


# Chapter 1

## Co-Teaching: An Instructional Model for All Students

**Lisa Etheridge**

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8359-7145>

*Troy University, USA*

**Joseph Johnson**

*Troy University, USA*

**Marie Kane**

*Troy University, USA*

**Angela Carpenter**

*Troy University, USA*

**Cathy Lott**

*Troy University, USA*

### ABSTRACT

*As schools move to adopt more inclusive practices for students, there is a call for more collaborative opportunities for teachers, such as professional learning teams, to meet the needs of all students. For these professional learning teams to be successful, they must be designed for high quality and performance to promote student learning and achievement. The purpose of this chapter is to focus on using the co-teaching model as an instructional strategy for meeting the diverse needs of all students. The chapter will include the six co-teaching strategies and how to implement them effectively. Furthermore, the chapter will discuss the training of teacher candidates at the higher education level in order to be ready to meet the needs of all students through collaboration using the co-teaching model. Lastly, the chapter will provide real-life scenarios incorporating the co-teaching strategies for the reader to work through and discuss.*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

As the call for more collaboration among teachers continues to increase in the world of academics, the use of professional learning teams is increasing (Knackendoffel et al., 2018; Friend & Cook, 2007; Murawski & Swanson, 2001). For these professional learning teams to be successful, they must be designed for high quality and performance to promote student learning and achievement. A co-teaching partnership is one type of professional learning team. The origins of co-teaching date back to the 1960s and 1970s as a means of modifying instruction for a more diverse student population (Villa et al., 2013). The primary goal of co-teaching was to place students with special needs in the general education population, with proper supports in place, to provide the same learning opportunities as their general education peers (Friend, 2013). General and special education teachers worked collaboratively to plan, co-instruct, and co-assess so that students with disabilities had equal access to the general education curriculum and to assist them in exceeding their learning targets on content standards. Today, the co-teaching model is being used as a professional learning team between general and special education teachers but also between two general education teachers. In such an arrangement, students who struggle to learn but who are not eligible for special education or other support services gain the benefits of a reduced student-teacher ratio and the instructional variety that the co-teaching model brings.

Utilizing the co-teaching model should begin with an understanding of the operational definition of co-teaching. Co-teaching involves two or more educators who share instructional responsibility for a single group of students primarily in a single classroom or workspace for specific content or objectives with mutual ownership, pooled resources, and joint accountability (Friend, & Cook, 2016). Co-teaching can be characterized as a means of bringing together the strengths of two teachers with different expertise that allows them to better meet student needs (Friend & Cook, 2016; Walsh, 1992; Bauwens, et al., 1989). Since each co-teacher brings different skill sets and experiences to the classroom, they work collaboratively instructing students rather than acting interchangeably (Friend, 2013). This allows for increased opportunities for student success through expanding instructional approaches (Friend & Cook, 2016; Murawski, 2010,). A second reason for using the co-teaching model focuses on the intensity and integrity of students' educational programs. First, students receive more instruction and are involved more in their learning. Additionally, the combination of two teachers reduces the student-teacher ratio and provides opportunities for greater student support.

This chapter will provide an in-depth discussion of co-teaching, including its history, the six co-teaching strategies as well as co-teaching in higher education with

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