual/Group Work: The students will then begin to work on their journal entries answering the question: How does the setting impact my character? The teachers will both be circulating around the room conferencing with each student on their writing and working on</p>		

clearing up any misunderstandings on the topic of direct and indirect characterization. The students will work for the duration of the class time.

Closing Activity: The teachers will have selected a student each while moving around the room that had a particularly strong topic sentence or example of characterization and ask them to share out with the class, so those students will share at this time. The students will be reminded of the next section they need to read for the next class before being dismissed.

In this case, conferencing was used to check on students' progress in their books. It appeared as though some of the students were beginning to fall behind, so I was able to walk around the room and come up with strategies to help them keep up via audiobooks or graphic novels while the content-area teacher checked in with the students' understanding of setting to make sure that all the students comprehended the previous lesson.

Moving into the instruction time, the teachers both decided that bringing in an alternate form of text for the students in the form of a video clip from a popular movie was a great way for students to access the concept of direct and indirect characterization. It created a more visual situation for the students with disabilities to better understand the complicated concept of characterization. Given the success with this and the alternate forms of texts that were given to the students struggling with their book club books, we decided to change future units to include multiple forms of text access so that all students can enjoy reading and are able to understand their readings.

The journal entry on setting worked well with the lesson on direct and indirect characterization and this created a great opportunity for students to practice their newly-acquired knowledge of both. Having both teachers move around the classroom conferencing meant that no student ever had to wait more than a minute for their questions to be answered, which sped up the work process for all students. It also ensured that the students were remaining on task, which eliminated most distractions for students who easily lose focus.

Name of Lesson: Book Club Setting Journal Entries Continued		
Date: Wk. 10 Day 10	Objective: Today we will write two journal entries on exposition and its impact on our chosen character so that we can understand the impact setting has on changing the characterization of a chosen character.	Learning Target: I will be able to write journal entries that analyze setting and its impact on characterization.
NGS Standards: R1, R2, R3, W5		
Materials: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Navigate a Story Sheet • Book Club Book Sheet • Book Club Books • Writer's Notebook • Reading Journal • Sticky Notes • Chromebooks • Prepared Google Docs Assignment 	Formative Assessments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher Observations • Teacher Conferences 	Summative Assessments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Journal Entry
<p>Opening Activity: The students will enter the classroom and get right to work reading their book club books with sticky notes to help them pick two impactful quotes and two discussion questions to log for this section. If students have finished the assigned section of their book club book for this class, they are welcome to continue to read ahead. The teachers will both be conferencing with students to determine where they are in their book club book, their understanding of the book so far, and their knowledge of characterization, as it appears some students may be struggling with the concept.</p>		
<p>Instruction: The teachers will pull the students into two small groups and work with those groups to reteach the concepts of indirect and direct characterization. The students who fully understand the concept will need to continue to work on their journal entry.</p>		
<p>Individual/Group Work: The students will have the duration of the class time to work on their journal entries. As they write, the teachers will be moving around the room to conference with each student and answer questions or clear up any confusion that may be occurring. The students will then need to complete the assignment by the end of class.</p>		

Closing Activity: The students will be asked to share out any part of their journal entries that they are proud of so that the class can celebrate their writing.

Continuing to push students to look for impactful quotes in their book club books while reading allowed the students to mark quotes throughout the novel, which made it much easier for the students to be able to find text evidence to include in their journal entries. Reading time also worked well as a time for the teachers to discuss with students their knowledge of characterization, as some students had seemed to still be confused. While the students were finishing up their readings, the teachers were able to meet to see which students needed reteaching, to what extent the reteaching needed to cover, and which students would be able to continue working independently to complete their journal assignments.

Splitting the students into three groups allowed for the reteaching groups to be small, which allowed students to feel more comfortable asking questions. The content-area teacher took the group that just needed more time with the concept and some additional practice to reteach. She was then able to begin conferencing with students less than ten minutes after the groups split up. I was able to take the students who were really struggling with the concept and not understanding it at all and reteach characterization from scratch. It took longer but the students were able to leave with a better understanding of characterization. The groups were heterogeneous, so students of all learning abilities were included in all of the groups. This helped to keep special education students from feeling that the attention was entirely on them.

Allowing the students to share parts of their journal entries that they were proud of actually led to the vast majority of the students sharing at least a line or two of their writing. It was a good chance for students to hear about each other's work and celebrate each other's successes. It also helped the teachers to gain a better understanding of students' writing abilities and their confidence or lack thereof in sharing in front of the class.

Name of Lesson: Book Club Placemat Consensus		
Date: Wk. 10 Day 11	Objective: Today we will do an academic vocabulary check-in and a placemat consensus so that we can identify key terms and analyze characterization in our book club books through dialogue.	Learning Target: I will be able to show my knowledge of academic vocabulary and find quotes that analyze characterization in my book club book with my group.
NGS Standards: R1, R2, R3, W5, SL1, SL4		
Materials: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Navigate a Story Sheet • Book Club Book Sheet • Book Club Books • Writer's Notebook • Reading Journal • Sticky Notes • Placemats 	Formative Assessments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic Vocabulary Check-in • Placemat Consensus Activity • Teacher Observations 	Summative Assessments: N/A
Opening Activity: When the students enter the classroom, they will be separated from each other so that they can take an academic vocabulary check-in to determine their understanding of the academic vocabulary covered so far this unit. Teacher A will remain in the classroom while teacher B will take the students who require testing accommodations to another room to give the assessment. When finished with the assessment, the students will come back to the same classroom to read their book club books, looking for two impactful quotes and two discussion questions. The teachers will conference with students to check their understanding of direct and indirect characterization.		
Instruction: In front of the class, both teachers will utilize the smartboard to show a mini-lesson on static and dynamic characters. The teachers will then choose a dynamic character from <i>Night</i> and model a placemat consensus for the students while simultaneously explaining the assignment.		
Individual/Group Work: The students will split into their book club groups and create a placemat consensus on the dynamic character of their choosing. The teachers will circulate		

around the room answering questions and providing assistance in finding quotes to back up any claims about the dynamic characters of choice.

Closing Activity: Each group will share out their placemat with the class, telling the class why they chose the dynamic character that they did, then walk the class through their placemat. When the groups are finished presenting their placemats, they will put their placemats up on the wall for the other classes to see.

With this unit, there was a lot of vocabulary terms that the students needed to know in order to answer the journal prompts and comprehend what they were reading, so we decided to give an academic vocabulary check-in to see how the students were doing with learning English Language Arts vocabulary. Having two teachers in the classroom meant that I could take the students with testing accommodations to a different classroom easily while the content-area teacher gave the check-in in her classroom. Instead of going through the time-consuming task of sending the students to the testing center, we saved time by being able to provide the testing accommodations ourselves. It also allowed the teachers to observe the students while they were taking the check-in to see which words were easy for them and which were tripping the students up.

After reading time with quotes (which happens every class), the students were asked to return to their seats and the teachers both explained the activity of placemat consensus. In fact, both the content-area teacher and I took the time to work together to not only model the activity so the students got instructions through auditory and visual means, but also to model how students should interact with each other during the activity. It appeared as though the visual representation of the project led to more understanding by the students, particularly the special education students.

Having the students present in a group after the activity helped to foster positive student interactions and public speaking skills which so many students, especially special education

students, were lacking. It also allowed the teachers to hear about the thought processes each group was going through so that they can better understand the dynamics of each working group. This helped the teachers to plan more lessons with group interactions later on in the unit.

Name of Lesson: Let's Talk about Hope		
Date: Wk. 11 Day 12	Objective: Today we will find quotes that represent hope in our book club books so the path we can identify and analyze how the literary elements emphasize the topic of hope.	Learning Target: I will be able to find and discuss quotes from my book club book that show hope in my story.
NGS Standards: R1, R2, R3, W5, SL1, SL4		
Materials: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Book Club Book Sheet • Book Club Books • Writer's Notebook • Reading Journal • Sticky Notes • Chromebooks • Prepared Google Slides Assignment 	Formative Assessments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher Conferences • Teacher Observations • Hope Quote Slides 	Summative Assessments: N/A
Opening Activity: The students will enter the classroom and immediately begin reading their book club books. While they are reading, they will be asked to keep the theme of hope in the back of their minds and use their sticky notes to mark any pages where they find strong examples of hope. The teachers will be moving around the room conferencing with students about the idea of hope and how hope is present in their novel. Then, the students will be asked to write their own book commercial for a free-reading book that they have enjoyed so far this year in the quick write section of their journals.		
Instruction: The teachers will explain the assignment to the class, showing their own example, again from <i>Night</i> , on the board. Teacher A will read the quotes to the class and explain how the teachers determined the literary element present in each quote, while teacher B creates example slides on the board for students to see a visual representation of what is expected.		
Individual/Group Work: The students will work with their book club groups to create a PowerPoint presentation on quotes about hope in their novels. Each student has a range of pages they need to find three quotes on hope from. Then, each student will choose one quote, analyze it, and determine which literary element is utilized in that quote. This presentation will then be shared with the teachers. The teachers will be walking around the class working with the different groups to ensure that all students are able to participate and meet the requirements		

of the assignment. They may need to guide students to quotes or be ready with page numbers that will help push students in the right direction if they are really struggling.

Closing Activity: The students will then discuss the presentation together with their book club groups and share their strongest quote with the class before leaving for the day.

This lesson began the process of beginning the unit essay, which was the summative assessment for the entire unit. When the teachers planned all the lessons from this point forward, they were planned to allow all students, especially the special education students, access to any concepts or instruction that they might need to be able to write a strong literary essay. When the teachers began to conference with the students for this lesson, they asked the students about hope and its role in their book club books. Having this prompt to their thinking helped the students who needed more time to process time to begin thinking about the concept of hope and how it fit into their book club books.

While the content-area teacher explained the group assignment, I was in the back of the room creating visual examples of the slides in real time on the smartboard so that the students were able to see my thinking process and how to do the assignment themselves. This again played into the idea of including as many visual representations as possible for the students to access the lessons with. Creating their own slides was tricky for some of the students, so the teachers were circulating around the room and checking in with the groups to help wherever assistance was needed. It seemed as though a lot of the students were able to tell the teachers what scene they were thinking of when trying to find a quote but they were unable to find the page numbers for that scene. This is why the teachers decided to do this lesson at the beginning of the essay section of the unit plan--finding the quotes can be the most difficult part of a literary essay and this project allowed the students to work with their book club groups to get ahead of

the game. The students were taking the assignment seriously, which would help them later on when actually writing the essay.

Name of Lesson: What is a Thesis?		
Date: Wk. 11 Day 13	Objective: Today we will explore strong thesis statements and learn the elements of a thesis statement so that we can create our own thesis statement for our final essay.	Learning Target: I will be able to write a thesis statement that answers my essay prompt and will set me up for a strong final essay.
NGS Standards: R1, R2, R3, W5		
Materials: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Navigate a Story Sheet • Book Club Book Sheet • Book Club Books • Writer’s Notebook • Reading Journal • Sticky Notes • Chromebooks • Prepared Google Docs Assignment • Essay Packets • Thesis Checklist • Sentence Starters • Note Cards 	Formative Assessments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher Observations • Teacher Conferences • Thesis Tickets-Out 	Summative Assessments: N/A
<p>Opening Activity: The students will come into the classroom and finish up reading their book club books. They should be at the point where they are either done or almost done with their books at this point. In this case, most of the students have switched over and are now reading their free-reading books again. The teachers will move around the room and conference on how literary elements show examples of hope in their book club books to help the students get in the correct mindset to write their final essay. Once this is completed, the students will listen to Teacher B read the “What is Beauty” quick write prompts to them and they will respond, focusing on the tone of the piece.</p>		
<p>Instruction: The teachers will go over a presentation with heavy amounts of class discussion on what a thesis statement is. Teacher A will facilitate, giving instruction on the parts of a thesis that are necessary when writing an essay. Then, the students will be given several thesis</p>		

statements and will work together in groups to sort the thesis statements from strongest to weakest. The first group correct wins.

Individual/Group Work: The students will then begin to craft their own thesis statement to be used to write their essay. They will have received the essay packet and gone over the prompt with Teacher A at the beginning of work time. Teacher A and teacher B will be circulating the room, helping students to write their thesis statements. If students are struggling, teacher B has guidelines to hand students as well as thesis statement templates if they are really unsure how to put their thoughts into words. Once the students complete their thesis statements and their thesis statements are approved by one of the teachers, they are allowed to continue working on their body paragraphs.

Closing Activity: The students will write their thesis statements on a piece of paper and give them to the teachers before leaving the classroom so that the teachers can see who needs additional help with their thesis statements.

The key to moving the students forward comes from the conferences at the beginning of class. When the teachers check in with the students, they are gaining valuable pieces of data that help to guide their instruction and future lesson plans. To begin this class, the teachers had walked around and conferenced with students about literary elements in their book club books, particularly those that showed hope. This was meant to get the students thinking about hope and literary elements, which was the essay prompt they were going to receive later on in the lesson.

We realized that some of the students were going to need additional instruction about thesis statements after the whole-class instruction time, so the content-area teacher took over the instruction of thesis statements, leaving my explanations in reserve for any reteaching moments that would come up later on. It may seem a bit odd, but some students were trending towards needed reteaching for all concepts and having two knowledgeable teachers enabled the teachers to have two different explanations of the concept. The organization game was very competitive and the students enjoyed competing against each other for prizes. It was good to watch, as the teachers were able to notice how some students thought length was equivalent to quality, which is not necessarily true with thesis statements.

Work time for the thesis statements gave the teachers both additional time to give more instruction on thesis statements if necessary, which I needed to do several times. For some of the students who were struggling, particularly the special education students, we had created some different prompts that would help guide students toward crafting a proper thesis statement. Many of the special education students found success with those prompts. Both teachers were able to conference during work time, allowing for strong thesis statements across the board as the teachers worked to conference with each individual student about their thesis statement. With the ticket out, the teachers asked the students to write their thesis statements on the card to see who I needed to pull during academic intervention time for additional help on their thesis.

Name of Lesson: Book Club Essay Parts

Date: Wk. 11 Day 14

Objective: Today we will do a scavenger hunt of a completed essay so that we can understand the parts of an essay and begin working on our final essays.

Learning Target: I will be able to identify all parts of a formal essay so I can write my own.

NGS Standards: R1, R2, R3, W5, SL1

Materials:

- Book Club Books
- Writer's Notebook
- Reading Journal
- Sticky Notes
- Sample Essays
- Markers
- Scavenger Hunt Sheet
- Chromebooks
- Prepared Google Docs Assignment

Formative Assessments:

- Teacher Conferences
- Teacher Observations
- Scavenger Hunt

Summative Assessments:

- Final Essay

Opening Activity: The students will come in and work on their free-reading books with sticky notes. The teachers will be moving around the room conferencing with students on their thesis statements to determine who still needs some additional help with their thesis statements. The students who need help will be scheduled to come in for some additional assistance after school or during the academic intervention time built into the school day to work with one of the two teachers.

Instruction: The students will be split into pairs while Teacher A introduces the assignment. The students will work with partners to search a sample essay written by the teachers to find a list of the different important components of an essay. Once they have identified all of the parts, they will need to have one of the teachers check it for accuracy. The teachers will be circulating around the room to help if necessary and to guide students in the correct direction.

Individual/Group Work: When the scavenger hunt has been completed and approved by one of the teachers, the students will split off to work on their own and continue working on their body paragraphs. The teachers will be circulating the room to assist where necessary and prompt struggling writers to help them build confidence in their own writing.

Closing Activity: The students will share out any parts of their writing that they are proud of to the class so the class as a whole can celebrate each other's writing abilities and creativeness.

This lesson was intended to be a review lesson to go over the different parts of an essay, which the students should have learned in previous classes. As such, the teachers took reading time to conference with students to determine their progress in reading their book club books (which should have been finished by then) or their free-reading books. This enabled the teachers to see who still needed to finish reading, so the teachers could pull those students in to work on their reading at other times during the school day. I also was able to work with some students during this time to provide some edits to their thesis statements to make them strong enough to support a full literary essay.

To review the different parts of the essay, the teachers worked together to create an essay scavenger hunt that would cover all of the parts of a literary essay. We worked together to create the groupings (the students worked in pairs) so that the struggling students and special education students were paired up with other students who had a stronger working knowledge of how to write an essay. When observing the students working together while walking around the room, both teachers noted that the heterogeneous groupings were leading to moments of peer instruction, which was improving the knowledge base for both students.

The rest of the class time was spent as work time working on the body paragraphs of the literary essay. The teachers were able to move around the room checking in with students and in many cases, ended up doing on-the-spot mini-lessons for students who had questions on various components of the essay. This allowed the entire class to keep moving on the essay without needing to stop for additional whole-class instruction each time there was a question during the writing process. It kept the work moving forward!

Name of Lesson: Book Club Essay		
Date: Wk. 12 Day 15	Objective: Today we will continue to craft our essays so that we can answer the essay prompt detailing how literary elements show theme in our book club books.	Learning Target: I will be able to write a formal essay answering an essay prompt on hope using literary elements to show my evidence.
NGS Standards: R1, R2, R3, W5, SL1		
Materials: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Book Club Books • Free-Reading Books • Sticky Notes • Essay Prompt Packet • Sample Essays • Chromebooks • Prepared Google Docs Assignment 	Formative Assessments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher Observations • Teacher Conferences • Student Questions 	Summative Assessments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final Essay
<p>Opening Activity: The students will come into the classroom and begin to read their free-reading books with sticky notes. This will allow the teachers a chance to conference with all students to check-in and see how each individual student is doing with their writing. The teachers will be able to answer any outstanding questions that students have about their essays and schedule time to work with students outside of class time if necessary.</p>		
<p>Instruction: The teachers will go over introductions and conclusions quickly with a PowerPoint presentation to show students the different components necessary in each of these parts of an essay. Students will be asked to talk amongst themselves and come up with questions about these two parts to be answered by teacher B while teacher A moves around the room checking for understanding and taking note of students who are struggling.</p>		
<p>Individual/Group Work: The students will split up individually to work on their essays. By the end of class time, the students should have completed a rough draft of their essay with all of the components present. While the students are working, the teachers will be moving around the room to answer questions. For the students who are still struggling with their essays, the teachers will schedule time to work with them during the academic intervention block or after school. The students will have the entire class time to work.</p>		

Closing Activity: The students will share out any portion of their essay that they are particularly proud of, with the teachers guiding different students to celebrate their writing who might not normally share.

For the reading time at the beginning of this class, the students were to be done with their book club books if they hadn't already completed them and were to be reading their free-reading books instead. The teachers took the time to meet with each student after splitting up the class amongst themselves to check on that student's writing progress and their understanding of the essay. This time allowed the teachers to pull specific students who were still struggling with the writing process in either after school or during the academic intervention time for additional assistance on writing their essays. During this time, I was also able to reach out to the different resource teachers for the special education students and ensure that they were getting time in resource to work on their essays.

In the interest of time, the teachers presented a quick PowerPoint presentation on introductions and conclusions to review the concepts for the classroom. The teachers took turns instructing students on each slide in order to give the students different perspectives on how to write the same parts of the essay. It may seem counterintuitive but the idea of presenting two different ways of thinking at the beginning of the lesson was working for the special education students as they got two different ways of approaching these essay sections taught to them.

The writing time allowed both teachers to conference with students and answer any questions about the writing process or the essays. I was making sure to check in particularly well with all of my special education students and I was pulling some of them aside to work one on one to clean up different sections of their essays that might have needed a little extra help. Giving the students access to both teachers during the writing process was invaluable as the students were able to make enough progress to be ready for editing their essays during the next class, which was the final necessary stage for this literary essay.

Name of Lesson: Book Club Essay Editing and Finalization		
Date: Wk. 12 Day 16	Objective: Today we will peer edit our essays so that we can turn in final drafts that meet all the requirements of the essay prompt.	Learning Target: I will be able to write a formal essay answering an essay prompt on hope using literary elements to support my evidence.
NGS Standards: R1, R2, R3, W5, SL1		
Materials: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Book Club Books • Free-Reading Books • Sticky Notes • Sample Essays • Essay Packet • Chromebooks • Prepared Google Docs Assignment • Editing Checklist 	Formative Assessments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher Observations • Teacher Conferences 	Summative Assessments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final Essay
<p>Opening Activity: The students will come into the room and begin to read their free-reading books with sticky notes. They will be able to sit wherever they like in the room as long as they are silently reading to themselves. The teachers will be working together to conference with every student in the classroom to ensure that their rough drafts are completed. If there are any students who do not have a completed rough draft at this time, they will need to utilize their reading time to complete it.</p>		
<p>Instruction: The teachers will model how to edit a peer’s essay using a sample essay that teacher B wrote incorrectly. Teacher A will use an editing checklist to edit teacher B’s essay on the Smartboard while commenting on her corrections. Then, teacher B will make final edits to the essay using teacher A’s remarks. Though the teachers will only use one paragraph as an example, the students will be told that this is how one peer edits an entire essay.</p>		
<p>Individual/Group Work: The students will split into pairs to work on editing each other’s essays using an editing checklist. The teachers will be floating around the room to see if anyone needs assistance with editing or explaining their thoughts kindly and constructively about a classmate’s essay. Once completed with the editing process, the students will make the final edits necessary to their own essays and turn them in on Google Classroom.</p>		

Closing Activity: The students will have a class discussion about how the writing process went for them and what changes they want to make when writing the next essay to help the teachers craft the learning process to what the students need to succeed.

Having time for the students to read their free-reading books at the beginning of class was a good way not only for the teachers to have time to conference with the different students but also calm the students down from whatever was happening during the day and putting them in the correct mindset for English Language Arts class. The teachers were able to move around the room and conference with individual students to make sure that each student in the class had completed their rough draft and was ready for the editing process. The content-area teacher and I were able to sit down with the two students who were not completed yet, even though they were close, and answer any questions they had while guiding them to complete their rough drafts.

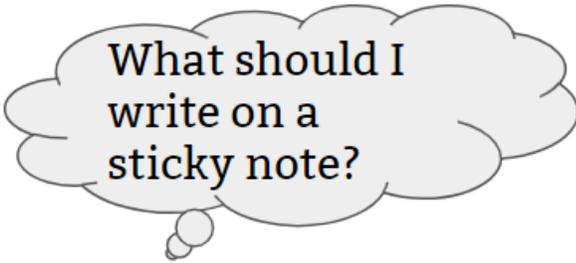
Modeling the peer editing process was important to this classroom of visual learners. Having the content-area teacher peer edit some of my writing both gave the students a laugh at my expense and allowed them to see that everyone makes mistakes. It also enabled the students to observe the process so that they could model their own peer editing process from ours. It appeared to work as the peer editing time began to move forward smoothly after the whole-class instruction.

The pairs for the peer editing activity were chosen by the teachers working together and were based on students' writing ability. We chose to pair a struggling student with a high-achieving student to ensure that all of the students were given the chance to turn in their best possible essay for their summative assessment for the unit. These peer edits were supplemented by the co-teachers moving around the room and checking in frequently with each individual pairing. The final edits were approved by the teachers and the students were finally allowed to turn in their essays.

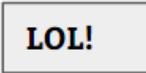
The final component of the unit was a discussion about the writing process for all of the writing assignments that took place during the unit and how the students felt about them. The teachers were both taking notes of the different concerns and comments that the students were making to ensure that any future writing assignments were tailored to meet student needs.

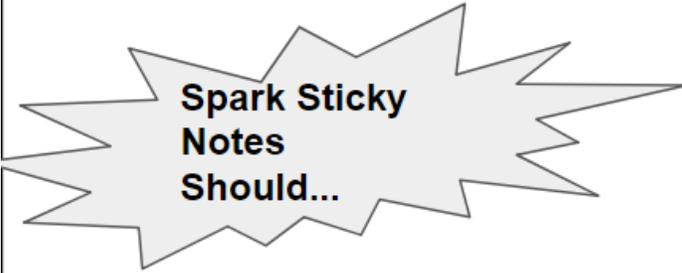
Unit Plan

Materials:



What should I write on a sticky note?

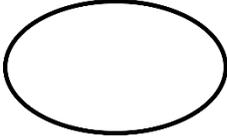
	Things that are funny! <i>This is funny because...</i>
	Things that are important! <i>This seems important because...</i>
	Things that are surprising! <i>Wow, that surprised me because...</i>
	Things you are wondering! <i>I wonder ...</i>
	Predictions you have! <i>I predict that...</i>
	Things you make connections to! <i>I can connect this to... because...</i>



Spark Sticky Notes Should...

- Help you understand the book
- Be an original idea (don't retell)
- Dig deeper into the text
- Spark ideas for conversation
- Allow you to elaborate and write a longer journal entry on

Annotation Symbols

# (1,2,3,4, etc.)	Paragraphs & Stanzas
<u>Underline</u>	Key Words/Details
<u>Double Underline</u>	Main/Central Idea
*	Important Info
	Vocabulary
?	Confusing
!	Surprising
Notes in margins	Thoughts & Comments
. And -	AGREE and DISAGREE

READING = THINKING

Discussion Questions should:

- Promote discussion
- Should not be able to be answered by a yes or no
- Can relate to universal ideas, hypotheses, or connections
- Can be something you're confused about and want to discuss to better understand
- Could reference literary elements such as writing style, mood, tone, theme, foreshadowing, symbolism, etc.

Impactful quotes are:

- Quotes that caught your attention
- Quotes that made you think
- Quotes that have deeper meaning
- Quotes that show literary devices such as theme, metaphors, similes, imagery, etc.

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Discussions Prompts for Round Table Discussion

- What literary elements occur most often in *Night* and how do they affect the text?
- What is the central idea of the section you've read for today?
- How have the main characters changed and developed from the beginning of the book?
- Why do you think the author began with Moishe the Beadle?
- How has Elie grown up since the beginning of the book?
 - What connections can you make to other Holocaust information that we've learned about?

Night Journal Assignments

- You must choose **2 journal questions** to respond to (one from each list).
- Your answers must be written with proper grammatical functions including writing in paragraphs.
- You must include textual evidence to support your analysis.
- Use the journal checklist to ensure you will get full credit.
- Read, revise, edit, reread.

Choose **one** question from this list:

<p>1. Night focuses on a single year in Eliezer’s life. Identify some of the internal and external conflicts he faced that year. What theme arises from these conflicts?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did the relationship between Eliezer and his father change in the course of the year in which the book focuses? How do you account for that change? What theme arises from these character changes? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the meaning of the title, <i>Night</i>? How does this symbolism lead to a theme in <i>Night</i>?
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Choose **one** question from this list:

<p>1. Why do you think Wiesel tells his story from the first-person point of view? If <i>Night</i> were written in the third person, would it be more or less believable? Why do you think Elie Wiesel begins <i>Night</i> with the story of Moshe the Beadle? What lessons does the narrator seem to learn from Moshe’s experiences in telling his own story?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Night</i> is written in short, simple sentences. Critics call this kind of writing “controlled.” That means that every word has been carefully chosen for precise meaning. How do you explain the decision to write in a controlled or measured way to describe experiences that are beyond one’s control? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elie Wiesel uses foreshadowing often throughout his novel <i>Night</i>. What are examples of this foreshadowing and what effect does it have on the novel?
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Setting Journal Entry Graphic Organizer:

Paragraph 1:

Title and Author of your book:
Where it takes place:
When:
Social Condition:
Economic Condition:
Political Condition:

Paragraph 2:

Claim (topic sentence)-
How the setting impacts the character reason 1:
Evidence (quote):
Explaining quote:
How the setting impacts the character reason 2:
Evidence (quote):
Explaining quote:

Book Club Literary Essay #1

English 10R

Due December 10th-11th (depending on when you have us for class)

In Elie Wiesel's preface to his book *Night*, he talks of his survival of the Holocaust: "It was nothing more than chance. However, having survived, I needed to give meaning to my survival." (Wiesel, viii) Although there was great tragedy in the time of the Holocaust, there were also many stories of moments of survival. Throughout the books we have read that cover the time period of the Holocaust: *Mapping the Bones*, *Librarian of Auschwitz*, *Tattooist of Auschwitz*, *The Diary of a Young Girl*, *Maus I*, *Maus II* and *Night*, there has been a reoccurring topic of hope. Despite the challenges these characters, and people faced in the midst of oppression, cruelty, and hate, hope continued to show up again and again.

Your challenge is to **write an essay** on **how the author of the book** you read for book club (*Mapping the Bones*, *Librarian of Auschwitz*, *Tattooist of Auschwitz*, *The Diary of a Young Girl*, or *Maus I and II*) **uses a literary element** (mood, tone, characterization, conflict, symbolism, allegory, setting, point of view, simile, metaphor, personification, foreshadowing, flashback, etc.) **to emphasize the topic of hope.**

Your responses should be double spaced, typed in Arial, 12-point font. You must use the success criteria checklist (next page) to ensure you get full credit for your response. Any essay that is handed in late will lose 3 points for every day that it is late.

Be thoughtful. Be insightful. Show your best thinking. Good luck.

INDICATOR	Success Criteria for Literary Essay
Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have a hook/lead that interests readers • I include appropriate background information of my book club book including title, author, genre. • I made it clear what literary element the author uses to emphasize hope through an insightful thesis statement.
Elaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have a lot of different types of evidence (quotations, examples, and/or definitions) • I explain how the evidence supports or builds my argument • I cite ALL of the evidence in my essay appropriately • I chose evidence that fully supports my ideas
Ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I showed exceptional insight into how the author uses literary elements wisely. • I connect the literary element to a universal idea (theme) connected to the topic of hope.
Craft	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Used many words (including transition words) purposefully to affect meaning and tone • I choose precise words and used academic language. • I used sentences purposefully to affect the development of my argument.
Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wrote with clear and purposeful organization of ideas into paragraphs • Each paragraph has a topic sentence that makes it clear what the rest of the paragraph is about. • The order of sections and internal structure of paragraphs make sense
Understanding of the Form or Mode of Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates full awareness and understanding of the task • The essay question is answered fully in essay form, typed and handed in via google classroom.
Conclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reinforces and builds on the main point(s) in a way that makes the entire text a cohesive whole.
Conventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoids errors in mechanics, grammar, and usage • Uses 12-point font for the main text double spaced • The meaning is clear

Chapter Four: Conclusions and Recommendations

Why Does the Special Education Discussion Matter?

In many classrooms across the country, students with disabilities are being pushed into general education classrooms to create more integrated learning environments. However, this creates unintentional consequences for these students. While the integration does better enable students with disabilities to increase their social potential and improve intrapersonal interactions, it does also create far more challenging scenarios for teachers to meet the needs of all students in their classrooms while still doing what they are required to teach in order to meet the Next Generation State Standards (NGSS).

After a challenging introduction and implementation to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), it was determined in only a few short years that alternate education standards were required in the English Language Arts (ELA) classroom. As such, the NGSS were introduced to teachers. These standards are nearly as lengthy as the CCSS but have better wording and are easier to understand. However, these standards require all students to be performing on grade-level in the ELA classroom in order to be fully met. In the case of special education students and struggling learners, for many, this is not possible. Teachers who are only trained to teach ELA are expected to educate students with disabilities with little to no training in the field, which makes the situation challenging at best and impossible at worst.

The materials provided for the content-area teachers for ELA under the CCSS and the NGSS are often not suitable for students with disabilities. These students, for example, have lower Lexile levels than their grade-level peers and are unable to fully access suggested class texts or given non-fiction readings. Without additional training and access to materials that are used to adapt these materials to the levels necessary for students with disabilities, many content-

area teachers find themselves overwhelmed and unsure how to present their materials to the class.

With these struggles in mind, how are any teachers supposed to meet the educational needs of their special education students in the ELA classroom? The most proven and current best option is co-teaching. Co-teaching is the full inclusion of a special education teacher in the content-area classroom who takes an equal amount of responsibility as the general education teacher. The co-teachers work together to create a curriculum that is designed to meet the needs of all students with adapted texts and materials, specifically tailored lessons, small-group instruction, and an increased frequency of teacher and student interactions.

The inclusion of a special education teacher in the co-teaching model helps not only with the educational aspect of running a classroom but the social and emotional components as well. Special educators receive training that helps them to handle other disabilities that are less about the traditional ELA curriculum and more about anxiety, depression, and ADHD. In many cases in today's high schools, there are students in nearly every classroom that struggle with a disability like one of these diagnoses but are classified as special education students. These students often have challenges meeting the requirements of the classroom and oftentimes the general education teacher has not had the training necessary to help students when they are struggling with these issues. In addition, with only one teacher in the classroom, the teacher often needs to send the frustrated student to the office since he or she is unable to take time away from instruction to quickly handle the issue in the classroom. The inclusion of a special educator in the classroom allows any challenges students may be facing with their mental health to be handled quickly and on the spot, saving both valuable instruction time and stress to the teacher and student.

The NGSS have been rolled out to educators far more smoothly than their predecessors, the CCSS, but content-area teachers are still not sure how to change their curriculum to meet the needs of special education students while still meeting all of the standards by the end of the school year. Having a co-teaching team where one member is a special education teacher and one is a content-area teacher enables the curriculum to be written with experts in both areas working on the same material. When written, this new curriculum now has different manners of meeting the needs of special education students built-in, which increases their effectiveness. In addition, having the special educator in the classroom enables this curriculum to be adapted on the spot if necessary, allowing the teachers to meet the needs of their students at each individual moment in time.

The increase of emphasis on reading pushes ELA teachers to include reading more in their classrooms, both for educational purposes and for pleasure. In the case of many special education students, they struggle to read grade-level appropriate texts or are unable to entirely and require texts with a lower Lexile level. For some students, reading at all is an issue, such as those with dyslexia. In a co-taught classroom, the special education teacher usually has access to texts that meet the needs of the students, as well as alternate versions of texts that allow students to participate in class while still learning at their ability level. These adaptations can include graphic novels, weighted texts, or audio versions of texts that allow students to read what they are interested in and meet the requirements of the class while not struggling so much that they lose interest in both reading and learning.

Special education teachers often see students in other classes as well or are familiar with other content areas due to their interaction with students during Resource time. As such, these teachers can bring in connections to the ELA classroom that the content-area teacher might not

be aware of, such as students using the same technique to write a thesis statement in ELA as they are a claim in their Global Studies class. These connections often help students with disabilities to understand the importance of the skills they are learning, which helps to improve engagement and effort.

The unit plan included with this research was adapted from a unit plan successfully implemented in my own co-taught ELA classroom. This unit plan details the interactions of the two teachers with students who have disabilities, general education students, and struggling students. When dealing with so many varying levels of need in one classroom, it was imperative that the teachers work as a true team to design a curriculum that both met the needs of the students and the requirements of the standards. Both teachers worked together in equal measures to plan these lessons to ensure that students were given the appropriate access to concepts, materials, and texts based on their individual needs. While challenging, working as a team enables the co-teachers to meet these needs on a daily basis and provide interventions when necessary.

Moving forward in the field of education, many schools are not implementing co-teaching in the manner in which it should be used, where both the special education teacher and the content-area teacher work together equally to create a curriculum that meets the needs of special education students and to give instruction in the classroom. In many cases, the special education teacher ends up taking the role of a teaching assistant, helping in the classroom but not being fully involved in the production of materials and instruction. The effect of this is not as great on the classroom as the true co-teaching model is. As such, why is this approach to co-teaching that appears to be the most common and how can we as educators achieve the ultimate model of co-teaching? Why are trainings for co-teaching so difficult to come by? Why are so

many districts reluctant to adopt this model of instruction? There are many additional questions like these that need to be answered in order to improve the access of special education students to two teachers that are experts in their fields in every classroom where students with disabilities are present.

With so many students diagnosed as students with disabilities or even just struggling to access grade-level material and concepts in today's schools, it is imperative that districts begin to consider alternate approaches to teaching these special cases. If integration is the approach of the future, then instruction needs to be tailored to the needs of all students in the classroom to ensure a truly integrated classroom where all students are able to meet the standards and receive instruction at their own levels. Co-teaching is a well-tested avenue that is not currently widely utilized but holds serious potential for meeting the needs of all students in an integrated classroom. Having the expertise of two very differently trained teachers in one classroom opens the door to a wealth of information and different approaches that can work for each individual case. The success of today's students with disabilities depends on adaptation...and co-teaching is the adaptation of the future.

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