

INTEGRATED CO-TEACHING¹ IN THE ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (ESOL) CLASSROOM

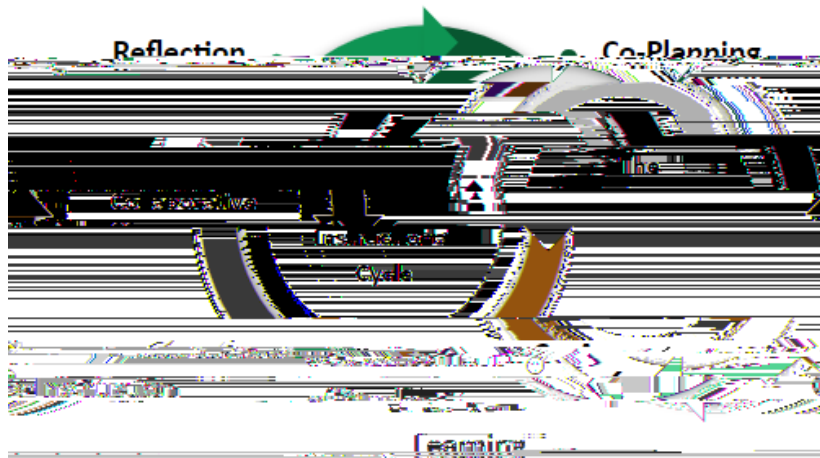
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The Collaborative Instructional Cycle

Co-teaching in Integrated English as a New Language (ENL) classes requires much more than having two or more teachers (one being an English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) specialist) delivering instruction together to classes that generally contain both Multilingual Learners (MLs) and English Language Learners (ELLs) and English-fluent students. It also requires lesson and unit planning, determining ways to support students' social-emotional well-being, joint assessment of student work, and individual and teacher-team reflection on both collaborative and instructional practices. To develop practices that support co-teaching for ELLs, teachers embrace the collaborative instructional cycle, which consists of four interrelated phases: co-planning, co-instruction, co-assessment of student learning, and reflection (See Figure 1). All four phases together maximize teacher effectiveness and impact on ELLs' language acquisition, literacy development, content learning, and social-emotional growth.

Figure 1: The Collaborative Instructional Cycle



Neglecting or bypassing any of the four phases disrupts the balance and continuity of the cycle and negatively impacts students' academic, linguistic, and social-emotional learning. While co-instruction might receive substantial attention, teachers need protected time and structured opportunities to implement the collaborative instructional cycle as they:

- a. Collaborate to create multi-level, differentiated unit and lesson plans;

¹For the purposes of this document, the term "co-teaching" refers to team-taught Integrated English as a New Language (ENL) classes and should not be confused with other co-teaching models such as special education co-teaching.

- b. Engage in collecting and analyzing formative and summative student data; and
- c. Reflect on the teaching-learning process that took place in the class as well as the collaborative relationship of the team.

The following sections provide guidance on each of the four phases of the collaborative instructional cycle (see *Topic Brief #4: Seven Models of Co-Teaching* for a more detailed discussion of the seven co-teaching models introduced here).

Careful preparation for co-teaching must include critical conversations around the following dimensions of shared instructional practice:

1. Laying the foundation for sustained collaboration by establishing strong partnerships.
2. Regularly examining student data obtained from multiple sources to reflect on students' academic, linguistic, and social emotional development and to make short-term and long-term instructional decisions. These sources include teacher-created formal and informal assessments—including student observations, and portfolios—as well as the New York State Identification Test for English Language Learners (NYSITELL), the New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT), and other standardized tests.
3. Planning instruction by integrating both content and language goals and maximizing the general education and ESOL teachers' expertise.
4. Expanding impact on student learning through on-going sustained efforts for collaboration.

Co-planning is most frequently focused on a unit of study or lesson, and it involves the cooperation of two or more educators. Co-teachers must be provided ample time for collaborative planning for any effective co-taught instruction to take place in the Integrated ENL class. Common planning time creates a professional context in which teachers can regularly collaborate because without co-planning, there is no co-teaching.

For effective teacher collaboration, teachers must be prepared to share:

Expertise of content, knowledge of literacy and language development, and pedagogical skills.

Instructional resources, technology tools, and supplementary materials that are scaffolded and differentiated.

Instructional strategies that represent research-informed and evidence-based best practices.

Approaches to co-teaching—ways to group students and optimize classroom space for instructional delivery.

Essential tools and resources to support successful co-planning include:

[New York State Next Generation English Language Arts Learning Standards](#)

[Bilingual Common Core Progressions](#)

Additional New York State Standards:

1. One Group: One Leads, One "Teaches" °

Discuss research-based best practices and promising strategies they wish to implement, and Plan coordinated interventions.

Collaborative assessment is highly structured and cyclical—each time new data are collected, students' progress and performance are reassessed. Thus, teachers have the opportunity to reflect on their students' academic learning as well as socioemotional and linguistic development. Co-assessment and shared reflection time can also help determine whether the modifications and accommodations teachers planned and executed offered the necessary support or not, and what additional instruction or interventions are needed. The literature on the co-assessment of student work offers several different protocols to follow when examining student work, as well as those that specifically examine work by ELLs—their cultural and linguistic challenges as well as academic and language development.

The collaborative instructional cycle would not be complete without sustained opportunities for co-teachers to reflect on the challenges and successes they have with the Integrated ENL program model. When reflecting on the co-teaching practice, coaching, or observing co-teachers, the following look-fors can offer guidance:

Parity Do both teachers participate equitably in the lesson (not equally)?

Integration of language skills Do both teachers provide instruction and support for content and language development?

Opportunities to talk Does the smaller student-teacher ratio lead to higher levels of student-to-teacher

Table 1: Four Critical Steps for Reflective Questions

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