How the Lack of Teacher Preparation Effects the Co-Teaching Model

by

Rachel DeJesus

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Supervised by

Dr. Mahmoud Altalouli

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Abstract

Schools around the U.S. are increasingly adopting ENL push-in co-teaching periods. However, teachers are facing issues in successfully implementing this instructional approach, including role division, planning time, and teacher education/ preparation. The literature emphasizes that addressing these challenges can be achieved through the importance of collaboration and proper training in co-teaching practices. With the aim of enabling teachers to learn from past co-teachers, understand the advantages of co-teaching, and engage in collaborative planning for their own co-taught classes, it is essential that teachers become educated in in collaborative practices and co-teaching models so they can best support their students. Recommendations include attending professional development, creating more pre-service courses on collaborative practices, getting more experience working collaboratively with other teachers, and building relationships with co-teachers.

Keywords: English learners, co-teaching, lack of education, pre-service teachers, professional development

Chapter 1: Introduction

English Language Learners (ELLs) are a continuous growing population in U.S. public schools. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2023) there has been an increase in ELL population from 4.5 million in 2010 to 5.0 million in 2020. ELLs often have struggles in their learning and need extra support. It has been found that there is an achievement gap between ELLs and non-ELLs; these students have difficulties learning academic vocabulary, content, they also struggle with communicating their ideas and understandings (Juma, 2022; Soland, 2019). These challenges significantly impact ELLs' academic success and overall learning experience. In fact, there is an achievement gap between ELLs and non-ELL (e.g., Crescencio, 2021; Soland, 2019).

Addressing such challenges requires instructional strategies such as being pulled out of the classroom multiple times a day. According to Williams and Ditch (2019), pull-out services "support the linguistic needs of ELLs, they often separate ELLs from their English-speaking peers by creating a parallel education separate from the regular educational path of non-EL students" (p. 21). Students are able to get exposure to grade-level in homogenous small groups. However, pull-out services have limitations such as disruption of instruction and often miss crucial class time (e.g., Glies & Yazan, 2019, Whiting, 2017).

Another strategy used to improve ELLs' learning is co-teaching push-in, which refers to a collaborative approach where a general education (GE) teacher and an ESL/bilingual specialist work together in the mainstream classroom to supports ELLs (Mofield, 2020; Williams & Ditch, 2019). Research has documented many benefits of co-teaching including increased student achievement (e.g., Bauler, 2019; Mofield, 2020; Soland, 2019) and increased feelings of social inclusion (Mofield, 2020; Rabin, 2020). In addition, co-teaching affords smaller teacher-to-

student ratios, which encourages student participation, opens opportunities for feedback, and supports critical thinking skills (Marascio, 2021; Rabin, 2020). It also benefits co-teachers by enhancing instructional delivery through collaborating on lesson planning, resource management, and instructional strategies (Battaglia & Brooks, 2019; Rabin, 2020).

However, there are potential challenges when implementing co-teaching. Co-teaching requires specialized training to ensure teachers are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively implement co-teaching (e.g., Battaglia & Brooks, 2019; Beninghof, 2016). If the teachers are not prepared in co-teaching practices there can confusion and mis-communication on how to implement instruction (Battaglia & Brooks, 2019). Another challenge facing co-teachers is time to plan and communicate. Given every teacher has other responsibilities or schedules that do not align, finding the time becomes a constraint to implement co-teaching (e.g., Sarisohn, 2018; Whiting, 2017). Additionally, there may also be a challenge of aligning teachers' different teaching styles (e.g., Honigsfeld & Dove, 2010; Huynh, 2017; Norton, 2013).

Thus, it is important that educators consider these challenges before implementing any co-teaching model. According to Honigsfeld and Dove (2010), there are six co-teaching models including: 1) one- teaches/one observes; 2) one teach/one assist; 3) parallel teaching; 4) station; 5) alternative; and 6) team teaching. A brief description of the six co-teaching models are as follows; in one teaches/one observes the GE teacher leads a large-group in instruction while the other teacher observes and takes academic, behavioral, or social data on specific students (e.g., Honigsfeld & Dove, 2010; Huynh, 2017). In the one teaches/one assist co-teaching model one teacher leads instruction while the other circulates the room offering individual assistance to students (e.g., Honigsfeld & Dove, 2010; Huynh, 2017). Parallel teaching consists of two

teachers each having half of the class; they both present the same material with differentiation strategies to increase student participation (Honigsfeld & Dove, 2010). Station teaching includes three different stations, the teachers each get their own station while the third is run independently (e.g., Field et al., 2010; Huynh, 2017). Alternative teaching has one teacher working with a large group of students while the other works with a small group for remediation, enrichment, assessment, or pre-teaching (e.g., Honigsfeld & Dove, 2010; Huynh, 2017). The last model of co-teaching is team teaching in which both teachers lead a large-group in instruction bouncing off each other throughout the lesson (Honigsfeld & Dove, 2010).

In my experience observing and assisting in three co-teaching ENL push-in periods this past year I have seen just how important having the knowledge and being prepared for co-teaching is. Each classroom I was in had a different co-teaching model, normally that would not be in issue since there are many different models that teachers could use (Williams & Ditch, 2019). However, what made the models un-effective was that in classes where the teacher was not prepared the role of the other co-teacher was diminished. There was, however, one classroom that I noticed had a positive effect on its students with its co-teaching model which was due to the GE teacher having a had the experience in a co-teacher setting for many years prior.

In principle, teachers across the board need more preparation in co-teaching practices. This needs to be taught more in pre-service teacher training, which often does not offer many opportunities for teacher collaboration (e.g., Kervinen et al., 2022; Rabin, 2020.). For pre-service teachers, “The traditional model of student-teaching has remained the same since its inception in the 1920s; rather than collaborating, teacher-candidates observe a mentor-teacher until they teach independently with little to no collaboration” (Rabin, 2020, p. 136). Teachers need the education

and opportunities to learn and work on collaboration with other teachers and subject teachers to have a better understanding of what effective co-teaching practices should look like.

Since more and more schools are moving to push-in co-teaching models to meet students' needs and support language development, the need for teachers to be prepared in the area of co-teaching is essential. Thus, this paper aims to determine how the lack of teacher preparation affects co-teaching practices in a ENL push-in program. The goal of this paper is to bring awareness and to educate teachers and administration on how to effectively use co-teaching in their classroom.

In Chapter 2, I will review the literature that explores how the lack of teacher preparation affects the co-teaching model, as well as ways to overcome these issues. The literature will assist me in developing the product discussed in Chapter 3, for this product the professional development (PD) will be focused on educating co-teachers in collaborative and effective practices that they will need as they develop their co-taught class. Lastly, Chapter 4 will conclude with the implications of how teachers can apply what was discussed throughout this project to their teaching and recommend future research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This Chapter includes a review of literature that pertains to the area of the lack of teaching education of co-teaching practices. Considering studies and reports from teachers it is essential to consider the reasons why we are seeing teachers not being prepared for the co-teaching environment. The literature discusses the ineffectiveness of other ENL services, benefits to co-teaching, the lack of teacher preparation, difficulties in planning instruction, effective co-teaching practices, how to choose effective co-teaching models, and how to support co-teachers. These themes work collectively in the understanding and the development of effective co-teaching. Before going into these major themes, it is important to discuss the conceptual framework of Vygotsky's (1978) collaborative learning and Walberg's (1992) theory of academic achievement.

Conceptual Framework

Vygotsky's (1978) theory of collaborative learning states that when learners rely on one another to accomplish tasks they would not be able to complete individually students will start to develop critical thinking skills. Students also tend to retain more information when working in groups. Group work helps build oral communication skills and promotes self-management skills (Battaglia & Brooks, 2019). In a co-teaching setting collaboration among ELLs and non-ELLs helps students to build upon their English skills and vocabulary development (Bauler, 2019). To make learning collaborative the two co-teachers need to collaborate to make instruction and the classroom environment a safe place where students feel as though they can make mistakes all while working and learning from their peers.

Also, co-teaching is modeling to students how they themselves should be when they are collaborating with peers (Rabin, 2020). This modeling by the teachers helps students to know

what is expected of them during instruction. Push-in co-teaching is all about collaboration and to overcome issues that come up in the planning process teachers need education in collaborative practices. Indeed, having teachers work together ensures that lessons will meet content standards and student's needs all while assisting students in their language growth and promoting academic achievement.

Walberg's (1992) theory of academic achievement states that psychological characteristics of students and their immediate psychological environments influence educational outcomes (i.e., cognitive, behavioral, and attitudinal. That is, educational outcomes are dependent on student ability/prior achievement, motivation, age/developmental level, quantity of instruction, quality of instruction, and classroom climate (Youn et al., 1996). In a co-teaching class, the quality of instruction and classroom environment is important for student's success in language and content development (Williams & Ditch, 2019). It is the goal of co-teaching to help students stay in the classroom as much as possible. In order for the co-teaching experience to be beneficial teachers need to make their roles and responsibilities clear so that there are no issues in developing a classroom environment (Mofield, 2020). Utilization of teacher's knowledge will ensure that lessons are of high quality and that students are getting the most out of their learning. Fundamentally, theories of Vygotsky and Walberg can help us understand co-teaching practices.

The Ineffectiveness of the Pull-out Model

There is an achievement gap in academics between ELLs and non-ELLs. This achievement gap is the product of ELLs being pulled out of classes and lessons multiple times a day. Soland (2019) highlighted that **"**often ELLs have lower mean achievement test scores in reading and mathematics, higher dropout rates, and lower college attendance than their English-speaking peers" (p. 2). These challenges can be contributed to the long-standing isolation that

ELLs received in pull-out instructional services. Pull-out ENL services were a sheltered approach that supported student's linguistic needs but separated ELLs from English speaking peers (e.g., Whiting, 2017; Williams & Ditch, 2019). These pull-out services were only beneficial for beginner and entering ELLs as they needed the extra time out of the classroom to work on foundational language skills, however, the issue with pull-out services is that instruction is being disrupted. Students are being isolated from their peers, and students can feel embarrassed about being taken out of the classroom (Whiting, 2017).

In addition, only using pull-out programs does not allow time for teachers to meet all students mandated minutes due to other class schedules interference. In their study, Baecher and Bell (2017) followed a total of nine teachers doing pull-out and push-in services for 175 ELLs. Four of the nine teachers provided pull-out instruction, three did push-in instruction and two did a combination of both. Teachers filled out a survey of their experiences which each model. For example, one teacher who only did the pull-out model stated that:

> The quantity of services is poor because of frequent interruptions (assessing new entrants, state testing, classroom events). At certain times of the year, I don't see some students for an entire week and that can happen multiple times for some students. (Baecher & Bell, 2017, p. 62)

Another teacher similarly stressed that "They were frustrated with their current teaching circumstances as they often do not have the opportunity to meet with their students for the appropriate amount of time" (Baecher & Bell, 2017, p. 62). In order to ensure that students are meeting their teacher regularly, it is important to have more push-in co-teaching periods.

It was due to these reasons that we are seeing a switch in schools from pull-out to push-in services. For example, Williams and Ditch's (2019) study on the switch from pull-out services to

co-teaching, they found that the switch occurred in order to address the long-standing achievement gap which were not being met with longstanding pull-out programs. The increase of more co-teaching push-in services allows for students to remain in the classroom to learn language through content with the special area co-teacher, in this case an ENL teacher. (e.g., Bauler, 2019; Marascio, 2021; Mofield, 2020; Rabin, 2020; Soland, 2019).

In a study by Soland (2019) on ELLs achievement gap followed middle school students' achievement test data and self-efficacy survey scores from a large, urban school district where more than 90% of students are Latinx. From the data and survey, it was concluded that there were large gaps between ELL and non-ELL students in both reading and math achievement compared to their native speaking peers (Soland, 2019). For example, ELLs were roughly .25 standard deviations lower than their non-ELL peers, and in subjects like math and reading, the gap was even larger at roughly .6 standard deviations (Soland, 2019). As the research has shown the achievement gap between ELLs and non-ELLs is substantial which has led to the implementation of co-teaching push-in ENL periods. Co-teaching also has many other benefits for ELLs and is a model of teaching that needs to be taught more in pre-service teacher programs.

Benefits of Co-teaching

There are many benefits to co-teaching push-in programs such as; increased student participation, smaller groupings, and collaboration between ELLs and non-ELLs. Studies done on equitability for ELLs in the classroom have shown that including ELLs in the general classroom during push-in periods has shown potential in language and academic growth. In their observations of 20 co-taught classes during 400 minutes of classroom instruction to measure the school district's co-teaching model and use of specific co-teaching strategies as well as the

quantity of teacher-student interactions relative to ELLs and non-ELL students, found that having another teacher actively in the instructional process lowered the student-to-teacher ratio and allowed for more collaboration and interaction with content material and native speaking peers which aided in language development.

Likewise, Stobaugh and Everson (2019) analyzed eighty-nine teacher surveys on co-teaching benefits. The results of the surveys showed that ELLs who participate in co-taught programs benefit from the increased attention and time from teachers and increased emphasis on their academic, language and social skills (Stobaugh & Everson, 2019). This is one example of co-teaching benefits. Similarly, co-teaching can also enhance relationships of ELLs with teachers, students, and content (e.g., Giles & Yazan, 2019; Marascio, 2021).

In a study by Harter and Jacobi (2018) on increased student's participation and student-teacher relationships 32 students of a co-taught class were selected to fill out a survey in were students shared their perspectives of co-teaching models. The qualitative data collected from the surveys showed that the "participants repeatedly used words such as "interaction," "collaboration," and "communication" in their survey responses" (Harter & Jacobi, 2018, p.7). Students were able to have more chances to work and collaborate with other students in the class as they learned content, academic language, and social skills.

Similar to the research conducted by Beninghof and Leensvaat (2016), in Hater and Jacobi's (2018) study, the ENL teacher and the GE teacher worked collaboratively to develop exceptionally effective instruction. This collaboration facilitated the utilization of diverse strategies and adjustments tailored to meet the specific goals of the students, ultimately leading to significant benefits for the students involved. However, co-teaching comes with challenges such as teachers may not be prepared for such a collaboration in the classroom, which ends up

not aiding or benefiting their students who need the extra support and instruction a co-teacher can give.

Lack of Teacher Preparation

The lack of teacher preparation starts at the pre-service level. New teachers often first experience with co-teaching models through student teaching. The power dynamics between the cooperating teacher and student teacher play an important role in the issue of role responsibility in co-teaching classroom. During student teaching the cooperating teacher's role is as the evaluator and supervisor, while the student teacher has a subordinating role (Stobaugh & Everson, 2019; Whiting, 2017). The common practices seen during student teaching are; student-teacher teaches alone, student teacher observes, or student teacher assists (Stobaugh & Everson, 2019; Kervinen et. al., 2022). From Stobaugh and Everson's (2019) pre-service teacher survey on the use of co-teaching models, it was found that the co-teaching strategy student teachers reportedly used the most for both prior to student teaching and during student teaching was One Teach, One Observe. The second most common model was one teach, one assist (Stobaugh & Everson, 2019). Likewise, in a study by Kervinen et. al. (2022) with 49 pre-service and twenty-eight in-service teachers about a new program meant to highlight co-teaching and collaboration practices found from teachers' reflections that during pre-service there were unequal distribution of roles.

Despite of such programs goal of equal distribution of responsibilities and roles, some in-service teachers report receiving new insights and fresh ideas but unable to contribute as much themselves (Giles & Yazan, 2019; Mofield, 2020). Kervinen et al. (2022) found many teachers were disappointed by the unequal roles and wanted more effort from the in-service teachers. The in-service teachers felt as if the in-service teachers were evaluating them like it was a teaching

practice period (Kervinen et al., 2022). The power dynamic observed during student-teaching is the first experience new teachers have of co-teaching. This idea then relates to their knowledge of what co-teaching is, so when it comes time for the implementation, we see an increase in non-effective co-teaching practices.

In students teaching, it become evident that pre- and in-service teachers are not fully prepared to work together seamlessly. They do not have experience or have mastered sufficient co-teaching models to make it successful (Whiting, 2017). This is the one reason we are seeing issues in the implementation of co-teaching practices. Teachers reflecting on co-teaching roles have found that the lack of teacher training is the potential cause for confusion about roles of the teachers, the perceptions of "power" or "status" plus the confidence in their content specific area result in making the other teacher feel marginalized and powerless (Norton, 2013).

In these cases, the special area teacher is then resulted to an aid in the classroom environment which is not beneficial for students who need the extra support. From the surveys in Baecher and Bell's (2017) research, one teacher reported. "Teachers I worked with last year treated me like a student. I have had several students tell me that I should be a teacher when I grow up. They see me as a "helper", or even an intern" (p. 59). The special area teacher's expertise is not being utilized during instruction, this is often seen in the common co-teaching models such as; teach/observe and teach/assist. Another teacher from the Baecher and Bell's stressed, "I lacked control over the lessons and therefore most often "floated" around the room" (p. 59). The ENL teachers are not being consulted with during the planning phases, they are just coming into the classroom and addressing what they observe (Stobaugh & Everson, 2019).

Similarly, Peercy et al. (2017) found that ENL teachers felt as though they were just an extra body in the classroom and that their value as an expert in their field was not being valued.

A teacher from their study suggested that the:

> Underutilization of one teacher undermines the potential of co-teaching, because of this, it is imperative that co-teachers have productive roles. Co-teachers must therefore be deliberate about their practice, make effective use of co-planning, and share responsibility for student learning (p. 217)

For co-teaching to be effective and for students to achieve academic success the two teachers need to tap into each other's expertise. This can only be achieved when both teachers are educated and prepared in effective co-teaching practices (e.g., Builes, 2022; Huynh, 2017). Likewise, a survey done by Bouchrika (2021) during the height of the COIVD-19 pandemic asked teachers who were teaching remotely at the time what they felt as the most imperative need for collaboration is. A total of 40% of the educators surveyed stated that enhancing communication and understanding of what teacher collaboration should be the number one priority of pre-service teacher programs and school districts. Not being educated in co-teaching leads to many other issues that schools across America are witnessing, one of those issue include finding time to plan and collaborate with co-teachers.

The Difficulties of Planning Instruction

The other issue seen in co-teaching environments is the lack to planning time. Teachers need to work together to create a time in which they can meet and plan lessons. The most common collaborative exchange between co-teachers was infrequent and informal encounters such as conversations through e-mail or brief hallway chats (e.g., Builes, 2022; Giles & Yazan, 2019). These informal interactions are not enough to build a positive co-teaching experience. Similarly, Giles and Yazan's (2019) study in collaboration of co-teachers found through a teacher survey that the hindering component described by co-teachers is the conflicts of planning

and teaching schedules since ENL teachers have "multiple and diverse duties" (p 5). The ENL teacher and GE teacher have other responsibilities that can conflict with planning time. ENL teachers have many duties such as pull-out services and other co-taught periods with various grade levels. One teacher in Baecher and Bell's (2017) study stated:

> It is not fostered in a formal way…All co-planning efforts are done during individual teacher prep periods or outside of school. The administration expects teachers to co-plan, as well as come together and submit comprehensive unit plans per grade, but the actual lesson and unit planning work is done at the initiative of the teachers. (pp. 58-59)

If teachers are not given the opportunity to plan instruction, then the co-teaching program is destined to fail. However, this can be overcome if the teachers create a direct time in which they can discuss lesson planning and common goals. This could be done once a week before or after school if their schedules do not allow ample time to meet. Also, the teachers can attend grade-level and data-meetings. It would also be beneficial to have school administrators promoting and creating time for co-teachers to work together. Ways administration officials can display support for co-teachers is to:

> Be mindful of how change and interruptions affect the teams, allow for peer coaching and observation, allow time for reflection, seek student feedback and perspectives, provide for continual professional development, try to maintain the same co-teaching teams from year to year, and lastly to provide encouragement. (Gaffney, 2019, p. 43)

Both teachers need to be present in all aspects of instruction; from pre-teaching, instruction, assessments, and post-teaching reflections (Marascio, 2021). Things need to be collaborative, both teachers should share their experiences and expertise during planning. This can help to determine how instruction will go, if pre-teaching of any vocabulary is needed for

ELLs to be able to comprehend and contribute during instruction or if other ESOL strategies should be utilized.

Indeed, communication is a driving factor that determines if the program will run smoothly, teachers also have to be open to the comments the other teacher is bringing to the table (Bulies, 2022). It is important for teachers to resolve any disputes over any classroom content and communicate preferences, strengths, weaknesses, roles so not to cause any confusion or problems (Battaglia & Brooks, 2019). If the teachers are not receiving of feedback from the other teachers or ideas then the program will fail it's intended purpose to meet the needs of ELLs and to aid in closing the achievement gap between ELLs and non-ELLs. The best way to overcome these issues and what teachers should do before creating a co-taught class is to become educated in collaboration and effective co-teaching practices.

Effective Co-teaching Practices

The first step to implementing effective co-teaching practices is to be educated and prepared. Teachers can do this by attending professional developments with their respective co-teachers, online or by take a class on co-teaching strategies at an educational institution (Battaglia & Brooks, 2019). Through education and preparation, teachers will have the knowledge and skills to be able to create effective co-teaching practices in their school.

The main points that teachers need to utilize when creating a co-teaching environment is to first recognize how the teachers "previous knowledge, experiences, and multiple identities influence their collaborative practices" (Giles & Yazan, 2019, p.2). The other teacher who is coming into the classroom for a few periods a day is not to be treated as an aid in which to float around the classroom. These two teachers bring a unique perspective to lesson planning and when used correctly have shown positive results in students learning. The main take away from

co-teaching is that it is a relationship that must be built on co-respect and co-responsibility to have the desired effect (Stobaugh & Everson, 2019).

Once the roles and responsibility of the two teachers are accepted then the teachers can start sharing responsibility in planning instruction and assessments (Battaglia & Brooks, 2019). The teachers can then start discussing and choosing which type of co-teaching model that would benefit their student population and content area.

Choosing Effective Co-teaching Models

In effective co-teaching, the sense that all students are "our students" must be in the fore front of every part of the instructional cycle (Beninghof, & Leensvaart, 2016). With that in mind picking the best models for co-teaching should reflect this ideology. There has not been conclusive research done on the effects of the co-teaching models themselves have on direct growth of students learning, however, there have been many surveys conducted of co- teachers and which models they felt was most effective for their student populations (Hanover, 2012). Most of the surveys concluded that the most effective co-teaching models were those discussed by Honigsfeld and Dove (2010) and Friend et al. (2010), which include team teaching, parallel teaching, alternative, and circuit teaching.

Team Teaching occurs when "two teachers lead instruction to the same group of students" (e.g., Honigsfeld and Dove, 2010; Huynh, 2017). This form of teaching requires a lot of co-planning because teachers have to know which part of instruction they are responsible for (Huynh, 2017). However, this model values the ENL teacher as an instructor not an aide. This model should be used when both teachers have considerable experience on the topic and are comfortable teaching together (Hanover, 2012). Also, when the goal of instruction is to interaction between students.

Parallel Teaching organizes students into groups to receive instruction (Friend et al., 2010). The content teacher and ENL teacher are teaching the same content but to different groups (Huynh, 2017). To be effective it is best to separate the groups to be homogeneous, so that students with similar abilities are grouped together. Then the teachers can teach the same content but differentiated. It has been determined that the best time to use this model is when you want to foster student participation for activities such as practice, re-teaching, and test review (e.g., Friend et al., 2010; Hanover, 2012).

Alternative Teaching is another model where the students are separated into two groups (e.g., Honigsfeld & Dove, 2010). In this model the content teacher teachers first deepening students understanding of a particular topic. The ENL teacher then teaches' a smaller group by helping students to access content by reinforcing concepts or providing additional language support (e.g., Friend et al., 2010; Huynh, 2017). This model is good for reinforcing the material and aiding growth in academic language and should be utilized when there is a gap in the mastery of concepts (Hanover, 2012).

The last model of effective co-teaching is station teaching in which students are mixed into heterogeneous language groups and work collaboratively together switch from station to station (Friend et al., 2010). The content and ENL teachers rotate between the different groups focusing on different areas (Huynh, 2017). Based on Honigsfeld and Dove (2010) the idea is that the "content teacher monitors students' understanding of the content while the ENL teacher supports and even extends students' engagement with the tasks by helping them to communicate their ideas" (Huynh, 2017, p. 5). This is a model that is highly collaborative for both students and teachers.

It is important that teachers are educated and taught the differences of these models and which would complement certain types of students needs and classroom activities. When it comes to choosing which model to use during instruction teachers can meet and discuss which they feel would be best for the type of instruction they have in mind, what would best compliment the desired content standards, and student populations that have different needs to allow differentiation. Teachers should use a variety of co-teaching models depending on their grade level and student population, this is something that needs to be determined between the teachers. Each model brings its own challenges to planning and implementation, however, they all utilize both teacher's expertise in their field also allowing for differentiation and student interaction. These are the main principles that are needed to make sure that the model teachers are using are effective. Once teachers determine what models they want to use they need to have the background and support from the school to make the shift to push-in co-teaching a success.

How to Support Co-teachers

In Baecher and Bell (2017) a teacher was asked about their experience in a push-in co-teaching model as part of a survey, they stated their reservations with the model stressing:

> Co-teaching deserves much more direct and concrete attention in teacher training, and I felt that the [teacher education] program did not sufficiently address the challenges and pitfalls of working alongside content teachers in a variety of models—especially push-in. (p. 60)

Besides teacher education in order for co-teaching to have its desired effect teachers also need continuous education on co-teaching to stay up to date on practices, and the support from their school district.

Extensive coaching from district leadership which is customized to meet teacher's specific needs has displayed positive results. An efficient way to maximize teacher and student growth is for school districts to provide high quality workshops on the basics of co-teaching. Having teachers observe a co-taught class or viewing videos and modeled examples of classes will serve as a base for them to create their own practices. Teachers will be able to communicate with their respected co-teacher and examine their practices honestly and deeply to help aid areas for growth (Beninghof, & Leensvaart, 2016).

Educating teachers is the number one priority to make co-teaching effective. In a study done by Rabin (2020) on teacher preparation during pre-service student-teaching 16 teacher candidates and 13 mentors were interviewed on their understanding of co-teaching practices in order to uncovered their perspectives. Findings revealed that teacher preparation, mentorship, and workshops on collaboration helped teachers to gain experience working together and made them feel more comfortable in a co-teaching environment. The only way for teachers to be effective co-teachers is to give them the opportunity to learn from experts in the field.

Mentorship in the first years of co-teaching would be beneficial to overcome the issues commonly seen. Providing time and space to work out problems and develop a working relationship is essential to making sure things will run smoothly in the classroom. Another way to support co-teaching would be to have side-by-side teaching, in the first year. The "coach" or mentor would intervene during an observed lesson to demonstrate development strategies to make learning more effective (Beninghof, & Leensvaart, 2016). This way teachers are not thrown into co-teaching right away but are being supported by colleges or other experts in the area of co-teaching so that when it comes time for them to work together on their own they know what the expectation, roles, and strategies necessary to have a highly effective co-teaching

environment. Students' participation and comprehension will increase when the teachers are able to conduct the class environment in a way where both teachers specific expertise is utilized. That is when we will start to see the positive outcomes co-teaching provides to students in meeting their needs and closing the achievement gap of ELLs.

Summary

Teachers need the education and preparation in collaboration, co-teaching models and practices in order for co-teaching to have any positive effects on students. In a ENL push-in co-teaching setting both the ENL and GE teacher need to have full collaboration in all aspects of the teaching process (i.e. pre-instruction, instruction and assessment). The goal of co-teaching is to provide instruction that meets the needs of the students. For this population the ELLs need certain modifications and accommodations in content driven lessons that the ENL teacher or specialist can work with the content teacher to provide student centered instruction that meets their specific needs. Co- teaching is a relationship and teacher need to have the time to meet and plan how they are going to work together in the classroom so that all students are benefitting from this classroom model. More courses on collaboration and co-teaching should be taught at the pre-service level. Likewise, the amount of professional developments on this topic should increase for active service teachers since more and more schools across the United States are pushing toward co-taught classes or periods.

Chapter 3: Description of the Product and Tools

As stated in Chapter 2, the purpose of co-teaching is to aid in closing the achievement gaps between ELLs and non-ELLs. However, due to the lack of teacher education and preparation in collaboration and co-teaching practices this is not being achieved (e.g., Juma, 2022; Giles & Yazan, 2019.) Actions must be taken in pre-service teacher training; school districts must also address these barriers and support their teachers by providing professional development in order to improve co-teaching in their schools. In this Chapter I will present a professional development strategy and its rationale that seeks to improve push-in co-teaching in schools.

This professional development opportunity is offered to ENL and general education teachers who have or will have push-in ESOL periods in the Great Neck school district located in New York. Great Neck school district serves a total of 337 ENL students and has a total of 25 ENL teachers across the nine different schools (Great neck UFSD: NYSEF, 2022). In attendance are also a variety of different GE content teachers who work with ELLs and have or are going to have so-teaching periods. As many other school districts across the U.S. Great Neck has increased the amount of push-in co-teaching periods. The goal of the professional development is to educate the teachers in co-teaching practices which they can incorporate into their classrooms.

Agenda of Events

The goal of this professional development (PD) is to educate teachers in effective collaboration, co-teaching practices, and techniques filling in the gap of knowledge of the topic and preparing teachers to work in a co-teaching setting. The participants of the PD are general education content teachers and ENL teachers. The teachers in this PD teach students from K-5th grade with a range of language development and language needs. The PD will have two sessions

which include introduction to co-teaching/ common issues, effective co-teaching models and practices by hearing from experienced co-teachers, and meeting with their respective co-teachers to go over a classroom plan. The sessions will take place during professional development days in the end of August 2023.

The sessions will be led in the school's library chosen due to the size of the room and its access to large tables, computer and smart T.V. The professional development is presented in the form of a Google Slideshow, in addition to several handouts and materials (see Appendices A, B, C, D). The first session will last about two hours and will consist of a presentation and allow for teachers to ask questions. The topics of the PD will consist of: defining co-teaching, what models are available, what common issues are seen in implementation and how teachers can overcome them by using effective collaboration practices. The second session will allow teachers to meet with their respected co-teachers to plan how they will conduct their co-taught classes with the new information they learned in session 1 as a guide. Each component is discussed independently in the following section along with a description and rationale for its use.

Description of the Professional Development

In session 1 teachers will be asked what they believe in necessary among co-teachers as a way of gathering any background knowledge of conceptions teacher might have, teachers can split into groups and talk with their peers. After the instructor will ask groups to share their responses as a way to introduce the topic being discussed. Next, the presenter of the PD will use a Google slide presentation (see Appendix A) to introduce the topic of co-teaching stating the need of having effective co-teachers in schools. Next, the presenter will describe the desired outcome and the benefits students receive from the program. It is important that teacher who are

new to co-teaching are given information about why more schools are implementing this new model (e.g., Beacher & Bell, 2017; Friend & Cook, 2010; Kervinen et.al, 2022).

The presenter will then pivot the discussion into how the lack of teacher preparation effects teacher execution of co-teaching and can led to common issues schools are seeing across the U.S. The discussion will highlight; division of teacher roles, planning time, education/preparation, and experience. The participants will hear from co-teacher surveys that have been a part of studies that voice the same common issues and concerns they might be feeling or have about co-teaching. This will get teachers thinking and that will link the conversation to the next part of the session. The question will be; “How do you think these issues could be overcome?”

The lack of teacher education on co-teaching practices was heavily researched and discussed in Chapter 2. During preservice teacher education the topic of collaboration with other educators is limited (e.g., Kervinen et al., 2022). The rationale of educating teachers is to provide them with the knowledge to make their co-taught classroom a positive experience for their students and to meet their content and language needs. The reason teachers need to become educated in this PD is because the first-time new teachers are introduced to collaboration is during student teaching where the cooperating teacher’s role is as the evaluator and supervisor, while the student teacher has a subordinating role (Stobaugh & Everson, 2019). When it comes time for implementation, we see an increase in non-effective co-teaching practices due to lack of education. Pre- and in-service teachers do not have the education, experience, or have mastered sufficient co-teaching models to make it effective (Kervinen et al., 2022). To have a program that is effective teachers first need to be educated, this is the main point in this professional development.

Overcoming Problems in Co-teaching

Next, the discussion will pivot to how teachers can overcome the common issues in co-teaching. Teachers will be listening to clips of experts and reviewing literature on the topic. Teachers will reference the problems such as role division, selecting co-teaching models, and planning time. The session will conclude with reference to research on how teachers can overcome these issues. Teacher in the PD will be provided with a handout (See Appendix B) that lays out each of the major issues co-teachers from surveys and studies have voiced on the topic (e.g., Bacher & Bell, 2017; Peercy et al., 2017). Teachers need to hear the issues as they might have similar concerns or experiences previous co-teachers. To have successful co-teaching requires effective co-teacher planning that is intended to maximize instructional effectiveness and student participation in the classroom. The communication between co-teachers is open and responsibility is shared, and co-teachers are able to agree on classroom structures, routines, and behavior management (Kervinen et al., 2022).

The last part of session 1 of the professional development will highlight the six types of co-teaching models, teachers will receive a handout on the models (see Appendix C) and will be watching a video for a more visual in depth look into each model. It is important that teachers are being properly introduced and taught about the different types of co-teaching that they can incorporate with their students. Also, as research shown in Chapter 2 when it comes to selecting a co-teaching model the two teachers need to have equal roles and responsibilities. This can only be achieved when both teachers are educated and prepared in effective co-teaching practices (e.g., Builes, 2022; Huynh, 2017).

Session 2: Planning Ahead

Session 2 will start out by briefly reviewing the contents discussed in the previous session. Teachers will then be asked to pair up with their respected co-teachers and will be given a handout for teachers to develop their co-teaching plan (see Appendix D). This handout will be used throughout this session. This sessions' goal is to allow teachers to draft out roles, responsibilities, plan a common time to make assessments, lessons, and to pick a co-teaching model that will be beneficial to teachers and students. The presenters' job is to act as a mediator and a resource for teachers to utilize as they start planning how they want to design their co-teaching classroom or period. The rational of having the second session be a time for teachers to get together and plan is taken from researchers such as Battaglia and Brooks (2019). Battaglia and Brooks (2019) stated that once teachers are properly educated, they can start sharing responsibility in planning instruction and assessments. The teachers need to start by discussing implementation and set up of their co-taught class so that it reflects themselves and their student populations needs.

Now that teacher have been educated on co-teaching practices, they need the isolated time and space to create their classroom environment, doing this in August will allow for teachers to start effective co-teaching practice in September and create a routine for students. At the end of the session teachers will be asked on a scale how prepared they now feel to participate in a co-taught classroom. The exit ticket responses will be compared to the opening question responses teachers handed in prior to the professional development. The goal is that once teachers have the education and background knowledge in effective co-teaching practices, they will be more prepared to co-teach and helps their students meet their needs.

In conclusion this professional development is designed for teachers who are new to co-teaching in any form. The goal of the development was to educate teachers and provide them with strategies they can use to overcome certain issues seen across schools is the U.S. The rationale of each section and session was based of research gathered about the topic and implemented in away, that allows for teachers to explore and create their own co-taught class based on their new perspectives and takeaways from this professional development.

Chapter 4: Conclusion

This project's purpose was to show how the lack of teacher education affects co-teaching push-in ENL programs. The literature shows common issues co-teachers face when they have not been educated on the models or any co-teaching/ collaboration practices. These issues include role division and planning time (e.g., Baecher & Bell, 2017; Giles & Yazan, 2019). Thus, research determined ways in which teachers can become educated in co-teaching to make co-teaching effective, as well as creating an environment where both educators' expertise is utilized in all aspects of instruction (Marascio, 2021). The questions that led this research included the following: (1) What pre-service education do teachers have on co-teaching or collaboration? (2) What are the common issues seen with the co-teaching models? How do these problems relate to teacher education? (3) What are ways teachers can overcome these issues? (4) How can schools better prepare their teachers for Push-in co-teaching ENL periods? In this Chapter, I first summary the major findings of this project. Next, I discuss the implications and recommendations.

Summary

More schools across the U.S. are providing push-in co-teaching periods for their ENL students as a way to keep them in the classroom to help them develop language and content skills simultaneously. However, there are many issues that have arisen between co-teachers due to the lack of teacher education in pre-service years (e.g., Giles & Yazan, 2019). That is, teacher preparation programs are not adequately preparing educators for a co-taught setting where both teachers are being utilized in instruction. In addition, common issues are getting in the way of the true purpose of the programs, which results in it not being beneficial for the students. For instance, teachers often have issues with planning time, role distribution, and experience. To

overcome these issues, research has concluded that both teachers need proper education and preparation before taking on this responsibility (e.g., Battaglia & Brooks, 2019; Marascio, 2021)

Thus, a professional development for teachers was developed to provide teachers with knowledge about the significance of co-taught classrooms. Through this initiative, teachers will have the opportunity to learn from peers who share similar concerns, discuss common issues, and explore how acquiring the necessary knowledge and preparation can effectively overcome these obstacles. In addition, setting dedicated time for teachers to meet and build a relationship while jointly creating their co-teaching environment helps them gain a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities.

Implications for Learning and Teaching

Students will benefit from this concept of teacher education because teachers will be more informed and attentive to the different needs and resources required to establish an effective co-taught class. ELLs will benefit from instruction since the ENL teacher is being seen as a partner and not an aide. That is, the students will have tailored instruction that will meet their needs and goals. The main purpose of co-teaching classes is to help ELLs close the achievement gap between themselves and non-ELLs.

In addition, ENL and GE teachers will both benefit from education and preparation in co-teaching and collaboration. By becoming educated in co-teaching and collaboration practices, teachers can decrease the number of challenges they currently face. This will help teachers to pre-plan, plan, and assess students according to their area of expertise. The ENL teacher will be utilized in this new co-taught classroom since teachers will be exploring the different models finding the one that meets the needs of students and highlights the teachers content area. Having opportunities to further learn either by increasing courses during pre-service education, attending

professional developments, or taking online courses will help overcome the common issues such as; role division, planning time and selecting an appropriate co-teaching model that meets student's needs will help teachers as they start to create their own co-taught classes. The professional development created with this paper seeks to aid teachers by educating them in effective co-teaching practices, models, and sets time for teachers to discuss goals they might have for the upcoming school year.

Recommendations for Future Research

Additional research that could be conducted on this topic includes surveying pre-service teachers about their experience with co-teaching or collaboration courses. Exploring the prior experience of teachers with any co-teaching model would also be valuable. Conducting these surveys will provide more precise data and insights into the opinions and feelings of pre-service teachers about co-teaching. Based on these results, colleges and universities might consider adjusting their course requirements and criteria, potentially offering more opportunities for co-teaching experiences. Moreover, having a solid education and background in ENL and GE classes will facilitate a smoother transition into a co-teaching setting.

Final thoughts

In essence, co-teaching offers benefits like smaller teacher-student ratios and greater student participation. Its objective is to support English Language Learners (ELLs) in acquiring language skills and narrowing the achievement gap through differentiated instruction. However, successful co-teaching relies on well-prepared and knowledgeable teachers. Without proper preparation, teachers may have limited impact, resembling aides in the classroom. Therefore, teacher education and training are crucial for establishing strong co-teaching relationships and improving students' language acquisition and content knowledge.

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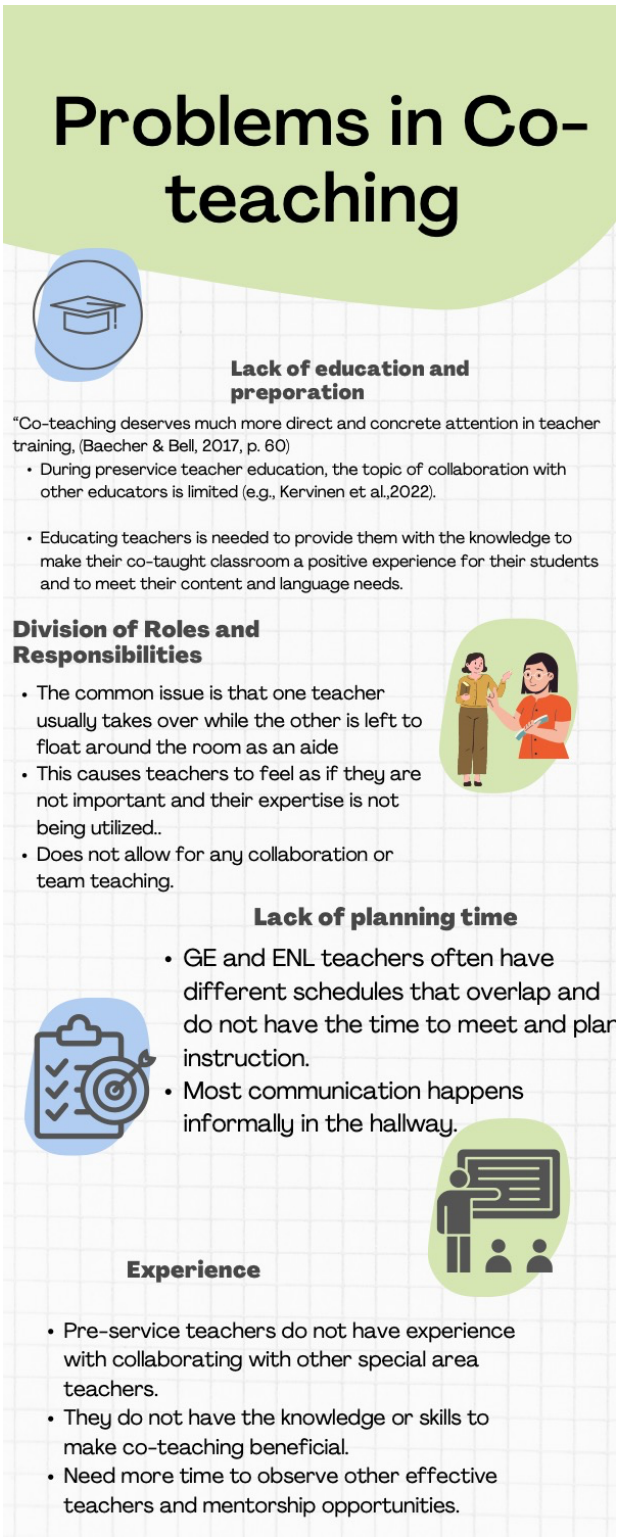
Appendix A

Professional Development Presentation Slides

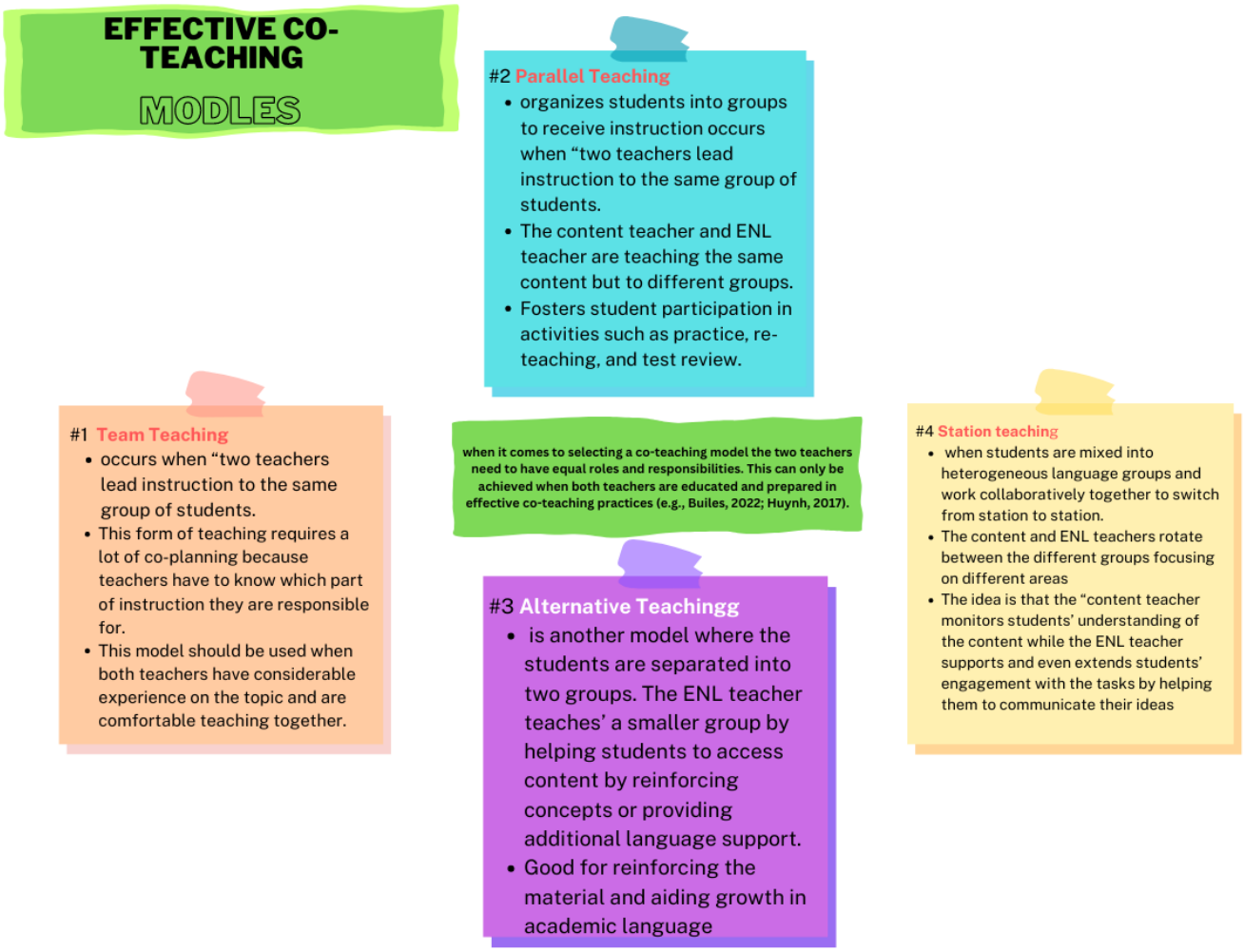
Appendix B

Problems in Co-teaching Infographic



Appendix C

Effective Co-teaching Infographic



Appendix D:

Co-teaching Planning Template

Name: _____ Date:_____

Teachers will pair up with their respected co-teachers. Use this handout to develop your co-teaching plan The goal is to allow teachers to draft out roles, responsibilities, plan a common time to make assessments, lessons, and to pick a co-teaching model that will be beneficial to teachers and students.

Roles/ Responsibilities	**Planning Time**	**Co-Teaching models**	**Ways to continue educating**
GE Teacher: *ENL Teacher:*	*GE Teacher:* *ENL Teacher:*	*GE Teacher:* *ENL Teacher:*	*GE Teacher:* *ENL Teacher:*

While Planning ask yourself the following questions:

- How will you resolve any conflicts that may arise?
- How will you build and foster your teaching relationship?
- How will you incorporate both teacher's expertise and experiences?
- How can administration help support you as you start co-teaching?
- How will you measure if your co-teaching is effective?

On a scale of 1-10 how confident do you fell to being co-teaching

Circle one: ? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10