



CO-TEACHING: 201

How to Support ELLs

By Andrea Honigsfeld and Maria Dove

Many general education classroom teachers and English as a Second Language (ESL) specialists find themselves sharing classroom space as well as responsibilities for planning instruction, teaching, and assessing English Language Learners (ELLs). This service delivery model may be called push-in, team teaching, inclusion, or co-teaching for ESL. Emerging literature on collaborative teaching practices to support ELLs (Pardini 2006; Zehr 2006), and personal experiences as ESL co-teachers and professional developers, have led us to devise guidelines to jumpstart co-taught lessons (Honigsfeld and Dove, in press).

Start with What You Know Best. Think of your favorite, most successful lessons, activities, and tasks that have worked in a one-teacher classroom. Try them in a co-taught setting.

Identify Objectives. Identify grade-appropriate, content-based objectives for each lesson. Add a language objective for ELLs.

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Begin Together. Start the lesson together in front of the class to establish your equal roles in the eyes of students. All students are your shared students.

Grouping. Consider group configurations for the next part of the lesson. Start with two or three homogenous groups before moving to heterogeneous groups. In groupings of *two*, each teacher stays with his or her group for a set period of time, working in a parallel teaching mode and using differentiated instructional techniques.

Group A: Current and former ELLs and other learners who need extra support, scaffolding, pre-teaching, or re-teaching of target concepts or skills. The ESL group focuses on language and content needed to reach mainstream goals.

Group B: More proficient, native speakers. For *three* groups, Teacher 1 takes Group A, Teacher 2 takes Group B, and members of Group C work independently. Teachers then rotate to a new group after a specified time.

Group A: ELLs

Group B: Learners who need extra support

Group C: Students who can work on advanced tasks independently

Start with one of the above groupings and then later experiment with others. When you are

ready to progress, try groups at 4–5 monitored learning centers.

Closing Lesson. In the last section of the lesson, review the lesson and assess student learning with the entire class.

- Take turns asking review questions or giving brief, informal assessment tasks, such as True/False statements with nonverbal responses (thumbs up, thumbs down).
- Play a closure game, such as Wonder Ball, where a soft ball is tossed to a student when it's his or her turn to finish a sentence starter—"I wonder..." or "Today I learned..." (Echevarria et al. 2008).
- Ask groups of students to take turns sharing ideas and products, outcomes of learning, projects, or worksheet answers.
- Do an exit activity. For example, students respond to one of several summary questions on their "tickets-to-leave" (slips of paper or index cards). Either teacher collects the "tickets" for assessment purposes.

Reflecting. Reflect daily (individually or together). Keep a simple 2+2 log (as illustrated here) to note what worked well and what could be done differently (Allen and LeBlanc 2005).

Date	Two things that worked	Two things to work on
2/15	Circle of knowledge - trees Wonder Ball!	transitioning to centers exit activity took too long

Forget-Me-Nots. Experiment as you create your unique set of co-teaching routines. Bring your individual talents forward. If you sing, introduce the topic through songs. Artistic? Illustrate key concepts while your co-teacher explains them.

Ask colleagues who have co-taught in inclusive or ESL settings for many years to share their favorite techniques. Visit them when they co-plan a lesson and co-teach.

Above all, take risks and be spontaneous! Co-teaching should be planned but does not have to be scripted. Show your enthusiasm about being with the whole class and working with each other. Your students will benefit greatly by



Quick Tips for Starting Together

- Use a graphic organizer or other visual aid as an overview or to introduce a concept.
- Role-play—take advantage of the fact that two teacher models are available.
- Read aloud (Teacher 1) and think aloud (Teacher 2), commenting on what Teacher 1 read.
- Alternate your roles: One teacher introduces information; the other teacher clarifies, illustrates, writes out key words, shows related pictures or realia, or asks questions of key points.
- Teach a rhyme, use poetry or finger plays, sing, play music, or involve everyone in a game.
- Take turns speaking (learn to take signals from each other).

your collaborative efforts. Enjoy the co-teaching experience and make the most of it. 🍎

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Authors' note: Portions of this article are based on the authors' forthcoming book *Collaboration and Co-Teaching: Strategies for English Learners*, to be published by Corwin Press in 2010, and are used with permission.