

Strengthening Co-teaching Practices

by

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Abstract

Co-teaching is a well-known practice utilized by educators when working with specialized or identified learners. Although co-teaching is incredibly common across every school, the potential of co-teaching is often hindered with obstacles that educators are not aware of how to mitigate. The overarching question of this capstone is: How can teachers strengthen their co-teaching to support their ELL students' linguistic learning outcomes? The purpose of this capstone is to provide educators with information about co-teaching in order to apply and reflect on their own practices and implement new methods and strategies provided. Previous research suggests that co-teaching is only strong when co-planning time is sufficiently provided. Oftentimes, teachers are not allotted enough time to collaborate and map out their ideas they plan to teach. This hurdle has the potential to be resolved when collaborative team educators advocate the importance of adequate planning and collaboration time to administration. The professional development created to follow up the capstone presents participants with the necessary findings to incorporate into future co-teaching and other collaborative practices. By showing an understanding of the benefits and overall academic outcomes found with proper ENL co-teaching practices and approaches, educators can better meet the needs of their students.

Keywords: English Language Learners, English as a New Language, Collaborative Teaching, Co-teaching, Co-planning

Chapter 1: Introduction

How do educators ensure the needs of their English Language Learners (ELLS) are always adequately being met? Although the English as a New Language (ENL) teacher maintains a strong connection with the ELLs to pinpoint their exact language acquisition and learning goals, it is also within the general classroom teacher's job to support the students too. ENL teachers and the classroom teacher are expected to pre-plan and design suitable content and instruction to their students including the ELLs. It is crucial for these teachers to effectively collaborate and co-teach (co-operative teaching) as well as find and maintain an appropriate teaching style or dynamic based on the language proficiencies and learning levels of the shared students. Honigsfeld and Dove (2008) shared that positive co-teaching practices “meet challenges and enjoy rewards of helping a new generation become integrated into the fabric of the classroom and the school community” (p. 11).

An effective co-teaching dynamic can be difficult to build or maintain in various school settings, yet it greatly impacts ELLs' linguistic and social learning outcomes. Although it sounds simple if you tend to get along with your co-teachers, co-teaching can lead to imbalances and learning gaps if not implemented properly. Therefore, this capstone will address how can teachers strengthen their co-teaching practices to support their ELL students' learning outcomes? Greater collaboration between ENL or ESL teachers and content-area teachers (English Language Arts) has been advocated for a long time throughout the English language teaching profession (Davison, 2006). The common documented problems within education is that there is a sufficient lack of proper co-planning time as well as tensions arising between both teachers negotiating their teaching roles within the classroom (Jacobson, 2015).

In this capstone, I will be using the terms: English as a New Language, collaboration, and co-operative teaching (co-teaching). Common acronyms I will be using include: ENL –English as a New Language, ESL- English as a Second Language, ELLs- English Language Learners, ELA-English Language Arts.

Significance of the Problem

The lack of co-teaching and collaboration impacts ELLs within a school setting by creating interruptions or inconsistencies within their language learning progress. Non-ELL students can also face problems in regards to unorganized/ineffective co-teaching models within their content area classes yet ELLs will experience the majority of drawbacks caused by challenges. These challenges include: lack of continuity with previously assigned co-teachers, tensions from sharing ownership and sole authority over the classroom, inconsistent or poor communication between teachers, co-teacher relationship failure and the most common challenge: lack of co-planning time (Honigsfeld & Dove, 2008). The three general areas being impacted for ELLs include linguistic challenges, cultural adjustments/outcomes and complexity of assessment/evaluations.

Common learning challenges experienced by ELLs are caused by insufficient co-planning and co-teaching. For instance, ELLs are taught by one ENL teacher during their pull-out instruction each day where they focus and target more specific language demands depending on the students' proficiency. Within an integrated ELA class, the ELLs have different needs than non-ELL students within the content area. The ENL teacher in the ELA class is responsible for enhancing the ELLs understanding of English while simultaneously learning the classroom content (Honigsfeld & Dove, 2008). If the classroom content was not co-planned, the ENL teacher will be teaching the content as they go along each class. This can take away time from

the student to concentrate on their English acquisition, forming gaps within their learning and halting their comprehension of the ELA class content.

Educators and supporting staff need to become aware of the cultural adjustments and outcomes ELLs face caused by insufficient co-planning and co-teaching time. For instance, ELLs that are new arrivals are still experiencing levels of culture shock and discouragement from their lack of communication with their non-ELL peers. Researchers have studied goals of immigrant ELLs and how to become American. Immigrants view that in order to become a real American, they must fully adapt and communicate in English. It is seen as being a political and social marker within the American society that determines belonging. Crossing the language border is their way of becoming truly American (Olsen, 2000).

Adequate practices for co-teaching can reduce the amount of stigmatization towards ELL students. Instead of the ENL teacher separating the ELLs from their peers being taught by the general classroom teacher, they can become equally as included within the whole class when proper planning and instructional goals are carried out in advance. This allows the students to feel more included and involved with their peers, allowing their transition into an English dominant society to feel less isolating and discouraging (Honigsfeld & Dove, 2008).

Complexity of assessments and evaluations ELLs face caused by insufficient co-planning and co-teaching time. Teacher collaboration addresses the overall goal of having ELLs meet the required standards within local, state, and national level. The ENL teachers take the assessments and instruction and modify it to reach the proficiency levels of the ELLs. In order to adequately create such adjustments to reach these goals, teacher collaboration needs to be present. Assessments, evaluations and other performance indicators have to precisely align with the five TESOL standards. Interrupted collaboration between teachers can cause imbalance and

misalignment when trying to create instruction and assessments to master each standard. “ESL teachers are best equipped with strategies to address the varied linguistic needs of their students, but they cannot do it alone” (Honigsfeld & Dove, 2008, p. 11).

Purpose

In order to mitigate the question of: How can teachers strengthen their co-teaching practices to support their ELL students’ linguistic learning outcomes, an anticipated outcome is projected throughout the duration of this capstone. The anticipated outcome is that educators that work with ELLs can become aware of the pitfalls within co-teaching and how to avoid them. It will also provide research based information to help educators maintain consistent habits and practices with their teaching partner. Consequently, teacher partners will analyze their own habits when creating specific instruction. Educators attending the professional development will learn ways to set up strong co-teaching classroom dynamics and identify various aspects of strong/weak co-teaching practices over two sessions. One session will take place within the first month of the school year (September) whereas the final session will take place in December. Professional development participants will apply their findings, after the first session, within their teaching practices over the next several months and reflect their practices (new or old) during the final session. The learning target of the professional development states that participants will receive information on co-teaching to strengthen teaching dynamics. Ultimately, improving planning, instruction delivery and reflection on practice to promote ELLs academic successes as well as other students.

Conclusion

ENL teachers and general classroom teachers have a duty to fulfill in regards to co-planning and co-teaching for their ELL students in order to support and improve their linguistic

and social learning outcomes. To counteract issues that stem from insufficient co-planning habits or co-teaching relationships, this capstone and corresponding PD provide a synopsis of research based implementations to further incorporate within your teachings and ENL collaboration supports.

The reader can expect to find the following information within the remaining chapters. Chapter 2 consists of a literature review co-operative planning and teaching to support ELLs. Chapter 3 consists of a methods section providing a description of the final PD carried out to resolve the identified problem. Chapter 4 consists of the conclusion: introduction, conclusions, implications for students learning, implications for teaching, recommendations and any final thoughts. In addition, there is an appendix with materials that contribute to the overall capstone PD.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

Previous research conducted by experts have been summarized within this literature review to address the issues regarding how teachers can strengthen their co-teaching to support their ELL students' linguistic learning outcomes. Classrooms that require the collaboration between general education teachers and ENL teachers (or other supporting teachers) can ease challenges that arise within the teaching setting (Kloo & Zigmond, 2008). In order to establish a strong co-teaching dynamic, all teachers involved need to be effective and responsive collaborative figures in order to meet the needs of their students. Co-teaching provides efficient instruction for the students receiving it yet, there are common challenges that can alter the desired outcome with collaborative teaching (Pratt, 2014). In this capstone, I will be focusing on the challenges involved with co-teaching that impose a negative effect on ELL students and how their linguistic learning outcomes are shaped. I will be discussing various challenges including teaching incompatibilities, support from administration, logistics, communication, and power struggles. I will also examine what the literature says about multiple co-teaching models that yield positive outcomes for the students and teachers involved within the practice.

State Mandate

New York State provides mandates and regulations such as the New York State Commissioner's Regulations Part 154-2 (New York State Education Department [NYSED], 2021) that require the collaboration between general classroom teachers and ENL teachers in order to provide the identified ELL students with their required instructional minutes. These occur in integrated class periods with non-ELL students.

Depending on the ELLs' proficiency levels, the ENL teacher is required to co-teach the content instruction for 180 to 360 minutes per week. The co-teaching instruction varies from teacher to teacher yet it typically involves working in small groups with the ENL teacher, side by side with the content area teacher or a combination of both. A study conducted by Bauler and Kang (2020) documented that co-teachers developed resilient practices over the course of three years. The trends documented within the study concluded that co-planning time, even when limited, shows promising practices and outcomes for the ELL students. The educators were able to implement and share ideas together within their teaching that showed a positive trend within the ELL's New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT) scores. Although proficiency scores had improved, there were still markers that indicated challenges for establishing a co-teaching dynamic to fit the needs of their students. Specific barriers that created inconsistent and ineffective co-planning time were rarely under the fault of the teachers' but more so due to systematic and inconsistent scheduling and structured planning time being provided.

The Challenges in Co-teaching

Unsupported or improper co-teaching can result in creating a hostile learning and teaching environment for the teachers and students involved. The capacity of student learning is altered when teaching holds strong differences in opinions and the unwillingness to compromise (Orzolek, 2018). These issues can form when there are inconsistencies with cooperative or collaborative planning periods provided for the two teachers. The key to strong co-teaching is strong co-planning. Co-planning involves more than one teacher designing classroom instruction together to accommodate and implement with their students. Teachers are provided with required planning periods each day. Co-planning occurs when both teachers are provided with the same

daily planning schedule or weekly schedule. When co-planning is interrupted or not provided, the co-teaching loses effectiveness (Magiera, 2006). The study analysis provided by Magiera et al recorded that teachers lacking common planning time or short planning time felt ineffective as a team when meeting the needs of their students. Some teachers began getting coverage from paraprofessionals in order to get more time to co-plan with their team teachers and support teachers. Once provided with adequate co-planning time periods, teachers collaborating together are required to learn how to generate and share different ideas and strategies to plan out classroom instruction. It was also recorded that problems emerged when co-teachers did not receive proper understanding of the co-teaching process and had a lack of experience. Co-teaching models became challenging due to co-teachers having to figure it out for themselves as they go along rather than being provided with professional developments or collaborative workshops.

Incompatibility

A majority of teachers are not given the flexibility or choice when choosing their team teachers or co-teachers. Challenges arise when there is a lack of compatibility among the involved individuals. Although co-teaching is becoming more mainstream across the wide varieties of teaching methods, quality collaboration will not occur if there is not a healthy dynamic established first hand. Problems can occur when two co-teachers are expected to co-plan and co-instruct without proper support. The inability to problem solve or create solutions can generate hurdles within students' learning. In order to achieve such co-teaching harmony co-teachers must come together and put aside their differences and create successful academic and social environments for all of their shared students (Petrick, 2014). Teacher attitudes regarding collaboration efforts varied due to loose identities within their teaching areas, struggling to adapt

different routines, being reluctant to change, readiness and response of feedback and critiques and the teacher's own perception of their achievements (Davison, 2008). Such experiences show difficulty when establishing a strong partnership between ENL teachers and the content area classroom teachers.

Support from Administration

The key to understanding sufficient co-teaching models is to have adequate support by involved teachers and the administrators. Principals have the common goal of leading successful staff and students. In order to reach this goal, principals have to have a strong understanding and knowledge about leadership and teaming up teachers. This includes knowing how to cultivate engaging and collaborative environments where teachers obtain expertise for working together to help students achieve success (Clark & Clark, 2006). Teachers cannot be successful without a positive learning foundation within their school of employment. Having an administration that prioritizes knowledge about successful characteristics of effective teaching teams create successful collaborative teachers. Principals need to have an understanding of how teacher team structures are the building blocks for the various functions that cultivate student learning and overall academic success. Clark and Clark obtained data from the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) and found that supported scheduled planning time lead to: teachers provided with collaborative opportunities on curriculum standards, the ability to share and discuss ideas and decision making, community of cultured learning, and building strong relationships based on trust.

Logistics

Another barrier found within co-teaching challenges involves the logistics between multiple buildings ENL teachers experience. A study conducted by Vintan and Gallagher (2019)

shared perspectives of ESL teachers and the barriers they face with co-teaching and collaborating on ENL support. Not enough time was dedicated to each school they were required to travel to which led to inconsistent classroom push-ins and meetings with co-teachers and other school personnel. One participant in the study shared that co-teaching is very effective and teachers are usually more than willing to collaborate but the time given is often insufficient. ENL teachers were working between two different buildings, this led to frequent occurrences of unavailable planning time due to one teacher having free time to plan yet the collaborating teacher did not.

Importance of Communication

One of the most important skills to establish between co-teachers is the ability to effectively communicate. Good communication develops when co-teachers are able to listen to each other and discuss their own perspectives and ideas when planning instruction for their shared students during their co-planning periods (Scruggs & Mastropieri, 2017). Necessary elements required in building and maintaining strong communication skills include: being an active listener with your co-teacher, focus on the task by avoiding personal commentary, finding precise common goals, brainstorming solutions and desired outcomes, summarizing goals and the practice of monitoring progress and the goals attained (Gordon, 2003). Establishing these practices early on in a co-teaching relationship will decrease the potential challenges when teaching.

Power Struggle between Mainstream Teaching and Supporting Teacher

Research conducted by Whiting (2017) uncovered multiple perceptions between mainstream teaching and ENL classroom teaching (push-in versus pull-out instruction). A survey involving 71 ELL teachers mentioned the occurrence of student embarrassment in regards to certain co-teaching methods carried out during a push-in setting. Students would express

embarrassment over having to visibly receive help from the ENL teacher when compared to their English speaking peers. The feeling of self-consciousness or embarrassment can impact ones' ability to learn in the same environment as their non-ELL peers when compared to a pull-out setting. This is a situation that can be discussed and minimized when co-planning instruction and groupings between the mainstream teacher and the ENL teacher, but it is not totally avoidable. Some survey participants noted that they would prefer not working in the mainstream classroom as a co-teacher for the ELLs due to the restrictions when teaching the content. As a result, the lessons cannot be fully changed and modified to fit the needs of the lower proficiency level ELL students without changing the classroom setting therefore resulting in the ELL students' time not being adequately used. It was common to receive comments within the survey that had ENL teachers expressing their views on not feeling like they were really teaching in that shared setting with the mainstream teacher, or they were not confident in their role as a ENL co-teacher. The ENL teachers felt less empowered and would frequently follow cues by the content area teacher.

The survey findings also reflected on the challenges logistics ENL co-teachers faced when teaching in their shared classroom setting. Frustration would increase among students and teachers as an increase in volume and stimuli took place within the classroom by other students doing other tasks. ELLs would need small group or one on one instruction to focus on the objective where they needed more focus yet experienced interrupted focus. It became difficult to teach around the pace or dynamic of the general classroom teacher at times and the ENL teacher experienced constrictions in their teaching abilities and effectiveness. One participant stated that there is not enough space to work with ELLs experiencing confusion regarding the lesson.

Co-teaching Models

Effective collaboration skills and strategies between ENL teachers and content area teachers are not difficult to achieve when professional co-planning is prioritized and well supported. Both teachers are responsible for the success of the students, therefore any personal differences must be put aside and focus on the students' learning outcomes. Quality collaboration comes from collaborative co-teaching and team co-planning that implement various strategies, techniques, actions, and steps for students to enhance their own learning with (Murcia, 2001). The ability to reflect ideas between cooperative teachers enables more clear task conceptualization, stronger lesson plan designs, well rounded communication skills, social and emotional engagement, greater mutual goals between teachers and students and most importantly, meeting the needs of all students.

Collaborative Team Meeting Strategy

According to Abid (2021), collaborative team meeting strategy (CTMS) is a suggested planning strategy that incorporates social metacognitive strategies to draw on learners and their own self-management of learning. For instance, collaborative learning methodology for students incorporates various groups of learners to problem solve a task to reach a solution. The author states that within the collaborative learning environment, all learners remain engaged with the provided activities where they interact and discuss various ideas and perspectives of the other participants. This allows a shared goal to be created and guide their problem solving techniques through mutual decision making. The activity allowed the learners to essentially create their own knowledge. Therefore, the same approach can be used with teaching terms. According to Darling-Hammond (2010), teachers show evidence of improvement regarding meeting the needs of their students when they experience problem solving tasks with their teaching teams. A

collaborative approach can be a positive trend in improving teaching cooperative practices when creating learning activities for students and assessing academic and linguistic outcomes. As theorized by Abid, teachers that co-plan using the CTMS involve the reflective process that uses prior knowledge to create diverse and enriched lesson plans for their students. Abid published a study that implemented CTMS on new EFL (English as a Foreign Language) teachers. The study measured the impact of CTMS training had on the teachers' ability to co-teach, deliver content and design lesson plans. Once the results of the CTMS training were analyzed, it was evident that the lessons quality and delivery had improved since the pre-assessment prior to the training.

Partnership Teaching

Partnership teaching is a more in depth term for co-operative teaching, whereas partnership teaching builds on the foundation of co-operative teaching by connecting the work and strategies of both teachers involved (or other grade/level or team teachers) in order to plan the curriculum development and staff development throughout the school community (Davison, 2006). As previously mentioned within the literature review, some collaborative teaching dynamics are viewed more as an extra pair of hands within the classroom than an actual co-teacher. This assumption often leads to the doubling of instruction rather than proper differentiation.

Pirtle (2002) reports that adapting to partnership teaching creates learning environments that demonstrate the values of partnerships within learning. Values are shared and transmitted between the participants within the classroom between both students and teachers. The author indicates that there is no perfected form of partnership teaching, yet it is a model that requires commitment. Pirtle proposes that there are three tools involved in establishing a strong partnership teaching dynamic. Tool one involves utilizing your own independent thinking

regarding partnership. Teachers cannot approach the partnership model with a mindset to be in control, both participants need to create dynamic knowledge where ways of communication and expression are valued and heard. Tool two involves cultivating partnership growth, where commitment and appreciation between co-teachers and partners are valued and respected. The final tool involves the practice of asking questions. Being able to effectively question ideas or practices is like “locating the inner tuning fork of partnership” (p. 3). The author finds that the partnership teaching process allows partners to correct dominating behavior into more developing or guiding behavior, determine values within the partnership, structuring activities by the contributing voices and coordinate rhythms of all participants being taught that is enhancing.

ENL Co-teaching Models

Effective co-teaching has shown promising results for the teachers and ENL students that experience such models. According to Honingsfeld and Dove (2007), co-teaching is an effective approach for inclusive practices to meet the needs of shared English language learners. The co-teaching model helps students meet the standards at local, state and national levels and it provides an opportunity for cooperation between the content area teachers and the ENL teachers. In fact, according to Honingsfeld and Dove (2007), there are a variety of co-teaching models that are carried out with ENL inclusive classrooms. They include: One lead teacher and one teacher teaching on purpose, indicating that one teaching teaches the whole class while the other provides short mini lessons to students one on one or within small groups. Another model that the authors reference is the Two Groups model. This model involves two teachers that teach the same content. This model involves heterogenous groupings split between each teacher. Working in a split group with ELLs allows them to have additional learning opportunities and interactions with peers. When working in such groups, the ELLs can receive individual oral feedback from

the teacher within a less attention-drawing environment. The Two Groups model allows the re-teaching of students with ranging language proficiencies to be assigned to work with one of the two teachers to more specifically target the learning standards. This model involves flexible grouping arrangements that work together in brief periods. A distinct model is the Multiple Group model also identified as teachers that can monitor and assign student tasks while simultaneously practicing the skills. Some students can receive targeted instruction from one of the teachers while the other carries out centers or stations. A modification of the team teaching model is identified as the One Group. Here two teachers teach at the same time. Both teachers teach the same lesson by collaboration. The content teacher might teach the lesson while the supporting teacher (ENL) would carry out examples, explanations, key ideas and details and more to expand on the students' learning.

How to Enhance Collaboration of Instruction

Vintan and Gallagher (2019) carried out a study that investigated the current models of co-teaching and collaboration between ESL teachers and elementary mainstream teachers. The authors composed a series of recommendations to further enhance the linguistic learning outcomes for the ELLs within the study. ESL teachers that participated within the study had a common goal of using collaboration as a pedagogical tool to support their ELLs. With the number of ELLs increasing within schools across the country, it was apparent that collaborators take the roll seriously because it is so essential. According to the teachers, ESL collaboration is like dividing up the stress and responsibility and creating a toolkit of preparation. Other participants in the study explained that authentic collaboration relationships take time to develop. The relationships had extended further than sharing classroom experiences and situational conversations and focused more on minimizing role differentiation between each other within the

classroom. According to the authors, it is also encouraged for ENL teachers and the corresponding classroom teachers to attend professional developments and other learning opportunities that are aimed towards ENL topics. The teachers considered a strategy and method to increase ENL pedagogical awareness and practices which also harbors methods of collaboration within teaching teams that strive for their ELLs success. It is also the responsibility of other school personnel to carry out and prioritize the importance of collaboration, especially the administration. The main conclusion from Vintan and Gallagher's study was the importance of administration support regarding additional collaborative time within co-teachers' schedules. Additional time would guarantee more effective strategies for support, ENL specific PD opportunities, curriculum mapping focusing on ELLs' needs, and creating educational plans for ELLs (setting goals, monitoring assessments, and other activities). Any additional time put into achieving the previously listed tasks *must* be supported by administration in order to fully support ELLs through teacher collaboration.

Student Benefit from Co-teaching

Since co-teaching incorporates multiple ideas and perspectives of the co-teachers present within the classroom, students are often exposed to synthesizing multiple perspectives. This exposure poses benefits such as building and using critical thinking skills and relating information into a larger conceptual framework (Davis 1995). In their study, Dugan and Letterman (2008) showed an improvement between student and teacher relationships when co-teaching or team taught instruction was carried out. Dugan and Letterman compiled findings of student benefits within co-teaching. They discussed research that concluded an improvement in student learning due to learning in a reflective and collaborative learning environment. Students showed an increase in actively integrating disciplines successfully, an increase in preparedness

for future classes, overall higher achievement levels, and improved interpersonal skills in other collaboratively focused courses. In a different study, Harris and Watson (1997) published findings that showed collaboratively taught classes incorporate diversity by being inclusive to team members and students of various ethnic, racial, linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

Assessment Analysis

Although research is limited in terms of assessment data from co-teaching, there are still breakthroughs in findings when analyzing various co-teaching models and the impacts they have on students. In the previously stated research regarding teaching models and forms, it is known that there are multiple formats and dynamics for team teaching. There is no one size fits all co-teaching model and every class is different, yet studies conducted by Dugan and Letterman (2008) recorded various amounts of student appraisals with different co-teaching models. Students completed assessments and the data was analyzed to compare attitudes and outcomes within traditional teaching, co-teaching and other vehicles for instruction delivery and differentiation.

Data Collection & Instrument

Quantitative data from Dugan and Letterman's (2008) study was taken via survey format. Students and faculty participated voluntarily through classroom administration. The students were prepared with the nature of the survey which was developed by the Individual Development and Educational Assessment Center (IDEA). The assessment instrument consisted of forty-three questions asking students to make ratings of the course outcome. It included questions regarding course objectives, course progress, methods and styles.

Assessment Results

The results made comparisons to perceptions about team (co-taught) instructed course versus solo taught instructed courses. Dugan and Letterman had predicted that team taught courses would receive a higher score, the data trends showed ratings for team taught instruction to be very similar to solo taught courses. There was a slight preference for co-teaching yet there was not enough statistical evidence to further investigate and support that stance. Although this study was carried out on graduate level university students, there are parallels that exist within the study that connect to the strengths of co-teaching that can be applied to elementary or secondary grade level students with co-teaching supports and accommodations.

Benefits of Collaborative Teaching and Learning

Research conducted by Alkhannani (2021) within a higher education program that teaches English in Saudi Arabia found that collaborative teaching and learning incorporates greater classroom engagement which increases linguistic development and other language acquiring skills than a typical solo classroom teacher. The control group within this study was taught with one teacher practicing traditional methods while the experimental group was taught using collaborative teaching and learning (CTL). The group practicing CTL showed much more achievement after being assessed via an evaluation test. Another similar study published by Awatef (2006) showed CTL learners had an impressive difference between post and pre assessment results and the students demonstrated a more proficient English performance. Although collaborative teaching and learning is not a new concept in westernized countries (specifically the U.S.), countries in the Middle East such as Saudi Arabia are brand new to these models and implementations. Such studies show a tremendous difference and impacts with co-teaching and collaboration regarding language acquisition when compared to the traditional

approaches frequently practiced. Findings for which of the two studies mentioned here showed the advantages of collaborative learning and teaching when compared to solo teaching.

Core Implementations

It can take roughly three years for co-teachers to establish a proper collaboration environment where progress in student learning outcomes is more prevalent. Bauler and Kang (2020) published findings that measured co-teaching practices for ELLs over a three-year period. They reported that more organic types of teaching structures were favorable based on the teachers' capacity to collaborate and integrate ideas as a team. Although limited co-planning time was a barrier, the teachers' resilient practices had persisted throughout the study. Core practices and implementations that allowed for strong co-teaching were stated as followed: Allowing co-teachers to work together on preferred subject areas (science, social studies and writer's workshops) resulted in more devoted time to practicing speaking, writing and reading with identified concrete practices. Co-teaching within writer's workshop let teachers model specific writing goals and strategies with the ability to celebrate students' progress. Assigned integration of ENL teachers to specific subject area classes became a favorable change by administration by the second and third year of the study. Whereas year one had more random assignments with less favorable outcomes between co-teachers. Since the teachers had established which subject matter they would be co-teaching in, they were more prepared and able to articulate co-teaching and other collaborative practices due to being able to share responsibilities and take ownership over their shared lesson content.

Another core implementation within successful co-teaching was the equality of roles. After two to three years of Bauler and Kang's study, teachers were able to recall concrete methods used in terms of negotiating roles and responsibilities within their shared space. They

were also abler to communicate and collaborate using their specific expertise. One teacher shared the dynamic established between her and her co-teacher involved provided support for the ELLs by meeting their needs and being able to effectively breakdown questions/terminology by being mindful of difficult word patterns and breakdowns. Which is something the general teacher does not have linguistic expertise in. Another teacher explained how co-teaching allows students to be grouped by English proficiency when they perform writing tasks. The main teacher is able to challenge the commanding, expanding and transitioning students while the ENL teacher focuses on challenging the entering and emerging level students. The same objectives are taught and carried out yet the learning process and methods vary.

The final core implementation discussed in the study was the benefits of ELL inclusion within the classroom. Having effective co-taught lessons for ELLs provide academic language support varying on English proficiency. Collaboration occurred between students as they were groups in pairs or small groups, this allowed for more academic talk and discussion to occur. Bauler and Kang state that teachers that co-taught viewed the collaboration being beneficial to ELLs and non-ELLs as their support was differentiated and provided to all.

The study showed promising potential co-teaching has on ELLs and other students within the classroom through supported inclusion, though it cannot be solely up to the teachers' responsibility. The frequently discussed barriers within co-teaching (time constraints, lack of co-planning and support) must be prioritized by school administrators and other personnel involved in the success of their students, especially their linguistically diverse students.

Conclusion

The research summarized within the literature review contains findings that connect back to support the overarching question: How teachers can strengthen their co-teaching to support

their ELL students' linguistic learning outcomes? The findings contain the numerous obstacles and challenges co-teachers experience, collaborative and partnership teaching strategies, teacher and student benefits and assessment analysis from co-teaching studies. Chapter three of the capstone will encompass a detailed description of the professional development presentation and tools used to reflect the findings and implementations of co-teaching. This includes a synopsis of the sections discussed within this literature review. Professional development participants will review the presentation to gain awareness on the obstacles within co-teaching and their solutions as well as implementation models.

Chapter 3: Description of the Product and Tool

Introduction

The professional development product was designed as a tool to synthesis the findings and implementations within the capstone project that address the question: How can teachers strengthen their co-teaching to support their ELL students' linguistic learning outcomes? The professional development product will be carried out in a series of two sessions. Session one is anticipated to take place at the beginning of the school year whereas the second session is suggested to take place within December. This allows roughly four months in between professional development sessions for participants to reflect and implement that information presented. The professional development product contains general components including an introduction, purpose, learning targets, topic problems, resolutions, student benefits, teacher benefits, effective models and methods, and a conclusion involving several tools to measure the products effectiveness.

Product Description

The professional development presentation is mapped out and organized within an agenda which participants will receive a printed copy (Figure 1). The agenda allows participants and the presenter a preview of everything that will take place within both professional development sessions. The rationale of the professional development contains roughly 5 major components throughout the two sessions. The introduction content begins with an open ended discussion question: What makes a good duet in dance? This question serves as a metaphor to co-teaching, the discussion is aimed at comparing a strong dance duet where each dancer is equally balanced to implement high quality choreography for the audience. This is comparable to co-teaching in a way where two teachers establish a high quality dynamic for them to serve the

needs of their shared students. Next, the presenter will continue with a brief discussion on co-teaching and the purpose of it. Experiences from participants will be shared in a think-pair-share format before coming together as a whole discussion. The purpose of the professional development will be stated as well as the learning targets for the professional development: Participants will be able to understand information and practices for co-teaching and strengthen their co-teaching practices to further support their ELLs as well as other students. The presenter will then pass out the tools used for assessment and activity purposes (Figures 2 and 3). The introduction will conclude with a brief discussion regarding participants' likes and dislikes about co-teaching, this will lead us into the next component of the professional development.

The second component discusses the overarching question: How can teachers strengthen their co-teaching to support their ELL students' linguistic learning outcomes? This portion discusses findings composed within the capstone's literature review. This portion begins with introducing common pitfalls, problems and obstacles within co-teaching or collaborative practices. Research and findings will be shared from Orzolek (2018), Magiera (2006), Petrick (2014), Davison, (2008), Clark and Clark (2006), Vintan and Gallagher (2019), Scruggs and Mastropieri (2017), Gordon, 2003) and Whiting (2017). Subsequently, information will be presented regarding student and teacher benefits, core implementations, co-teaching models and team building strategies. This will include the works of Davis (1995), Letterman (2008), Harris and Watson (1997), Alkhannani (2021), Honigsfeld and Dove (2007) and Bauler and Kang (2020). The information presented within this section will be applied to the assessment activities as the presentation continues. Participants are expected to complete the hand out in Figure 2 and 3 throughout this section.

The third component wraps up session one in a conclusion. Participants reflect on what they have learned throughout session one and complete the handout presented as Figure 2. They will write down their current co-teaching, co-planning or other collaborative practices within one column and complete new or different practices or strategies they have learned throughout the professional development. A brief discussion will be initiated for participants to share their experiences and findings with the goal of finding some overlap. Session one concludes with participants completing Figure 3 which involves the creation of one short term goal connected to co-teaching practices and one long term goal. The participants are responsible for keeping this activity (in the form of a paper) and return it with them for a discussion/reflection in session two. Participants will be asked to email their goals to the presenter in the event they misplace their paper or cannot remember their goals.

Session two consists of three components and will be a brief session compared to session one. The time frame for session two is about 20 minutes yet is anticipated to be extended with active discussions. The first component of session two involves a recap of session one components (obstacles, problems, strategies, benefits) and a recap of the learning targets and assessment tools. The next component allows participants to take out their initial short term/long term goal sheet and discuss experiences related to the ability to meet their goals. Depending on the different types of goals, discussions can be carried out by goal categories (planning time goals, communication goals, implementation goals). The presentation will wrap up with a discussion on greater long term goals (time span of years) and will share information from Bauler and Kang's (2020) study on co-teaching dynamics established after roughly three years of implementations. This is to give participants an idea of how long their goals can take to be met in

case their short term/long term goal(s) were not established yet. The session concludes with a time frame to share final thoughts and questions.

Resolution of Product Problem

The problem this capstone focuses on is not solved with a one size fits all approach, since inconsistencies within co-teaching can create a wide array of problems, there are a wide array of resolutions and implementations to counteract issues and improve student learning outcomes. The professional development is intended to bring awareness to educators and administration that work within a collaborative teaching/team environment. Awareness of efficient co-teaching models and implementations are provided with adequate research and studies conducted by scholars and researchers analyzing the aspects within co-teaching and collaborative instruction. The professional development will allow teachers to examine various co-teaching models and discuss which models and strategies may work well for them based on their co-teaching strengths, weaknesses and other experiences. The professional development will allow teachers to reflect on their past and current practices in order to shape the outcome of their future teaching practices and desired outcomes.

Product Components

The components of the product were chosen through a careful review of the composed literature review findings and further organized into sections within the presentation. This includes carefully reviewed studies documenting problems seen and demonstrated throughout various co-teaching settings, surveys and interviews from educators that utilize co-teaching and models and methods that showed student performance improvement with co-teaching. The order of components provided within the product were chosen based on appropriate introduction to the topic and problem, a discussion of similar or related experiences from professional development

participants, examining documented problems and reviewing the solutions and implementations to inspire educators and create confidence with co-teaching. The information presented within the professional development product is mapped out and reflected within the tools created for assessment. The ultimate purpose of the professional development is provided within the learning target: participants will be able to understand information and practices for co-teaching to strengthen their co-teaching practices to further support their ELLs and other students. The achievement of the learning target will be reflected within the participants' completed assessments.

Intended Outcome

The intended outcome of the professional development product and tool is to provide participants (regardless of levels of co-teaching) with experiences to enrich their own collaborative and co-teaching abilities. Participants can also expect to learn aspects involved within collaborative teaching they should advocate for such as scheduling co-planning time and reaching out to administration for any concerns related to the improvement of co-teaching within their school setting. Expectations and goals will be fostered by the professional development sessions by looking into researched models and methods used in other school settings by teachers within the same or similar content or specialty areas. Chapter four of the capstone will discuss the overall conclusions drawn from the literature review findings, implementations and implications for students and teachers.

Chapter 4: Conclusion

Introduction

The identified question this capstone paper focuses on is how can teachers strengthen their co-teaching practices to support ELL students' learning outcomes. The problems within co-teaching or lack of proper co-teaching impact the way in which ELL students develop and expand on linguistic and social learning outcomes in order to succeed. Well researched and supported co-teaching and co-planning factors ultimately benefit the involved teachers, supported students, and other students within the learning environment. Educators with an unclear understanding of proper co-teaching strategies or insufficient co-planning periods are bound to fall into the pitfalls associated with poor teacher collaboration. Essentially, the biggest issue behind co-teaching comes down to co-planning (Magiera, 2006). With more than one teacher designing, accommodating and implementing instruction for their shared students, a sufficient amount of time to prepare and create materials is essential in order to deliver instruction properly. If New York State mandates a supported content delivery for language learners (roughly 180-360 minutes per week), it should also be mandated to provide co-teachers with adequate planning periods to meet such demands (NYSED, 2022). Although it varies from district to district and school to school, many teachers that co-teacher are only provided with a couple short planning periods per week. Unless they receive strong support from administration and maintain advocacy for this important planning time, proper co-planning would often fall on the teachers' own time if they were equally willing to do so.

Conclusions

There are several researched strategies to incorporate within co-planning and co-teaching environments to foster greater support and success for participating students and teachers.

Educators that utilize collaborative team meeting strategies (CTMS) use social metacognitive strategies to draw on learners, teachers and their own self-management of learning (Abid, 2021). This method provides practices of problem solving techniques through the use of mutual decision making-a key factor in co-planning and co-taught settings. Teachers that incorporated CTMS practices within their co-taught classes found evidence of improved lesson quality and student progress through synthesizing skills and instruction and further applying it during assessments.

Allowing a partnership teaching method to be implemented between co-teachers creates better connected teaching dynamics to carry out specific tasks and instructions to supported students and eliminating the notion of a pair of extra hands in the classroom type of co-teaching. Partnership teaching maximizes the outcomes of differentiation when supporting students with English language learning. The partnership teaching method allows the strengthening of co-teaching practices between teachers that support ELLs by allowing partnership growth and cultivation by the involved teachers (Pirtle, 2002). This creates an effective collaborative environment where values and ideas are actively heard and respected. Dominating classroom behavior is corrected through partnership teaching and transforms it into more guided behavior where the enhancement of instructional and content delivery occurs.

The main takeaway gathered throughout this capstone is the importance of support from administration when it comes to carrying out collaboration and the proper opportunities to do so (Clark & Clark, 2006). There is a multitude of strategies, methods, and implementations backed by researchers and scholars within the vast fields of education, yet unless teachers are not provided with adequate times to formulate and plan their instruction, the potential of student achievement will not be fully reached. Administration plays the role of supporting mandated

planning periods for educators. With the addition of allowing more time to co-plan, teachers have more opportunities to utilize co-teaching strategies and cultivate stronger partnership teacher.

This ultimately leads to more clearly defined roles within the classroom, a better understanding of each teacher's content expertise and methods of differentiating specific skills, more aligned educational plans and language objectives, and an increase of pedagogical awareness.

Scheduling each teachers' planning times and teaching times each school year can differ from district to district depending on the amount of involvement from administration. If teachers advocate for more collaborative time to administration, they would be able to map out curriculum to support ELLs and their linguistic outcomes, create plans for classroom goals, expectations and assessment of learning targets (Vintan & Gallagher (2019)).

Implications for Student Learning

ELL students benefit through proper co-teaching models because it provides various opportunities for individualized support and caters towards a students' learning and linguistic needs (Vintan & Gallagher (2019)). The general classroom teacher presents the content and information that each learner will use to expand on their learning, depending on the level of English proficiency present within the ELLs, the ENL co-teacher uses their expertise on language learning strategies to allow a better understanding for the student. Carefully planned out content and curriculum mapping carried out by the co-teachers allow for better implementation and partnered teaching to occur within the classroom. This leads to students receiving better support from teachers that are on the same page and create a strong balance within the learning environment.

Another aspect of co-teaching that benefits students learning outcomes involves the integration of different perspectives, views and opinion within the classroom through learning

content taught by more than one individual. Students are exposed to analyzing and synthesizing various perspectives enabling broader critical thinking skills. Proper co-teaching and classroom collaboration studies have shown improvement within student learning outcomes, an increase in successful discipline integration, an increase with interpersonal skills, an increase in future preparedness/readiness and overall, higher academic achievements (Dugan & Letterman, 2008).

Implications for Teaching

General classroom teachers and supporting teachers (ENL, Special Education, other push in teachers) can greatly benefit from adequate co-planning and co-teaching. Educators that run their classrooms independently can also benefit from taking some time to look into collaborative style practices. If a teacher encounters collaborative arrangements in the future, or work with students that receive co-taught instructions within other content area class, they can practice such implementations. Though various co-teaching models can have advantages and disadvantages depending on the specific class, there are many different implementations to consider (Bauler & Kang, 2020). The teachers know their classrooms the best and can arrange co-teaching models and plans based on the learning levels, language proficiencies and other individualized learning needs their students require. Pre-planned flexible grouping arrangements determined during co-planning by the co-teachers allow teachers to carry out differentiated approaches and styles to match the needs of their students. This allows for a classroom to consistently run smoothly, teachers maintain respect and consideration of ideas from each other and establish a harmonious shared dynamic (Bauler & Kang, 2020). Teachers that practice proper co-teaching are able to divide and conquer responsibilities as well as come together to share expertise within their content/specialized areas. Although it can take time to establish a strong co-teaching relationship

built on growth, communication and dedication to the students, proper co-teaching results in the success of each and every student within the shared classroom.

Recommendations

My perspective on co-teaching has greatly developed over the course of the assembling of this capstone. After working in multiple school settings as a relatively new educator, I believe the idea and concept of co-teaching is often misunderstood and it was misinterpreted over years and years. It is common to think of a co-taught classroom as having a main teacher leading instruction, and a teacher that acts more like a side kick that shows up and helps out a select few students, without establishing a more important role within the classroom. I think exploring the success stories and findings of supported co-planning and co-teaching will allow educators to reconsider the current collaborative models they currently have in place.

Since support from administration is so crucial when it comes to allowing proper time for co-planning, I would continue researching about the roles administrators play in creating or establishing teaching schedules and how to consider collaborative periods for supported students. How do teachers succeed as co-teachers when they are faced with an unsupportive administration? What are the links that exist between administrators that advocate for the teachers' needs and how they ultimately reflect on the students' performances?

Final Thoughts

Supporting ELLs' learning outcomes through strong co-teaching practices are caused by numerous roles within a school community. With proper support and implementation, the sky is the limit when it comes to cultivating success for students shared between collaborative teachers. Understanding the purpose of collaborative teaching from a deeper perspective generates an evenly balanced team that is well prepared to tackle on obstacles within their students' academic

journeys. Successful co-teaching should be shared with administrators and other educators within the district and at a state level in order to expand the support and resources necessary to guide students involved in this practice.

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Appendix

Figure 1

Professional Development Agenda:

Session one:

- 1) Purpose of professional development and agenda
- 2) Learning target for today's session: Participants will be able to understand information and practices for co-teaching and strengthen their co-teaching practices to further support their ELLs as well as other students
- 3) Review activities (Figure 2 and 3)
- 4) Presentation on co-teaching: Pitfalls, obstacles, problems, student and teacher benefits, effective co-teaching models and strategies
- 5) Exit ticket (Figure 3) and what's to be expected for session two.

Session two:

- 1) Session one recap and new learning target: Participants will be able to reflect on their co-teaching goals
- 2) Discussion of experienced implementations (referring back to completed Figure 3)
- 3) Long term practices and closing

Figure 2

Comparing Current Teaching Practices to Presented Practices

<p>My current co-teaching practices, strategies and methods:</p>	<p>New/different co-teaching practices, strategies or methods mentioned within the professional development:</p>
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Figure 3*Co-teaching Goals*

Short term goal(s) connecting to collaborative teaching and planning: *think about implementing within days or weeks	Long term goal(s) connecting to collaborative teaching and planning: *think about implementing within weeks, months or years

Professional development link: <https://brockport.voicethread.com/share/20433177/>