How Co-teaching Transforms Instruction and Language Acquisition

by
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Table of Contents

Abstract

This study investigates how co-teaching transforms instruction and language acquisition in bilingual classrooms. It also examines the barriers that hinder successful co-teaching collaboration between general education and English as second language teachers. Challenges in co-teaching collaboration are examined using social interdependence theory, which suggests that cooperation increases the prospect of set goals being attained. Literature findings revealed that co-teaching models fail due to inadequate training and administrative support to co-teachers and a lack of teacher autonomy in lesson planning and student assessment. Professional development of co-teachers in bilingual classrooms can lead to great relationships and friendships, leading to higher levels of student morale, performance, and engagement in the classroom. ELLs participating in co-taught programs benefit from increased attention and time from teachers, and increased emphasis on their study, social skills, and cognitive strategies. However, future research should examine the effectiveness of co-teaching and specially designed instruction in language acquisition.

Keywords: Co-teaching, GE instructors, ESOL teachers, collaboration, ELLs, English

Chapter 1: Introduction

Problem Statement

For a long time, the main instruction system for English Language Learners (ELLs) in the US has been segregation where English language development programs take place in a separate environment from mainstream academic learning. However, in the last few years there has been a growing countrywide emphasis from education stakeholders to shift to a more integrated model. The push stems from the belief that ELLs will benefit in terms of instruction and language acquisition while learning the mainstream curriculum alongside English-speaking peers. To achieve inclusivity, co-teaching has become the norm in schools that wish to integrate ELL's into mainstream learning. While co-teaching means having both the general education (GE) teacher and the English as a Second Language (ESOL) teacher in the same class working collaboratively. Dove and Honigsfeld (2018) assert, "The simple placement of two teachers in the same classroom does not constitute an instant teaching partnership" (p.37). The success of this model, with regard to supporting ELL's content learning and language development depends largely on the relationship of the two.

The striking difference between the act of placing two teachers in a classroom and their ability to form a working partnership is one that I came to realize through experience. As a future ESOL teacher in an elementary school shifting from Spanish classroom teacher to a co-teaching model of instruction. I was completing my observation hours for the TESOL program in a class of 23 students, 8 of whom were ELLs. At first, the GE teacher, and the ESOL teacher (who I was observing) kicked off the year on a high note working collaboratively on almost every task, from planning, teaching, and assessment. However, midway through the year, disagreements emerged particularly on how to best help struggling ELLs in the classroom. Their co-teaching model fell

apart affecting the culture of the class. With time, they adopted a "push-out" arrangement where the ESOL re-taught content to ELLs in separate groups. It took a while to rebuild their working relationship but eventually, they understood their respective roles and were able to form a formidable co-teaching team. Improving the co-teaching model remains a challenge for GE and ELL educators. Therefore, this experience has led me to examine the overarching research question: How can co-teaching transform instruction and L2 language acquisition. Since, co-teaching, implemented well can result in positive changes for ELLs.

Significance of the Problem

In the US, ELLs are one of the fastest-growing student populations. According to a report by the US Department of Education (2020), between 2010 and 2019, the number of ELLs in the US increased from 4.5 million to 5.1 million. Of the 50 states, 42 reported an increase in the ELL population (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2022). These numbers mean that the task to educate this growing population will only get bigger. Therefore, the improving of co-teaching partnerships is imperative to successfully educate linguistically and culturally diverse students.

ELLs are expected to acquire English proficiency to engage with peers and to learn academic content. Already, the achievement gap between GE students and ELLs is worrisome. To put it into perspective, in every subject that the US tests for accountability, ELL's performance is always below grade level (Soland, 2019). Secondly, language proficiency is directly correlated to academic achievement. A study by Ozowuba (2018) found that proficiency level in English is a key determinant of high performance in academic areas including mathematics, biology, government, and English (as a subject).

Additionally, by being in a foreign environment, most ELLs have already experienced culture and language shocks. Often it is upon the teacher to guide them through the intercultural adaptation process. Communication is at the heart of this procedure and research shows that L2 acquisition is a process in which it takes ELLs 5 to 7 years to acquire academic language. In addition to that, L1 skills also affect the process. Therefore, any retrogressive action, such as poor co-teaching partnership, that affects the learner's capacity to acquire language proficiency is detrimental to the objectives of addressing the achievement gap in the US society and integrating ELLs into the American way of life.

Purpose

This capstone project aims to explore the dynamics of co-teaching partnerships and how it can enhance instruction and L2 acquisition. The lack of proper collaborative approaches between GE and ESOL teachers hinders successful co-teaching and adversely impacts student learning. In the project, I will design a professional development (PD) that is centered on maximizing the effectiveness of educators dealing with ELLs, presenting the many opportunities for instructional collaborations, as well as the different co-teaching models that can be implemented with ELL students. During the PD, GE and ESOL teachers will be taken through different activities and be taught how to form strong co-teaching partnerships founded on honesty, respect, trust, the spirit of collaboration, effective communication, and collective efficacy. Teachers will be instructed to complete personality and previous co-teaching experience surveys that will help them reflect and analyze different paths. They will be allowed to give their input on how to improve classroom instruction through role play or mock activities using scenarios of their own classrooms and by exploring the different co-teaching models. The objective by the end of the PD is to have teachers bring their collective strengths to the

classroom to help ELLs. They will identify the best strategy to be implemented to specific group of students. Moreover, throughout the entire duration of the PD (3 days) teachers will constantly reflect on the previous practices to improve students' performance. Rabin (2019) contends that reflecting on co-teaching practices helps teachers improve their instructional pedagogies. The learning needs of ELL students can be met through the development of strong co-teaching approaches.

Summary

As more schools are shifting to the integrated instructional model, co-teaching for ELLs is quickly gaining popularity in the US. However, the act of simply putting a GE and an ESOL teacher in the same classroom does not guarantee academic achievement or language development for ELLs. From experience, a poor co-teaching partnership can affect the capacity of ELLs to achieve proficiency in English, impacts instruction, communication, and attainment of academic success. At the national level, it is imperative to improve instruction for ELLs to minimize the achievement gap between ELLs and their English-speaking peers. There is a need to enhance a co-teaching model that specifically addresses the relationship between ESOL and GE teachers when educating ELLs in mainstream classes.

In chapter 2, I will review the existing literature on co-teaching as well as reveal the missing gaps in research. Chapter 3 will detail the elements of the PD. Here I will present a co-teaching model for ESOL and GE teachers. This model will inform educators on how to build effective co-teaching partnerships. In chapter 4, I will compile recommendations and conclusions. Finally, all PD materials will be included in the Appendix of this capstone.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

How Co-Teaching Transforms Instruction and Language Acquisition

This literature review will examine how co-teaching transforms instruction and language acquisition. Co-teaching encompasses the pairing of educators collectively in a classroom to undertake tasks such as instructing, planning, and evaluating students. In co-teaching settings, teachers share equal responsibilities in the classroom. In bilingual classes, co-teaching is an effective tool for enhancing the knowledge and language acquisition of English Language Learners (ELLs). When implemented intentionally and thoughtfully, co-teaching effectively meets all students' unique learning needs (Butera & Buchs, 2019). It is important to note that language acquisition is not the end goal in co-teaching models but rather an instrument that enables ELLs to better comprehend grade-level content. Therefore, co-teaching models provide each learner with a more diverse learning environment and levels the playing field for every student.

For co-teaching models to meet their goals, there needs to be cohesion and a good working relationship between the general education (GE) teacher and the English as a Second Language (ESOL) teacher. Unfortunately, co-teaching models are marred with numerous challenges due to misunderstandings between the GE and ESOL teacher. The challenges are also attributed to differences in knowledge acquisition rates and the achievement gap between ELLs and GE students (Shimizu et al., 2022). Despite these challenges, co-teaching partnerships remain instrumental in successfully educating culturally and linguistically diverse students.

Theory that Addresses the Issue

One of the theories that best addresses co-teaching models, particularly the relationship between the GE and ESOL teacher in classroom settings, is the social interdependence theory.

Social interdependence is a theoretical approach suggesting that the behaviors of other group

adherents impact group outcomes. According to Butera and Buchs (2019), the theory allows

people to differentiate competition and cooperation from different marvels that could exist in

community situations. The scholars also note that cooperation is deemed positive social

interdependence because the actions of individual group members partake in the attainment of a

common goal and the success of one goal supports increases the prospect of other goals

succeeding. However, competition leads to negative social interdependence because the activities

of one person hinder others' ability to attain their set goals, with the success of an individual

group member hindering others' potential success.

Butera and Buchs contend that social interdependence, whether constructive or adverse,

contributes to the projected results, which are the advent of collaboration alongside its promotive

actions or rivalry accompanied by its oppositional deeds.

According to Shimizu et al. (2022), the key components of social interdependence

include outcome, means, and boundary. The authors define outcome interdependence as the

alignment toward attaining objectives and winnings, while means interdependence entails roles,

resources, and task interdependence. Group members share available resources, they are assigned

different roles, and task interdependence encompasses the team adherents having a common

arrangement on how to split and allocate tasks. Shimizu et al. argues that if these components are

well-aligned, they result in the amplified output of the learning group. Boundary interdependence

is discontinuities that segregate group members from each other but unify separate groups such

as outside competitors.

With regard to co-teaching by GE and ESOL teachers, Shimizu et al. contend that the

components of social interdependence are interrelated and often impact the factors of multi-

professional collaboration. Boundary dependence between the GE and ESOL teachers determines their collaboration level in classroom settings. Outcome interdependence or problem-solving requires that the GE and ESOL teachers embrace professional competencies and collaboration as a team. Dividing resources such as instruction and language acquisition competencies should be the epicenter of interprofessional work in bilingual classrooms.

 According to Assalahi (2019), social interdependence theory provides the theoretical context for comprehending the social breadth of motivation for the target language community. It reflects the important roles that instructors play in motivating students to learn the second language. In this case, the conquest of co-teaching in bilingual classrooms is contingent on whether the GE and ESOL teachers share common goals in terms of fostering the academic attainment and language acquisition of GE students and ELLs. Positive interdependence between the GE and ESOL teachers results in greater achievement and motivation, prompting each teacher to work towards outcomes that are beneficial to the other teacher and all students in the bilingual classroom. Assalahi contends that social interdependence theory emphasizes learning in a social co-constructed manner, whereby the instructors' orientations should be equally focused on the needs of students, including the ELLs.

Loh and Ang (2020) suggest that to facilitate positive interdependence, teachers should structure interactive tasks and goals to ensure learners work together to attain the anticipated objectives. Learners should be assigned rotating roles to ensure they seek each other's assistance in completing the shared tasks. The authors offer that this ensures that students realize that their individual and team performance is mutually caused by themselves and others' team members' efforts. Consequently, in co-teaching partnerships, cohesion and unity among culturally and linguistically diverse students are extremely important. ELLs are partly expected to acquire

English proficiency by engaging with their peers in the classroom and learning academic content from GE teachers. Therefore, co-teaching in bilingual classrooms should focus on creating social interdependence opportunities for all students as well as GE and ESOL teachers to establish personal communication, interact, and develop trusting relationships that enable them to share resources, encourage one another, provide constructive feedback, and participate in the joint-celebration success. During such engagement between GE and ESOL teachers, new knowledge and ideas are formed, and information is reconstructed. This, in turn, enables the teachers to positively impact the students' cognitive abilities and reduce unnecessary miscommunication.

According to Shimizu et al. (2020), the psychological processes that influence positive interdependence include inducibility (openness influenced by others), substitutability (the extent to which a person's action substitute for others' actions), and positive cathexis (investment in positive psychological energy from external forces). The social interdependence theory indicates that an individual's socio-emotional welfare is expanded through joint interest and that new motives and goals are developed in competitive and cooperative situations. In co-teaching practices, Shimizu et al. contend that instructors should develop social interdependent attitudes among students and then assess their outcomes using the measure of competence judgment. In collaborative learning environments such as bilingual settings, effective c-teaching relationships between GE and ESOL teachers can improve students' interaction better, enabling them to attain higher educational outcomes.

Challenges of Co-Teaching

Wijaya and Santosa (2022) conducted a study on the challenges that novice English teachers in bilingual schools encounter in their line of work. Using the qualitative design method, the researchers used interviews and surveys to collect data. The study findings revealed that the

challenges facing this group of teachers are influenced by internal and external factors such as inadequate teacher preparation, poor relationships with parents and other teachers, poor students' attitudes, testing through assessments, and adhering to curriculum content. In terms of relationships with their peers, Wijaya and Santosa contend that educators in bilingual classrooms struggle to maintain a relationship with foreign teachers. This means that GE teachers face challenges in developing formidable relationships with their ESOL teachers. To avoid their relationship breaking down further, Wijaya and Santosa claim that one of the teachers tries to be as patient as possible because he or she wants to maintain a good relationship with their colleague. The authors advise instructors working in co-teaching models to build a good network and relationships with other teachers, particularly those they teach alongside in bilingual classrooms.

According to Sundqvist et al. (2020), co-teaching is a great intervention in promoting classroom diversity. The authors conducted a study in which they investigated how special and general education teachers in Finland's Swedish-speaking schools utilize co-teaching. Finland is a bilingual republic with most educational institutions serving Swedish and Finnish-speaking populations. Despite studying in Swedish-speaking schools, the Finnish students receive minimal educational support to enable them to catch up with the native students, leading to lower academic outcomes.

Sundqvist et al. contend that co-teaching, where GE instructors and special education teachers (SETs) cooperate in the classroom can be a positive strategy for inclusive education. However, for co-teaching to be successful, the authors agreed that the roles performed by STEs and GE teachers should be more collaborative. By teaching all students in a regular classroom and bringing the SET into the common classroom, Sundqvist et al. assert that co-teaching

improves instructors' capabilities to distinguish between learners as well as meet their individual needs without having to exclude some learners from the regular classroom.

According to Sundqvist et al., having two instructors with dissimilar aptitudes in one classroom enhances flexibility in terms of differentiating and grouping. In the "teaming" co-teaching model where teachers equally deliver instructions to students, Sundqvist et al. contend that teachers should strive to acquire necessary collaborative skills such as the ability to share responsibility and good communication skills. To ensure successful co-teaching implementation, Sundqvist et al. propose that co-teaching should be emphasized in all teacher training programs. The authors also suggest that school principals should promote school development that focuses on inclusive education and encouraging teacher collaboration.

In bilingual classrooms, co-teachers, GE and ESOL teachers are responsible for selecting content and language goals, developing small group and whole class learning activities, and aligning appropriate standards. In addition, these co-teachers are required to assess both content and language goals for all learners collaboratively and plan for appropriate scaffolds. Dove and Honigsfeld (2021) emphasized that classroom lessons in co-teaching practices should be collaboratively planned and implemented, with co-teachers actively participating in the entire lesson and varying their co-teaching approaches depending on the nature of the curriculum and students. Also, both teachers should participate in summative and formative assessment practices and constantly participate in professional reflections on their impact on student learning.

However, Dove and Honigsfeld claimed that deep-level collaboration in co-teaching practices in inclusive learning environments for ELLs and Multilingual learners (MLs) is hindered by the long-standing culture of individualism and teacher isolation as well as teachers'

preference to preserve their individual autonomy. Teacher collaboration is instrumental to successful co-teaching in inclusive ENL classrooms comprising ELLs and MLs.

Capitalizing on Inclusive Pedagogy

Inclusive pedagogy is a major evidence-based practice and theoretical framework that suggests teachers identify and respond to all students' needs and offer further support to some students to make lessons accessible to all. Dove and Honigsfeld (2021) suggest that a key feature of successful inclusive pedagogy is equitable learning opportunities for all learners and instructor collaboration. This collaboration is centered on co-teaching practices that enable two or more instructors to strategize, implement, and assess instruction for the sake of ELLs while also delivering differentiated instruction to all learners.

Dove and Honigsfeld contend that formal collaborative co-teacher practices to support ELLs' and GE students' academic and linguistic development should have a direct instructional plan infused in the education of these students. The instructional activities that collaborative co-teaching GE and ESOL teachers should focus on include curriculum development and alignment, joint lesson planning, collaborative assessment of student work, co-developing instructional materials, and co-teaching. Also, Dove and Honigsfeld provide that co-teachers in inclusive ENL classrooms should engage in non-instructional collaborative activities like instructor research, joint professional development, participating jointly in extracurricular activities, and conducting parent-teacher conferences.

Co-Teaching Practices and Findings

According to Dávila et al. (2017), English learners (ELs) make up the majority of the budding section of the student populace in schools across the U.S. The National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES, 2022) indicates that from 2010 to 2019, the EL population

increased by 1.2%, noting that in some states it went up to as much as 19.6 %. The increase in

this population segment has brought about new challenges. The most pressing issue in America's

education practice and policy has been to search for mechanisms to improve the academic

outcomes of these ELs. To advance the academic results of the ELs, Dávila et al. claim that most

American schools have implemented collaborative education guidelines as they are deemed to

offer ELs the linguistic backing they require in the academic content area. Also, collaborative

teaching practices are considered a way of minimizing physical and budgetary restraints in

overcrowded American schools. Dávila et al. (2017) contend that most school districts prefer co-

teaching models because they offer better prospects for small-group teaching, have a smaller

student-teacher ratio, and allow access to comprehensible academically and linguistically

sophisticated content.

Selecting Co-Teaching Dyads

Dávila et al. conducted a study on how English as a Second Language (ESL) and content

area co-teaching were implemented in an urban high school located in the U.S. southeast. The

data was collected for one year and was analyzed through sociocultural perspectives on learning.

The authors' findings indicate that before assigning teachers to co-teaching dyads, school

administrators should consult or partner with the affected teachers, otherwise, the latter are likely

to develop feelings of powerlessness, resentfulness, and ineffectiveness in the classroom. For co-

teaching models involving GE and ESOL teachers to work effectively, Dávila et al. contend that

teachers should be given an opportunity to give their insights into classroom roles, space, and

educational practices with their co-teachers, especially those they had negligible or no earlier

interaction. In multilingual classrooms where, co-teachers are not well introduced to each other,

they are likely to have problems collaborating in course and lesson planning. Also, the

relationships between such teachers are based on incompatible and territoriality pedagogical methods and goals. Due to the lack of co-teaching collaboration, Dávila et al. (2017) argue that ESOL teachers are marginalized by being considered the lower status instructors and end up being given the assistant roles within the classroom. The marginalization of ESOL teachers in the classroom increases the risk of ESL students failing to comprehend academic content, prompting some of them to engage in off-task conduct.

To address tensions between GE and ESOL teachers relating to legitimacy and status, Dávila et al. contend that in co-teaching partnerships, teachers should be involved in decision-making before the start of the school year. Contradictory epistemological conventions in co-teaching partnerships can be minimized by pairing ESOL teachers with expertise in specific domains with instructors in that content area. The GE or content area instructors should communicate with ESOL teaching staff and observe how the latter partakes in ESL classes before agreeing to a co-teaching partnership. Dávila et al. contend that co-teaching should be comprehended from an instructional and interpersonal viewpoint interceded by individual identities. School administrators should hold a sense of urgency over staffing pronouncements relating to co-teaching, while ESOL and GE teachers should feel assured with the expertise and knowledge that their partner brings to co-teaching settings.

Teacher Preparation for Co-Teaching

Martínez-Álvarez (2021) conducted a study on how teacher education curtails the effectiveness of co-teaching partnerships in inclusive bilingual classroom contexts. The authors claim that teacher education programs can prepare instructors to understand and respond to the diverse needs of learners. Also, these programs enable teachers to address complexities relating to the intersectionality of differences in culture, disability, and language that affect the learning

process. Martínez-Álvarez claims that participating in preparation programs and research efforts

can help teachers overcome the complexities of diverse classrooms and duly prepare co-teachers

for handling students in inclusive bilingual classrooms. This is because the teaching education

programs equip instructors with competencies they could require in inclusive classrooms.

To alleviate gaps in teacher competencies, particularly those handling dual language education

classrooms, Martínez-Álvarez recommends that teacher education programs use critical

pedagogical approaches to prepare teacher candidates for instructional action. Also, the teacher

education programs should be centered on cultural theoretical approaches like DSE (disability

studies in education) and CHAT (cultural historical activity theory) because they help instructors

to better understand how to practice in actual inclusive bilingual classrooms. The theoretical

foundation should be aligned with clear, relevant implications and practical applications to

address the key historical contradictions that are outlined in inclusive bilingual education.

Mentoring and Co-Teaching

  A study by Rabin (2019) examined the benefits of co-teaching mentorship and the impact

of co-teachers developing collaborative relationships with one another. According to the author,

today's teachers' environments for collaboration are unsupportive, competitive, and isolating. In

the past, the mentor-teachers would gradually release teacher-candidates until they were able to

function independently. While using the gradual release model, the mentor and candidate

teachers would alternate teaching responsibilities instead of reflecting on their practice as a

means for improving collaboration. Traditionally, the mentors guided the teacher-candidates'

socialization into existing structures and beliefs, with the latter expected to replicate what they

observed, which, in turn, helped to preserve the status quo.

However, Rabin claims that teacher-candidates assume instructing, planning, and assessing for entire disciplines. This undermines the learning of teacher-candidates, prompting them to struggle to reflect on their practice and enhancing student learning. To alleviate the struggles of teacher-candidates, Rabin proposes the adoption of a mentorship model in co-teaching in order to increase the confidence of teacher-candidates and enhance student learning outcomes. Mentorship by experienced teachers increases teacher-candidates' confidence in their classroom management skills and enables them to meet the learners' diverse needs. Rabin asserts that candidates' perceptions of strong relationships between mentor and candidate teachers enhance their engagement levels in the classroom.

The collaborative nature of co-teaching partnerships makes them a relational model, whereby the co-teaching collaborations become unsuccessful if relational building is unsupported, neglected, and subjected to judgment. Rabin claims that relationships in co-teaching partnerships have to be developed comprehensively for teachers to successfully co-teach, learn from teaching, and give each other feedback. The mentorship context also applies in inclusive bilingual classrooms, with GE teachers sometimes expected to be mentors to the ESOL teachers. Due to the mentorship nature of their co-teaching partnership, their relationship could face a power imbalance. Consequently, the GE and ESOL teachers end up failing to share meaningful feedback during their co-teaching collaboration. According to Rabin, co-teaching without focusing on teachers' relationships risk isolating school environments, making them unconducive for teachers.

Examining Co-Teaching and Co-Planning

Mofield (2019) conducted a study on how gifted education teachers collaborate with GE instructors to co-teach and co-plan. The authors found that the collaboration between these

teachers elicits some benefits, but barriers also arise in the process. Mofield contends that collaboration fosters admittance to the general curriculum by aiding the allotment of instructional support between GE and ESOL teachers. However, in gifted education, collaboration with the GE teacher allows the gifted education educator to share his proficiency by supporting the talented learners within specific content areas so that they develop their talents and strengths in a domain and accelerate beyond the general curriculum. This type of collaboration improves Tier I instruction by implementing differentiation, whereby the co-teachers adapt the process, content, and learning environment depending on learner needs and strengths. According to Mofield, using the co-teaching model in gifted education increases opportunities for co-teachers to enhance talent development through acceleration and enrichment.

Co-teaching in multi-bilingual or differentiated classrooms enhances the interest and engagement levels of gifted students. This is because gifted education teachers are able to facilitate in-depth, meaningful learning activities. Mofield found out that highly talented students are more excited, less distracted, and more interested in learning when there is a collaboration between the gifted education and GE educator general education instructor.

Also, co-teaching increases students' engagement and excitement because of the additional complexity, challenge, and depth that is added to the learning process. This, in turn, increases students' understanding of the content and enhances their confidence in achieving the required goals and outcomes. Mofield asserts that in bilingual classrooms comprising ELL students, the collaboration between the GE and ESOL teacher can help them identify gifted, foreign students who are able to quickly understand and speak the English language. Spotting these students allows the ESOL teacher to give such students more complex tasks to enhance their understanding of the English language and curriculum content. Honigfeld and Dove (2008)

report that co-teaching teams in ESL classrooms should strive to establish rapport with one another and accommodate each other's teaching and disciplinary styles.

Despite the benefits of GE and ESOL collaboration in inclusive bilingual classrooms, several factors hinder successful collaboration between these teachers. One major barrier is the lack of time and proper structure to co-teach and co-plan. Mofield contends that the schedules of GE teachers do not sometimes coincide with those of gifted education teachers, thus curtailing chances of a successful collaboration.

Another obstacle facing co-teaching practices is conflicting assumptions between GE and gifted education teachers. Mofield claims that most GE teachers believe they have a better understanding of the learning needs of gifted students, hence requiring them to meet the teacher's expectations. This closed mindset when teaching gifted students is a huge challenge because it curtails the latter from fully realizing their potential. Also, the gifted education teacher assumes that the GE teachers do not like supporting differentiation. In inclusive bilingual classrooms comprising of ELL students, these conflicting assumptions between the GE and ESOL teachers hinder successful co-teaching partnerships, adversely impacting the academic outcomes of all students, particularly the ELL learners.

Classroom Discourse in Co-Teaching

A study by Wang (2019) examined how classroom interactions between a pre-service teacher and co-teacher undertaking a master's program in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL). The co-teaching site was a university in the northeastern U.S. The study findings revealed that in classroom co-teaching, there are interactionally complex discourse moments between co-teachers as well as moments of advancement to the instructional agenda. The discourse is attributed to some co-teachers taking the leading role while the other takes the

non-leading role. Wang claims that role of the non-leading teacher in the co-teaching partnership is mediating a conversation between the students and the leading teacher so as to keep the conversation flowing and ensure that students give expected answers through multiple responses. As a result, the author notes that non-leading teachers become an interactional resource in co-teaching contexts, which is instrumental in advancing the instructional agenda. Therefore, when one of the teachers is entirely focused on executing the pre-planned agenda and is not aware of the students' learning needs or miscommunication at the moment, the other teacher intervenes by mediating the miscommunication with the students.

Sometimes, classroom discourse can interrupt the instructional agenda, but this problem can be rectified by co-teachers focusing on the students' learning needs. Also, the discourse can be alleviated through the leading teacher appreciating the role of the non-leading teacher as an interactional resource. Wang contends that non-leading or novice teachers' responses limit unforeseen student contributions and can gloss over by the leading teacher due to their indifferent understanding of the practice intention. Such miscommunication between leading and non-leading co-teachers results in them wasting a lot of time attempting to coordinate their classroom talk and determining each other's intentions. As a result, Wang asserts that the occupation of the non-leading teachers is not entirely fulfilled if there is a lack of effective teacher collaboration. In bilingual classrooms, there is a need for cohesive co-teaching partnerships between GE and ESOL teachers in order to realize their instructional agenda. If the ESOL takes up the non-leading teacher occupation, the leading teacher (GE instructor) should regard the former as an interactional resource in the co-teaching context.

Perceptions and Attitudes to Co-Teaching

Shimizu et al. (2022) developed questionnaires for 258 students to determine how they perceived social interdependence with regard to their readiness for interprofessional collaborative learning. The questionnaires were administered online to the students anonymously, but a Readiness for Interprofessional Learning Scale was used to determine the participants' readiness for interprofessional learning. After data analysis, Shimizu et al. (2022) claimed that questionnaires were great data collection tools because they promoted exploratory factor analysis and helped with exploring the underlying structure of co-teaching and instructional interdependence.

In a separate study, Shimizu et al. (2020) conducted a modified Delphi procedure to to arrive at the opinion of how co-teaching can be harnessed in inclusive multilingual classrooms. The authors found the Delphi procedure to be effective because it was designed to establish consensus and gather opinions from professionals within a specific field. This is achieved through building consensus among experts through multiple consultation rounds. For this capstone, the Delphi procedure will help in the successful implementation of the co-teaching model and acceptance of feedback from the data analyzed.

Similarly, Sundqvist et al. (2020) employed online surveys and questionnaires containing open-ended and multiple-choice questions as the data collection instruments. The participants were identified through a website comprising data on all of Finland's Swedish-speaking schools. The authors found the questionnaire to be more effective in data collection because it can be modified and tailored toward the research goals and characteristics of the study participants.

Conclusion

Successful co-teaching occurs in the context of robust relationships that can sustain the creative process. Co-teaching models are marred with numerous challenges due to misunderstandings between the GE and ESOL teacher. The challenges are also attributed to differences in knowledge acquisition rates and the achievement gap between ELLs and GE students and ESOL co-teachers in inclusive bilingual classrooms should learn to develop and nurture their relationships to ensure they are adequately prepared for their co-teaching roles. Cultivating co-teaching relationships enables instructors to improve student learning outcomes. School districts should develop teacher education and mentorship programs that can increase the competencies of GE and ESOL instructors co-teaching in inclusive bilingual classrooms. In chapter 3, I will present a PD that we help teachers explore, analyze, and apply the different co-teaching models. I will also present some helpful strategies they can use when having an initial meeting with their co-teacher.

Chapter 3: Description of the Product and Tools

Introduction

Co-teaching in bilingual classrooms is always a challenging prospect due to the lack of coherence between general teachers (GE) and English as the second language (ESOL) teachers. The lack of proper collaborative approaches between GE and ESOL teachers hinders successful co-teaching and adversely impacts student learning. The biggest casualties of incoherent co-teaching are the English Language Learners (ELLs) because they are denied the requisite support to understand the curriculum content and keep pace with their classmates whose English is their first language. The learning needs of these ELLs can be met through the development of strong co-teaching approaches. The goal of the PD is to determine how co-teaching transforms instruction and language acquisition.

Structure of the PD

The PD will be implemented in 3 days by being presented to two groups of teachers on daily basis. Each group presentation will last for 45 minutes. The first group will comprise grade k to 2 teachers, and the second will have grade 3 to 5 teachers. The PD presentation will take place in an available school classroom as each group consists of about 20 GE and ESOL instructors. All materials for this PD can be found in the Appendix A.

Day 1

The aim of the first day of the PD presentation is to have teachers review co-teaching models so that they can understand how to apply them on day two of the PD presentation. Teachers will receive a detailed agenda, Figure 1, of the first day giving details about co-teaching models. The first activity is to have the teachers complete a questionnaire, see Figure 2, about their past co-teaching experiences. They will be given 10 minutes to fill the questionnaire

and it will be collected at the end of the session. The goal of giving the teachers a questionnaire

is to collect information about different co-teaching models and use them as the basis for

training. Also, the questionnaire will seek to obtain information about how they implement co-

teaching programs, the challenges faced, and their insights on how to improve co-teaching. It

will also aim at getting feedback on how each teacher experiences collaboration,

interdependence, and cooperation with their co-teachers. This exercise is important because poor

co-teaching collaboration between GE and ESOL teachers impacts summative and formative

assessment practices and denies ELLs access to comprehensible academic and linguistic content

(Dove & Honigsfeld, 2021). Each group of GE instructors and ESOL teachers will be given a

printed 8-item questionnaire for them to fill. The teachers will not be required to indicate their

names on the questionnaire to ensure they do not fear providing objective and honest

information. Of the 8 questionnaire items, two are related to the teachers' backgrounds, two will

deal with school information, and the other four will focus on the professional roles and tasks of

co-teachers, their collaboration with others, and the school support system.

During the next 25 minutes of the first day session, the teachers will be placed in groups

of four and they will independently read an article containing information about the seven co-

teaching strategies and examples. The groups will be form randomly by using color popsicle

sticks. This session will last for ten minutes after which the teachers will be required to discuss

questions in the handout, Figure 3, for about eight minutes. Each group will then be expected to

choose two representatives who will share their group's answers and discussion findings. This

activity will last ten minutes to ensure each group is given enough time for presentation. The

goal to is to enhance the teachers' collaborative skills. To ensure successful co-teaching

implementation, Sundqvist et al. (2020) propose that co-teaching should be emphasized in all

teacher training programs. The PD will close with a briefing of tomorrow's activities, which, in this case will be practicing some co-teaching models by using data. The teachers will be expected to bring along a copy of their class roster in the next PD presentation.

Day 2

On the second day of the PD presentation, teachers will receive a detailed agenda, see Figure 4, on applying co-teaching practices in the classroom. The teachers will discuss and apply some co-teaching models using their own student data. This will allow the teachers to reflect on their previous co-teaching practices and experiences and acquire new competencies on alternative co-teaching. To help the teachers reflect on their co-teaching practices, they will be required to complete a ten-question personality survey, see Figure 5, an exercise that will take about five minutes.

To identify the best co-teaching strategy that should be implemented with a specific group of students, teachers will be divided into three groups based on grade band, each comprising of six teachers, five GE teachers and one ESOL teacher. On their own, the teachers will watch a YouTube video dubbed "Essential Elements - The Six Models of Co-Teaching", see Figure 6. Each group will be provided with a tablet to watch the nine-minute video and take down notes. Using lessons from the video, each group will be given 15 minutes to list at least 10 of their students from this year who are ELLs and/or with an IEP and discuss the questions in the handout, see Figure 7. They will be given a further ten minutes to describe their students and identify the most suitable co-teaching model they can apply in the classroom. Rabin (2019) contends that reflecting on co-teaching practices helps teachers improve their instructional methods. This session will end by providing the teachers a Padlet link in which they will write something new they learned, and a perception or idea they had before and that with today's

activity was able to change. They will then be briefed about the day three of the PD presentation which will entail discussing how to build better collaborative relations with our co-teachers.

Day 3

On the third and final day, the PD presentation will aim to help the teachers understand the importance of building co-teaching relations in order to improve instruction and language acquisition. Participants will receive a detailed agenda, Figure 8, with goals and activities. The first activity will encompass reflecting on the results of the survey to help the teacher identify their preferred co-teaching mode. Each teacher will be required to write down the results in an index card and explain whether they agree or disagree with results. They will then be required to share the results with their colleagues for them to identify if they share any characteristics with other teachers. This exercise will take about ten minutes.

Next, the teachers will form groups of four teachers. The teachers will use their accounts of Education Modified and individually read an article on co-teaching practices. Then, they create a ten-item questionnaire by selecting questions from the articles and using their own preferences. Each group will then choose two members who will present the sketch to other groups. In the last ten minutes, all groups will come together to discuss the most common questions listed by the groups and then create a single document that will serve as a guide. At the end of session, the teachers will be required to list what they have learned from the 3-day PD and what they will implement in the next two months by using a Padlet link.

Suggestions Incorporated in the PD Presentation

The rest of the PD content will be presented using PowerPoint presentations and handouts. The handouts and PP presentation will be tailored for each group of teachers to ensure they capture their experiences in the classroom and the learning needs of their students. Due to

the numerous challenges associated with co-teaching, school administrators can support these programs by providing teachers with professional development opportunities to learn about co-teaching, conflict resolution, and collaboration. Also, the administrators should give co-teachers the autonomy to plan their lessons, divide tasks and responsibilities, and evaluate student progress (Dávila et al., 2017). The administrators should also make teaching resources available to the co-teachers to enable them to address students' needs and individualize instruction. Presenting the PD to teachers will positively impact co-teaching programs by ensuring greater cooperation between co-teachers. It will ensure that the teachers become more responsive to the students' needs, particularly the English language learners. In the next chapter, I will talk about conclusions made about this project and the implications of co-teaching on student's leaning and on teaching practices.

Chapter 4: Conclusions

Introduction

The research objective was to investigate how co-teaching can transform instruction and language acquisition. Research on this topic was informed by the prevailing challenges in the U.S. education system, whereby the main instruction system for English Language Learners (ELLs) has often been segregated from mainstream academic learning. According to Kabiru (1990), the differential treatment of ELLs by teachers derails their mastery of English, leading to lower academic outcomes. To enhance ELLs' academic outcomes and language acquisition, education stakeholders at the federal and state levels have recommended that school districts shift to a more integrated teaching model. In adherence to these recommendations, most school districts adopted a co-teaching model that ensures ELLs are integrated into mainstream instruction and classroom settings. The co-teaching model involves pairing general education (GE) teachers with English as the second language (ESOL) teachers in the same classroom. These teachers collaborate in instruction, lesson planning, and student assessment. When implemented intentionally and thoughtfully, co-teaching effectively meets all students' unique learning needs, including those of ELLs (Butera & Buchs, 2019). Co-teaching models also offer ELLs a more diverse learning environment, enabling them to better comprehend grade-level content.

However, the major problem identified in this literature review is that co-teaching models face many barriers that limit their effectiveness in transforming instruction and language acquisition. The greatest challenge co-teaching models face is the lack of cooperation between GE and ESOL teachers. Consequently, the learning needs of ELLs are not adequately addressed,

negatively affecting their academic outcomes, language acquisition, and ability to keep pace with classmates whose English is their first language.

Conclusions

One major takeaway from the research is that poor co-teaching relationships between GE and ESOL teachers are sometimes attributed to external factors beyond their control. Among the external barriers to successful co-teaching is inadequate teacher preparation on how they can collaborate with their colleagues in the classroom. According to Sundqvist et al. (2020), educators, particularly general teachers are not adequately trained to teach students with special education needs, including how to collaborate with ESOL teachers. This highlights the importance of school districts and teacher training institutions to incorporate co-teaching in the teacher training programs and the curriculum.

Another takeaway from this research is that GE and ESOL teachers should strive on their own to make co-teaching a success by acquiring necessary collaborative skills such as sharing responsibility and good communication skills (Rabin, 2019). However, school administrators should offer them the requisite support to foster their collaboration, such as independence in lesson planning and student assessment and access to critical teaching technologies such as digital whiteboards, communication apps, and learning management platforms. With this in mind, co-teachers should be partly held responsible for failures in co-teaching practices.

Apart from fostering student learning and language acquisition, co-teaching is also helpful in reducing budgetary and physical constraints faced by most schools across the U.S. According to Dávila et al. (2017), co-teaching models allow students access to comprehensible academic and linguistic content, especially when being taught in small-group settings. This

information indicates that co-teaching models can offer numerous benefits to schools if implemented properly.

Implications for Student Learning

If the barriers preventing the success of co-teaching models are properly addressed as recommended in the research, students could benefit immensely from this approach. Stobaugh and Everson (2019) note that co-teaching models would benefit students by exposing them to a wide range of teaching techniques, learning styles, and data-driven instruction. ELLs participating in co-taught programs will also benefit from increased attention and time from teachers, improved classroom communities, increased emphasis on their study and social skills, and cognitive strategies. In addition, the co-teaching models will expose ELLs to higher-level discussion and concepts than those found in segregated education settings. Mofield (2019) claims that ELLs interactions with GE teachers and other students whose English is their first language could enhance their language acquisition, thus increasing their self-confidence and enabling them to interact more naturally with other students. The author further asserts that co-teaching in bilingual classrooms will contribute to increased student self-esteem and strong student-student relationships. Despite the challenges of co-teaching, student learning can be fostered using this model due to greater inclusivity in bilingual classrooms and increased teacher attention to student needs.

Implications for Teaching

If co-teachers strive to make their co-teaching relationships strong, it could contribute to greater opportunities for professional growth, increased professional satisfaction, and better opportunities for collaboration. According to Mofield, using the co-teaching model in gifted education increases opportunities for co-teachers to enhance talent development through

acceleration and enrichment. Also, co-teaching gives ESOL teachers greater insights into the realities of the general classroom, while GE teachers learn valuable lessons in accommodating, planning, and instructing students with behavioral or learning difficulties. Lakkala et al. (2021) assert that co-teachers complement each other in the classroom by utilizing their unique skills to promote student learning. Strong collaboration between co-teachers could lead to good friendships that, in turn, increase student morale and performance.

In bilingual classrooms, adopting co-teaching models allows experimentation with new teaching methodologies, provides flexible testing situations, and enables co-teachers to conduct hands-on activities and offer whole group instruction while still meeting ELLs individual needs. Dove and Honigsfeld (2021) contend that collaborative co-teaching enables instructors to focus on curriculum development and alignment, joint lesson planning, collaborative assessment of student work, co-developing instructional materials, and co-teaching. In addition, it enables co-teachers to provide one another with valuable feedback, share expertise, and assist each other in combating accountability, content, and structure issues. Overall, co-teaching models increase learning and teaching potential if implemented thoroughly and collaboratively.

Recommendations

Future research should focus on how co-teaching models in bilingual classrooms can be implemented in specific subjects such as math and sciences because most ELLs struggle with STEM subjects. With co-teaching focusing on the students' individual learning needs, incorporating these models in STEM subjects, even in the general instruction classroom, would have a great, positive impact on student performance and academic outcomes.

Also, future research should conduct follow-up studies on ELL students who have moved to higher grade levels to determine if they maintain the same trajectory in language acquisition

and classroom engagement. Follow-up data should be obtained to determine if co-teachers and school administrators require additional training in co-teaching to ensure they implement the model effectively. Additionally, further studies and data is required to evaluate whether administrators are continuing to offer co-teaching teams support or if it has decreased over time. Researchers should conduct a study to contrast the effectiveness of co-teaching and specially designed instruction in language acquisition.

Final Thoughts

Despite its benefits, co-teaching in bilingual classrooms remains challenging because of internal and external factors that impact effective collaboration among co-teachers. Undoubtedly, the lack of cooperation between GE and ESOL teachers negatively impacts student engagement, morale, and academic performance. Poor co-teaching relationships arise when co-teachers fail to collaborate in selecting content and language goals, developing small group and whole-class learning activities, and aligning appropriate standards. However, co-teachers can positively impact co-teaching programs by ensuring greater cooperation with their colleagues. Educators should collaborate in responding to students' unique needs, particularly English language learners. Due to the numerous challenges associated with co-teaching, school administrators can support these programs by providing teachers with professional development opportunities to learn about co-teaching, conflict resolution, and collaboration. Also, the administrators should give co-teachers the autonomy to plan their lessons, divide tasks and responsibilities, and evaluate student progress.

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Appendix

Figure 1

PD Agenda for Day 1

Outcome: Teachers will find different ways to collaborate in order to improve instruction practices and to enhance student learning.

Day 1 duration: 45 minutes

Purpose: teachers will review co-teaching models/strategies to be understand them to apply on day 2 of the PD.

Warm up: please complete the questionnaire about your past co-teaching experiences. This will be collected at the end of today's session. (15 minutes)

Learning goal: What are the different co-teaching models, and how they can be implemented?

- Review co-teaching models

Activity

- In groups of 4 take turns to read and analyze the pdf about seven co-teaching strategies and examples (please open the link in your laptops). (10 minutes)

- When you finish, discuss with your group the questions in the handout. (8 minutes)

- Share out (8 minutes)

Closing

Tomorrow we will have the opportunity to practice some of the co-teaching models by using some data. Please bring a copy of your class roster as we will use it in our activity tomorrow.

Figure 2

Teacher Questionnaire: Past Co-teaching Experience

Question	Feedback
How do you allocate your teaching time during the school year?	
How often and in what form, as a co-teacher, collaborate with other teachers?	
If you collaborate in co-teaching, in which subjects do you teach?	
What challenges have you faced while cooperating with other teachers in co-teaching?	
How often would you like to engage in co-teaching activities?	
Does your school, particularly the administrators offer adequate support to co-teachers?	
How would rate the effectiveness of the co-teaching programs in improving the academic outcomes of ELLs?	
What improvements would you recommend in co-teaching programs in your schools?	

Figure 3

Discussion Questions

After reading about the different co-teaching models and their examples, please discuss the

following questions:

➢ Have you ever used any of the models mentioned in the pdf?

➢ If you have used any of the strategies, have you used them as described? Did you make

   any adjustments to the models/strategies when applying them in the classroom?

➢ If you were to try a different strategy/ model, which one would you try? Why?

➢ What strategy do you think would be the most difficult to apply? Why?

Figure 4

PD Agenda for Day 2

Duration: 45 minutes

Purpose: teachers will discuss and apply some co-teaching models/strategies using their own students.

Warm up: please complete the 10- question teacher personality survey using the link provided. (5 minutes)

Learning goal: What would be the best co-teaching strategy to be implemented with a specific group of students?

Activity: Please sit with your grade band. Since we have 15 GE teachers and 5 ESOL teachers, each grade will have one ESOL teacher in their groups. Therefore, we will have three groups of 6 teachers.

- Please watch the video about the Essential Elements for Co-teaching models/strategies. You may want to write down some notes. (9 minutes)
- Each group will list at least 10 of their students from this year who are ELLs, and/or students with IEPs. Based on the video you just watched, you are going to discuss the questions in the handout. (15 minutes)
- Share out: each group will describe their students and then will explained what model they chose and why they chose it. (10 minutes)

Closing

Teachers will be provided with a Padlet link in which they will write something new they learned, and a perception or idea they had before and that with today's activity was able to change. Tomorrow we will discuss how to build better collaborative relations with our co-teachers.

Figure 5

Teacher's Personality Survey https://www.proprofs.com/quiz-school/story.php?title=what-isyour-teacher-personality

- This survey will be used as a warm up activity. Teachers need to complete the survey and make sure to save their results as they will use them in the next day's warm up. The purpose of this activity is to identify their teaching style.

Figure 6

YouTube Video Link https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=21UeMPnO6-Y

Table for Video

Model	Example

Figure 7

Discussion Questions Day 2

➢ How this co-teaching model supports differentiated learning in the classroom?

➢ Why did you group the students the way you did?

➢ What would be a back up strategy if the first one doesn't work?

Figure 8

PD Agenda for Day 3

Duration: 45 minutes

Purpose: is to understand the importance of building proper co-teaching relations to improve instruction and language acquisition.

Warm up: thinking about the results from the survey about what type of teacher are you, please write down your result in the index card, and explained if you agree or disagree with the results. Please be ready to share with the rest of the teachers. (10 minutes)

Learning goal: What would be the best way to get to meet your co-teacher partner? What would be some specific steps you will take to make this journey easier?

Activity: You will sit in groups using the colors from the popsicle sticks you got when you entered the classroom. You will form groups of four teachers. (25 minutes including presentations)

- You will read the article on you own about co-teaching essentials. Then, with your group you will create a 10-item questionnaire by choosing questions from the article. You will do this based on preferences.
- You will choose 2 members of the group to present them in a sketch form. When presenting them you don't need to ask all 10 questions.
- Share out: each group will have the opportunity to present their skit to the audience.

Closing

After the share out, discuss what were the most common questions chosen by the groups. We will create a single document that can serve as our guide. In the Padlet, please write about something new you learned during this 3-day PD, and something you will want to try in the next 2 months. (10 minutes)