
Planning for Effective Co-Teaching

The Key to Successful Inclusion

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ABSTRACT

TODAY MANY SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES ARE PROVIDED IN GENERAL EDUCATION CLASSROOMS. VARIOUS SUPPORT MODELS ARE DESIGNED TO MAKE CLASSROOMS MORE INCLUSIVE AND MORE APPROPRIATE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES AND OTHERS WHO ARE AT RISK FOR SCHOOL FAILURE. SUPPORTERS CONTEND THAT BETTER COLLABORATION AND SERVICE COORDINATION IN MAINSTREAM SETTINGS WILL ENABLE MANY STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES TO ACHIEVE GREATER ACADEMIC AND SOCIAL SUCCESS. ONE SUPPORT MODEL USED IN MANY INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS IS COOPERATIVE TEACHING OR "CO-TEACHING." THIS ARTICLE EXPLORES FUNDAMENTAL PLANNING ISSUES THAT NEED TO BE ADDRESSED BY SCHOOL SYSTEMS TO FACILITATE EFFECTIVE CO-TEACHING MODELS.

are made to facilitate development and successful implementation of appropriate new initiatives. Comprehensive planning is widely recognized as an essential ingredient in creating support for among stakeholders (Barth, 1990; Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991). System-wide planning also helps ensure adequate resources, better communication and coordination of efforts, and lasting support as other priorities emerge (Barth 1990; Friend & Cook, 1992a; Janney, Korinek, McLaughlin, & Walther-Thomas, 1994). This article addresses comprehensive planning issues related to the development of cooperative team teaching or "co-teaching" teams. Planning considerations at the district, building, and classroom levels are discussed, and a detailed example of ongoing classroom cooperative planning ("co-planning") is presented.

TODAY MANY SCHOOL SYSTEMS ARE USING SPECIAL education support models to help students with disabilities and others with unique learning needs achieve greater academic and social success in general education classrooms. The popularity of inclusive models of support (e.g., team teaching, consultation) is growing. According to U.S. Department of Education data, this trend is likely to continue in the future (U.S. Department of Education, 1994). As special education and other support services (e.g., Chapter I, ESL, gifted/talented, occupational therapy, counseling) move into mainstream classrooms, it is imperative that school systems plan comprehensively as changes

BACKGROUND

Over the years various interaction models have been proposed to facilitate dialogue, collaboration, and problem solving among school professionals (Laycock, Korinek, & Gable, 1991). Some well-known models include collaborative consultation (Idol, Paolucci-Whitcomb, & Nevin, 1994), mainstream assistance teams (Fuchs, Fuchs, & Bahr, 1990), teacher assistance teams (Chalfant, Pysh, & Moultrie, 1979), and cooperative teaching (Bauwens, Hourcade, & Friend, 1989). All of these models are designed to help students with learning and/or behavior problems function more successfully in mainstream settings by providing struc-

tured support for their classroom teachers. Using various interaction formats, designated by each model's design, professionals work together to develop, implement, and monitor appropriate student intervention plans (Laycock et al., 1991; Pugach & Johnson, 1995). Co-teaching differs from other models because it is based on ongoing classroom participation by supporting colleagues.

Bauwens and her colleagues (1989) have defined the co-teaching process as "an educational approach in which general and special educators or related service providers jointly plan for and teach heterogeneous groups of students in integrated settings" (p. 19). Effective co-teachers work together as equal partners in dynamic and interactive relationships; both participate directly in planning, teaching, and evaluating student performance (Friend & Cook, 1992a, 1992b; Pugach & Johnson, 1995; Walther-Thomas, in press-a). Co-teaching is not a new concept in public schools. It enjoyed initial popularity during the era of open schools (Cohen, 1973) and resurfaced during the early 1980s as a special education support model (Brandenberger & Womack, 1982; Garvar & Papanla, 1982). Although co-teaching is not an easy model to implement without adequate teacher preparation and support resources, emerging research suggests that it is an approach to service delivery that offers potential benefits for students with disabilities, other low-achieving students, and the professionals who teach them (Karge, McClure, & Patton, 1995; Pugach & Wesson, 1995; Walther-Thomas, in press-a).

Walther-Thomas (in press-a) studied 23 schools over a 3-year period as new co-teaching models were implemented in eight school districts. Teachers and administrators reported many student benefits. Students with disabilities developed better attitudes about themselves and others. They became less critical, more motivated, and learned to recognize their own academic and social strengths. Most showed academic improvement and very few were removed from general education placements because of inability to cope with academic and/or social demands. Identified students' social skills improved and positive peer relationships developed. Many other low-achieving students also showed academic and social skills improvement in co-taught classes. Participants attributed improvements to more teacher time and attention. Reduced pupil-teacher ratios also facilitated better progress monitoring, individual assistance, enrichment, and reteaching opportunities. Many general educators in this study reported that a greater "sense of community" emerged as classroom instruction became more inclusive. Special and general educators alike reported professional growth, personal support, and enhanced teaching motivation as a result of their co-teaching experiences. Although potential benefits abound, so do potential problems. Common complaints reported by co-teachers included a lack of staff development opportunities to develop new co-teaching skills and limited classroom support as teachers adjusted to their new roles as collaborators (Walther-Thomas, in press-a).

It is not surprising that teachers find it challenging to learn how to co-teach with others. Until recently, most educators spent their professional lives working alone. Few opportunities were provided to discuss, plan, and participate in ongoing projects with other adults (Feiman-Nemser & Floden, 1986). Consequently, most are poorly prepared for their new roles as collaborators and co-teachers (Bauwens & Hourcade, 1995; Karge et al., 1995; Pugach & Wesson, 1995; Walther-Thomas, 1995). Although school systems want their teaching staff to be innovative and continually improve the quality of instructional efforts, few systems are prepared to facilitate this process (Barth, 1990; Fullan, 1993). Typically, most teachers implementing new ideas receive limited preparation and classroom support (Fullan, 1993; Joyce & Showers, 1988). As a result, and as any experienced educator will attest, many worthwhile innovations never take hold and become integral parts of the system.

COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING FOR CO-TEACHING

It is important for stakeholders and decision makers to understand that changing existing programs and patterns of service delivery is a complex and labor-intensive process; successful change demands years of ongoing support, resources, and monitoring (Barth, 1990; Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991; Korinek, McLaughlin, & Walther-Thomas, 1995). Systems genuinely committed to changing their current models must plan accordingly. Investments must be made in long-term support efforts to facilitate meaningful change and proactively address problems that emerge naturally as part of the process (Fullan, 1993). Although this is disheartening news and many organizations try to ignore these issues, comprehensive planning is essential to the lasting success of innovations (Barth, 1990; Beane, 1995; Friend & Cook, 1992b; Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991; Janney et al., 1994; Pugach & Johnson, 1995). As illustrated in Figure 1, there are a number of issues that program planners must address before new co-teaching programs can be implemented successfully.

District-Level Planning Issues

Just as planning at the team level is critical to classroom success, district-level planning is needed for inclusive education efforts to become integral parts of school programs. District leadership ensures that local schools receive adequate support for new program initiatives (Fullan, 1993). District-level planning helps reduce duplication of effort; it facilitates communication within the system and in the larger community, and fosters better cooperation and collaboration among schools. This level of participation in planning, implementation, and evaluation helps ensure that local schools have the resources needed to develop new local services successfully (Beane, 1995; Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991).

District level		
<u>Potential planners</u>	<u>What are the major issues?</u>	<u>How are issues addressed?</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Superintendents • Supervisors • School board members • Staff developers • Principals/teachers • Related services • Families/students • Community agents • External consultants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Districtwide design: broad goals, objectives, rationales, expectations • Resource allocation • Implementation plan • Evaluation plan • Public relations • Staff development • Change consequences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Task forces • Information meetings • Staff development • Consultant time • Site visits • Open forums • Pilot projects • University support
Building level		
<u>Potential planners</u>	<u>What are the major issues?</u>	<u>How are issues addressed?</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principals • General teachers • Special educators • Related services • Parents • Students • Staff developers • District facilitators • External consultant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building design • Resource allocation • Expectations/support • Caseloads • Student scheduling • Teacher scheduling • Co-planning time • Participant selection • Staff preparation • Program evaluation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schoolwide meetings • Small group meetings • Ongoing staff development • Site visits • Biweekly support groups • Classroom peer coaching • Weekly co-planning meetings
Classroom level		
<u>Potential planners</u>	<u>What are the major issues?</u>	<u>How are issues addressed?</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-teaching teams • General educators • Special educators • Other specialists • Families/students • Paraprofessionals • Volunteers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roles & responsibilities • Resource allocation • IEP development • Content/skills/strategies • Management issues • Progress monitoring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-teaching • Teacher consultation • Small-group instruction • Student consultation • Peer tutoring • Cooperative learning

FIGURE 1. Comprehensive planning for co-teaching.

District-level task force committees should include administrators, teacher leaders, related services professionals, families, and other appropriate community agency representatives (e.g., vocational rehabilitation specialists, adult services workers, college support counselors). Committed teams need to develop long-range inclusive education plans and consider the potential consequences that any new programs and services will have on the district. District planning helps ensure that potential consequences are considered before new programs and/or services are implemented. Without systemwide planning, school-level implementation of new ideas is fraught with unevenness and resistance, and, typically, is short-lived (Fullan, 1993). For example, if one enthusiastic seventh-grade team attends a conference on inclusion and decides to implement co-teaching support for students with learning disabilities, how will this affect other seventh-grade teams in their school? What impact will it have on other grade-level teams? How will it affect the elementary and high school programs? What will this mean for students with other

disabilities? One team's decision may create ripples across the entire system. Comprehensive planning helps reduce frustration, confusion, and competition between schools when representatives work together to design appropriate policies, programs, and implementation plans for all students and all schools.

Building-Level Planning Issues

When new ideas are introduced to teachers and principals, it is tempting to implement these strategies quickly while motivation and enthusiasm are high. As inclusive models are introduced, it is important for building-level teams to resist temptation and allow themselves adequate planning and preparation time before new services are implemented. Planning a year in advance allows administrators, staff developers, teachers, and related services providers time to gain school and community support, recruit willing and qualified co-teachers, visit model sites, conduct staff development sessions, conduct Individualized Education Pro-

gram (IEP) meetings, and make appropriate decisions regarding student placements, teaching assignments, and planning schedules. Building-level issues are complex and teams need to evaluate their situations and determine if adequate support is in place to launch new initiatives.

COMMUNICATE ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT AND LEADERSHIP. Principals, as the instructional leaders of their schools, play critical roles in facilitating collaborative efforts by instructional personnel (Chalfant & Pysh, 1989; Meyerowitz, 1990). Support, understanding, and involvement by principals often serve as pivotal factors in the lasting success of new instructional innovations (Barth, 1990; Pugach & Johnson, 1990). Administrative involvement ensures that important issues are addressed more appropriately (e.g., staff development, resources, classroom sizes, specialist caseloads, planning times, and balanced classroom rosters) (Adams & Cessna, 1991; Chalfant & Pysh, 1989; Meyerowitz, 1990; Pugach & Johnson, 1990). As instructional leaders, effective principals also help provide the vision, moral purpose, recognition, and encouragement that help teachers during challenging stages in the implementation process (Adams & Cessna, 1991; Barth, 1990; Chalfant & Pysh, 1989; Fullan, 1993; Walther-Thomas, in press-a).

SELECT CAPABLE AND WILLING PARTICIPANTS. Building-level planning teams should consist of capable teachers and related services specialists who are viewed as leaders by their colleagues. Because this effort requires additional time and effort, it is important to find participants who are willing to make these commitments (Bauwens & Hourcade, 1995). To encourage broader participation and to recognize the extra effort and time involved in designing and implementing innovations, participants should receive incentives for their efforts (e.g., release time, monetary compensation, free breakfast, recertification points, consultant support) and/or other professional development opportunities (e.g., college tuition, conference registration, textbooks, professional journals).

Whenever possible, select capable volunteers for co-teaching assignments. Often teachers who have worked with others in the past make good co-teachers. The process moves more quickly when new co-teachers have previously developed positive working relationships, have mutual respect for each person's professional skills, and value collaboration. Because of the intensity of the work and the focus on meeting students' academic and social needs, this model should not be used as a strategy for remediating weak teachers or for mentoring inexperienced novices. Both co-teachers must be capable contributors to make these partnerships equitable and productive. Even for competent teachers, it takes time to become effective co-teachers. Ideally, participants should make a good faith commitment to work together for a minimum of 2 years. This allows teams adequate time to establish positive work-

ing relationships with each other, develop effective co-teaching roles and responsibilities, and acquire genuine appreciation for their partners' contributions.

PROVIDE ONGOING STAFF DEVELOPMENT. Unfortunately, many good teachers can't co-teach successfully solely on the basis that they are motivated. Additional skills that were not provided in their initial teacher preparation programs may be required. Most new co-teachers benefit from 3 to 5 days of preparation before classroom implementation. Sessions should provide instruction related to effective co-planning; co-teaching variation; student scheduling; instructional considerations (e.g., study skills, learning strategies, cooperative learning, peer tutoring, instructional modifications); ongoing performance assessment; and interpersonal communication (e.g., problem solving, conflict resolution, negotiation). Sessions should be designed to provide appropriate co-teaching models, supervised practice, and time for partners to discuss their concerns, solve problems, and formulate initial implementation plans (Bauwens & Hourcade, 1995).

Following initial instruction, ongoing skill development and support should also be provided. Staff developers should design a long-term plan for instruction and classroom support based on teachers' current skills, past training efforts, and perceived areas of greatest needs. In addition to district and building-level efforts, co-teachers should be encouraged to participate in college classes, summer workshops, seminars, and professional conferences. Site visits to model programs, monthly problem-solving meetings with other co-teachers, and peer coaching relationships can also facilitate implementation efforts. It is worth noting that building-level administrators should participate actively in all staff development sessions to ensure their clear understanding of the process and potential problems as well as to demonstrate their commitment to this effort.

ESTABLISH BALANCED CLASSROOM ROSTERS. Next to recruiting and preparing capable teachers, scheduling students appropriately is one of the most critical parts of initial planning. As class rosters are developed, it is important to keep the principle of natural proportions in mind (Brown et al., 1989). Effective co-taught classes are heterogeneously grouped environments. To achieve appropriate classroom configurations, most co-taught classes must be scheduled by hand. Planning teams cannot rely on the random results generated by most computerized scheduling programs.

Schools that serve high special education and/or at-risk populations find it hard to become more inclusive (Stainback & Stainback, 1990). A high concentration of students with special needs within a school makes it easy to overload classrooms with challenging problems. Typically, achieving balanced classrooms is an easier task in elementary and middle schools where mixed grouping is

the norm in many regions. Unfortunately, in many high schools the lower level courses (e.g., consumer math, basic English) are filled with students who have learning and/or behavior problems.

School teams need to carefully assess student needs and available resources (e.g., co-teaching time, paraprofessional time, scheduled planning periods, class size, specialist caseloads) as student placement decisions and co-teaching assignments are made. Ideally, in a class of 25 students no more than 6 class members should have identified disabilities in the mild to moderate range or other related problems that make them candidates for school failure. If the identified disabilities are more severe and necessitate more support, fewer special education or at-risk students should be added to these classroom rolls. The underlying goal in the development of classroom rosters is heterogeneity.

PROVIDE WEEKLY SCHEDULED CO-PLANNING TIME. Arranging common planning times for co-teachers is a challenging task for many administrators and teachers. It necessitates thoughtful consideration of complex schedules and in general, can be established only if it is an administrative priority. Ideally, co-teaching pairs should have a minimum of one scheduled planning period (45 to 60 minutes) per week.

DEVELOP APPROPRIATE IEPs. Teams need to meet with parents, students, and other related services professionals to write appropriate IEPs for inclusive settings. Goals and support services should accurately reflect the learning experiences that students will receive in general education classes. To the greatest extent possible, these goals should reflect the skills that students will need to achieve success in general education learning environments (e.g., organizational skills, test-taking strategies, social skills, self-monitoring).

PILOT TEST CLASSROOM AND SCHOOL EFFORTS. Novice co-teachers need to remember the successful innovator's credo: "Small is beautiful." It is important to pilot test co-teaching as a service delivery approach before launching a schoolwide effort. This serves multiple purposes. First, it enables decision makers to assess the appropriateness of this model given available resources. Second, starting slowly allows new co-teachers more time to establish relationships, create effective and efficient planning and teaching routines, and to develop confidence in their new roles. Finally, lessons learned from pilot tests enable stakeholders to develop more effective plans for successful large-scale implementation (Fullan, 1993). Typically, co-teaching pilot tests involve volunteers who teach one class together for a 9-week term or a semester. A more conservative approach suggests that new co-teachers try teaching a single unit together (Friend & Cook, 1992b).

Classroom-Level Planning Issues

Shared commitment and enthusiasm for the process are essential parts of co-teaching (Bauwens & Hourcade, 1995; Friend & Cook, 1992b; Walther-Thomas, in press-a). These factors should be considered as teachers are selected for participation. Effective co-teachers are open, confident, and eager to try new ideas. They eliminate "my/your" thinking and vocabulary quickly. Their language reflects inclusive thinking (e.g., "our students," "our class," "our goals for the year"). Their team image and mutual respect should be evident in their work. Both teachers' names should be posted on the door and in the classroom. On the first day of school, both should be there to welcome students and families. All meetings and correspondence with families (e.g., notes, grades) should reflect participation from both co-teachers.

Although research on classroom co-planning is limited, there is growing interest in this area. Engeström (1994) found that co-planning is essentially a recursive process. Lesson plans are developed together in an open-ended and spiral fashion. Typically, co-planners revisit instructional issues on multiple occasions as they plan, teach, reflect, modify, and evaluate instructional efforts. Co-planners may not use conventional oral turn-taking, pausing, or decision-making procedures during these sessions. As planners become more familiar with each other's style and skills, they can build on each other's ideas more easily and circle back to earlier points in their discussion as they make plans and imagine together (Engeström, 1994). Because of the complex nature of the planning process, it is easy to understand why successful co-planning demands time, effective communication skills, and trust in each other's competence and commitment to shared goals.

Studying co-teachers over time, Walther-Thomas (1995) found that five planning themes emerged among co-teachers who considered themselves to be effective co-planners. First, skilled planners trust the professional skills of their partners. Frequently they cite the skills, contributions, and commitments of their partners as the "secret" to their success. The underlying confidence in their partners' skills enables them to work through problems that emerge as relationships develop. Second, effective planners design learning environments for their students and for themselves that demand active involvement. Co-teachers report that the intensity of co-planned instruction, supervised practice, and more individual student attention enables them to accomplish more learning goals with students. Third, effective co-planners create learning and teaching environments in which each person's contributions are valued. As a result, ongoing classroom roles and responsibilities are shared fairly. The success of these efforts often make it impossible for classroom visitors to identify special education students and to determine who are the "real" classroom teachers. Fourth, effective planners develop effective routines to facilitate their planning. Efficient routines

emerge as co-teachers become more familiar with each other's skills, interests, and working styles. As routines develop, more in-depth planning takes place during work sessions. Finally, planners become more skilled over time. Participants report that they feel more productive, comfortable, and creative over time. Although co-teachers acknowledge that the amount of time they spend planning does not decrease over time, the quality of classroom instruction improves.

The Classroom Co-Planning Process

STEP 1—GETTING TO KNOW EACH OTHER. Co-teachers must become familiar with each other's professional skills, including their instructional strengths, weaknesses, interests, and attitudes. It is important to spend time talking and getting better acquainted with each other's skills, interests, and educational philosophies. It is important for participants to discuss these topics with honesty, respect for each other's opinions, and open minds. A focused interview may be part of the initial staff development process. Program planners may ask potential co-teachers to complete this interview process *before* final decisions are made regarding co-teaching assignments. As shown in Figure 2, a semistructured preliminary discussion can facilitate this process as potential partners exchange ideas on teaching, management, and progress monitoring. Current classroom routines and rules (e.g., bathroom and drinking fountain privileges, pencil sharpening, talking during class, use of instructional materials, patterns of parental contact) can be discussed and the teachers can begin to discuss potential roles and responsibilities in their work together.

New co-teaching partners need time to plan and prepare before they begin working together. If co-teaching is initiated during the school year, partners typically start working together at the beginning of a new semester. Sometimes new partners teach an initial unit (e.g., 2- to 4-week social studies unit on the Civil War) together to try out the process. If all goes well during their pilot test, they may commit to a year-long co-teaching partnership the following school year. Most partners begin co-teaching at the beginning of a new school year. Many find that it is necessary to plan together during the summer to prepare for the first week of school. In most classrooms, many important decisions are made before school starts regarding daily routines and rules, curriculum, student evaluation, and behavior management. Co-teachers need time to develop classroom routines they can both support. To ensure that both partners are genuinely committed to this effort, both need to participate in these important decisions.

Experienced co-teachers may use time during the summer to evaluate the success of their previous efforts. They should consider data such as classroom suspensions, report card grades, child study referrals, and student work portfolios. It is also an appropriate time to send home consumer satisfaction surveys to parents and students. Based on their review, co-teachers can make any necessary

modifications and establish new goals for the coming year. Planning new programs and evaluating existing ones are labor-intensive efforts. They are also critical to the long-term success of inclusive education programs. District- and building-level administrators need to acknowledge and support these essential activities by compensating teachers for their professional time during summer months.

STEP 2—WEEKLY CO-PLANNING. Effective weekly co-planning is based on regularly scheduled meetings. Walther-Thomas (1995, in press-a) found that experienced co-teaching teams reported an hour or more of co-planning time with their partners each week. Planning sessions were viewed as priorities by both teachers; they refused to let other competing responsibilities interfere with their planning sessions. During weekly planning sessions co-teachers reported that they stayed focused on the task at hand and avoided discussion of any unrelated topics. Satisfied co-planners prepared for meetings by reviewing the content in advance. This enabled them to identify key concepts as well as potential content problems and student needs. They also facilitated early consideration of various resources, activities, homework assignments, and evaluation procedures that could be used (Walther-Thomas, 1995). Ongoing team planning helped maintain balance and equity in co-teaching relationships and facilitated effective communication, team problem solving, and progress monitoring. During these sessions co-teachers shape their instructional plans, establish timelines and priorities, assign preparation tasks, and address specific areas of concern as they review students' classroom performance, assessment information, and IEP goals. Walther-Thomas (1995) found that many co-teachers address three fundamental issues during these sessions: content goals, learner needs, and effective instructional delivery.

What are the content goals? Typically, co-teachers rely on district curriculum guides as their framework for instructional units, weekly plans, and daily lessons. They develop linkage between content goals and the IEP goals of identified students. Together they determine the extent to which content goals must be modified, if at all, for students with disabilities. As students study new content (e.g., the Civil War, adjective usage, environmental chemistry, literature), many co-teachers also teach students learning strategies and study skills (e.g., reading comprehension strategies, two-column note taking, test preparation, problem solving) to facilitate learning mastery. They create instructional plans that weave content and strategies instruction together.

Who are the learners? Effective co-teachers consider the diverse needs of all class members when planning instruction. Initially, IEPs, report cards, standardized test results, pretest information, curriculum-based assessments, informal assessments, and preliminary teacher observations are useful sources of information for planning. In addition, early meetings with families and former teachers

It is helpful for potential co-teachers to discuss their teaching philosophies, routines, and student expectations before making the commitment to co-teach. The questions below are designed to serve as a starting point for co-teaching discussions. Depending on previous experiences working together, some questions may not be relevant. Review the questions in advance and plan to spend about an hour together discussing these items. Remember that differences of opinion are inevitable; differences are OK and perfectly normal. Effective co-teachers learn and grow professionally from their work together. Competent professional skills, openness, and interest in working together are more important than perfect agreement on classroom rules.

1. What are your expectations for students regarding: Participation? Daily preparation? Written assignments and/or homework completion?
2. What are your basic classroom rules? What are the consequences?
3. Typically, how are students grouped for instruction in your classroom?
4. What instructional methods do you like to use (e.g., lectures, class discussions)?
5. What practice activities do you like to use (e.g., cooperative learning groups? labs?)
6. How do you monitor and evaluate student progress?
7. Describe your typical tests and quizzes.
8. Describe other typical projects and assignments.
9. Do you differentiate instruction for students with special needs? If so, how?
10. Is any special assistance given to students with disabilities during class? On written assignments? On quizzes and tests?
11. How and when do you communicate with families?
12. What are your strengths as a teacher? What are your weaknesses? Pet peeves?
13. What do you see are our potential roles and responsibilities as co-teachers?
14. If we decide to co-teach together, what are your biggest hopes for our work as a team? What are your biggest concerns?

FIGURE 2. Preliminary discussion questions.

provide invaluable information about students' academic and social needs. As the year progresses, co-teachers rely more on their growing knowledge of students' needs, abilities, and interests. Daily interaction with students and with each other facilitates planning. This enables them to anticipate potential problems, identify topics of student interest, and customize learning experiences to meet individual and group student needs more effectively.

How can we teach most effectively? As content specialists, general educators understand critical dimensions of the curriculum that students must master to progress satisfactorily to the next level of proficiency. Special educators, as process specialists, understand potential learning problems that many students experience—as well as generating possible solutions. Effective co-teachers use their com-

plementary professional skills to provide students with enriched learning experiences. Both partners invest equally in planning, preparation, and delivery of classroom instruction. Typically, co-teachers who plan together use a broad array of instructional strategies, guided practice activities, and monitoring procedures to create active and productive learning environments. Planned environments reflect co-teaching relationships that are dynamic: Both have opportunities to present to the large group, monitor group and individual work, clarify concepts, and supervise practice. Diverse roles and responsibilities help ensure greater equity and respect among participants (Bauwens & Hourcade, 1995; Friend & Cook, 1992a; Walther-Thomas, in press-b); this also helps students respect the skills and value the contributions of each teacher.

The Writing Process: A Case Study of Co-Planning

Sue Land, a learning disabilities resource teacher, and Mimi Bryant, a former sixth-grade teacher, were co-teaching partners for 5 years at Berkeley Middle School in Williamsburg, Virginia. They were members of a four-teacher team. Together Mimi and Sue taught two English classes and one reading class. During this time Sue also co-taught two other classes, math and science, with the other teachers on the team. Sue planned 1 hour per week with each of her co-teaching partners. Sue's weekly planning and co-teaching schedule is illustrated in Figure 3.

During 1994–95, their sixth-grade team consisted of 65 students, 12 of whom had identified learning disabilities. Approximately one third of the students on the team were considered at risk for school failure because of various factors (e.g., identified disability, language problems, family issues, poor academic skills, low cognitive ability). The other students on the team achieved at average or above-average levels. This mix of low, middle, and high performers was considered typical of other middle teams in this district.

In Virginia, students are given math, reading, and writing competency tests in the sixth grade. Students must pass these tests during middle school years to receive

credit for courses when they enter high school. If students fail any of the three subtests in the sixth grade, they take the subtest again the following year. Students continue this pattern until students pass all subtests or elect to graduate from high school with a certificate of attendance instead of a standard diploma. Typically, most students with mild to moderate disabilities have one or more IEP goals written specifically to address some competency test requirements.

Writing skills are a significant part of the sixth-grade English curriculum. During their years as co-teachers, Mimi and Sue found that most students entered middle school with few effective writing skills. Most sixth-grade students think their first draft is "good enough." Working together, these teachers taught students an effective writing process in September and supervised its ongoing use until June. By providing students with a writing process, setting high expectations, and encouraging ongoing practice, most of their students, including those with identified disabilities, performed well on the state's writing subtest.

Sue and Mimi taught their students that effective written products are created through a process that consists of different stages (i.e., prewriting, drafting, responding/revising, proofreading, publishing). They wanted students to understand the recursive nature of writing, in which

<u>Day</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Planning meeting content/planning partner</u>
Monday	12:40 p.m. to 1:40 p.m. 1:40 p.m. to 2:20 p.m.	Math and consult on social studies (Nancy), team planning (Mimi, Nancy, Val)
Tuesday	12:40 p.m. to 1:40 p.m. 1:40 p.m. to 2:20 p.m.	Science (Val) Team planning with specialists (Mimi, Val, Nancy, and other as appropriate)
Wednesday	12:40 p.m. to 1:40 p.m. 1:40 p.m. to 2:20 p.m.	Individual planning (e.g., IEPs, testing), team planning (Mimi, Nancy, and Val)
Thursday	12:40 p.m. to 1:40 p.m. 1:40 p.m. to 2:20 p.m.	English and reading (Mimi) Team planning (Mimi, Nancy, and Val)
Friday	12:40 p.m. to 1:40 p.m. 1:40 p.m. to 2:20 p.m.	Individual planning, team planning (Mimi, Nancy, and Val)
<u>Sue's daily co-teaching schedule</u>		
<u>Time</u>	<u>Content</u>	<u>Special Education Students per Class</u>
8:00 a.m. to 8:45 a.m.	Co-teach math with Nancy	(6/25)
8:45 a.m. to 9:30 a.m.	Co-teach English with Mimi	(4/25)
9:30 a.m. to 10:20 a.m.	Co-teach English with Mimi	(6/25)
10:20 a.m. to 10:40 a.m.	Individual student consultation	1 to 2 students per day
10:40 a.m. to 11:10 a.m.	Lunch meeting with team members	
11:20 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.	Co-teach science with Val	(6/25)
12:00 p.m. to 12:40 p.m.	Co-teach reading with Mimi	(7/25)

FIGURE 3. The special education teacher's weekly planning and co-teaching schedule.

good writers move back and forth between various stages. To facilitate their students' understanding of this, they used two instructional strategies. The first, a visual aid taken from the students' language arts book, represented effective writing stages as sailboats going from one port to another. The teachers explained that sailors often revisit ports to accomplish their work. Using this analogy, they noted that writers often revisit their work multiple times to make it better. This graphic helped many weaker writers see the process in a way that made sense. To help students remember the writing process stages (i.e., prewriting, drafting, responding/revising, proofreading, publishing), they devised a mnemonic ("Pretty Dolly Rode the Railroad Past Pittsburgh") that all students learned.

As school approached, Sue and Mimi worked together and revisited some of the major issues related to content delivery, guided practice, and student evaluation from the previous year. They built new lessons on the basis of these experiences and journal notes they both had written. During weekly planning they asked themselves questions related to the content, practice, student learning needs, and evaluation.

In September 1994 they decided to try several new teaching and practice strategies as they prepared to teach their writing unit. One of the new strategies was based on their observations about note taking during the first few weeks of school. They were surprised to discover that many students were not fluent note takers. Frequently a number of students experienced difficulty copying notes from the chalkboard and/or overhead transparencies. Because of this, some missed important content. In an effort to begin to build better note-taking skills and to ensure that all students learned the writing process, they created a structured note-taking guide that used a slot outline format. This tool provided a number of benefits for students. It allowed them to concentrate on key concepts, words, and phrases. It eased the frustrations of poor note takers and allowed them to focus their attention on the writing process. The prepared guide helped increase students' on-task behavior by demanding more active involvement. It also facilitated the teachers' efforts to monitor student participation. Finally, the completed study guides were used in various ways to help students prepare for several quizzes and a writing process test.

Mimi and Sue also used writing folders to keep students' written work in the classroom. Keeping students' written material in class ensured their participation in daily writing assignments; second drafts could be generated as needed without delay. Ongoing access to students' work enabled the co-teachers to evaluate productivity, individual and group efforts, and progress on an ongoing basis. Both teachers read student writing assignments and responded on a daily basis. Instruction, practice, and evaluation activities all focused on helping students understand the process required to become effective writers. Students' writing folders also served as portfolios for completed work; stu-

dents were asked regularly to select their best efforts for their portfolios.

At the beginning of the writing process unit, their students learned five strategies for prewriting (i.e., webbing, free writing, brainstorming, listing, and observing, and recording). Each day Sue and Mimi focused on one technique; students were asked to plan their writing about an assigned topic using various prewriting strategies. All of the teachers on their team discussed writing and worked together to reinforce the writing process in science, social studies, and electives (e.g., "OK, as you get ready to write a soldier's letter describing the Battle of Gettysburg, I want you to use one of the prewriting strategies you have learned in English. Who can tell me about one of these strategies?").

Even though Mimi and Sue were veteran teachers with more than 30 years of combined experience, several distinguished teaching awards, and 4 years of previous experience as teaching partners, they continued to plan together on a weekly basis. All of their lesson plans, as well as other related responsibilities for preparation and evaluation, were written down. Both teachers prepared by reviewing the upcoming content and learning objectives in advance. They structured their meetings to include a brief review of the past week's activities and an examination of the objectives for the coming week. Most of their time was spent discussing content delivery (e.g., team teaching, modeling, station teaching, cooperative learning groups), possible practice activities, and evaluation procedures. Specific student needs were discussed and appropriate modifications and accommodations were proposed. All of the preparation responsibilities were divided equally. As shown in Figure 4, both teachers had active roles and responsibilities related to instruction and maintenance of classroom flow (e.g., homework collection, discipline, materials distribution) when they implemented the plans they created during their planning sessions.

CONCLUSIONS

As school systems move toward more inclusive education programs for students with disabilities, comprehensive co-planning at the district, building, and classroom levels ensures that structurally sound frameworks will be provided to support these programs. Multilevel planning helps guarantee that effective and appropriate programs are designed, developed, implemented, and monitored over time. To ensure appropriate learning experiences for students with disabilities in general education environments, program planning cannot be left to chance. Deliberate and thoughtful planning efforts must take place. Multilevel planning also allows administrators, teachers, specialists, parents, and other interested community members to have input in the development of a comprehensive plan and to develop a shared commitment to support inclusive education.

<u>Mimi</u>	<u>Sue</u>
Welcomes students at the door; collects last night's homework.	Writes opening activity on the board and explains it to students: List the ways in which you use writing throughout the day and in your life.
Monitors student work on opening activity.	Records homework in rollbook; writes students ideas on an overhead transparency.
Leads discussion on possible daily writing tasks; uses student-generated ideas to build rationale for good writing.	Writes objectives on the overhead transparency; monitors students; passes out note taking guides. Reviews note taking with students.
Explains today's lesson objectives: (1) naming and describing the 5 stages of the writing process; (2) using the note taking guide during today's lesson.	Draws sailboats on an overhead transparency.
Explains the recursive nature of writing, uses the "sailboat" metaphor.	(Alternating teacher roles) Explains writing process (stages 1, 3, & 5); answers questions (use prepared overhead transparency).
(Alternative teacher roles) Explains writing process (stages 2 & 4); answers questions, monitors.	Supervises partner practice.
Introduces a 2-minute partner practice activity on the process.	Models brainstorming with the topic "Times I Got in Trouble."
Explains brainstorming as a prewriting strategy.	Writes homework assignment on board; answers questions as needed.
Writes Sue's ideas on overhead transparency; leads 3-minute review and explains homework: Brainstorm at least 10 possible writing topics using "Times I Got in Trouble"; bring list to class.	Checks students' note taking and homework planners; excuses class.
Checks students' note taking guides and homework planners.	

FIGURE 4. Typical co-teaching roles and responsibilities: teaching the writing process (Day 1).

District-level planning ensures that adequate resources are available to schools and classrooms to provide appropriate services for students with disabilities. Typically, this support includes essential financial commitments needed for staff development, classroom supervision, and hiring new personnel. Central office leadership signals the importance of this effort; it provides the critical "go ahead" for building-level teams. District planning teams or task force committees should encourage active family, business, and public agency participation to ensure support for inclusive education within the community. Planning teams should develop mission statements that reflect commitment to inclusive education. These statements can facilitate discussion about effective inclusive education among

team members, helping stimulate building- and classroom-level program development efforts.

At the building level, principal involvement is essential to lasting success of inclusive education programs. Administrative leadership ensures better implementation by securing resources needed to prepare staff members for new roles and responsibilities (e.g., scheduled co-planning time, ongoing staff development, manageable teaching schedules, balanced classroom rosters, problem-solving support). Administrators also facilitate implementation efforts over time by monitoring student progress and teacher performance and maintaining a clear focus on inclusive education in discussions with staff members, students, community members, and central office administrators.

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