Co-teaching has been increasingly adopted to support students in the general education classroom. After 20 years of field testing, we know what works—and what doesn’t. In this practical guide, co-teaching and inclusion experts Toby J. Karten and Wendy W. Murawski detail the best practices for successful co-teaching and ways to troubleshoot common pitfalls. This book addresses the do’s, don’ts, and do betters of:

- The co-teaching relationship and collaborative roles.
- Co-planning instruction and assessment.
- Co-teaching in action.
- Academic and behavioral supports and interventions.
- Collaborative reflections, improvements, and celebrations.

Readers will gain valuable insights on what to start doing, what to stop doing, and how to improve their co-teaching practices to better reach all students.

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This book invites its readers to value co-teaching as a viable collaborative instructional model that assists students as they learn side by side with grade-level peers. It acknowledges how far we’ve come since the rise of co-teaching, what we now know about the do’s and don’ts of co-teaching, and why we need to do it better. Explanation and application of the eight co-teaching spokes of co-teaching models (CTM), Universal Design for Learning (UDL), Understanding by Design framework (UbD framework), social-emotional learning (SEL), Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), differentiated instruction (DI), Multitiered Systems of Support (MTSS), and specially designed instruction (SDI) are offered with elementary and secondary curriculum applications. Chapter sections include best practices (the do’s), common pitfalls (the don’ts), and raising the bar (the do betters). Curriculum Connections are threaded throughout each of the six chapters across the grades and disciplines for elementary and secondary co-teachers. Each of the six chapters begins with the collaborative goals and then revisits these goals by reflecting on the applications that allow the evidence-based co-teaching practices to live and breathe in K–12 lessons. Corresponding tables, charts, and forms for planning, instruction, assessment, and reflections are included in each chapter.

Chapter 1, “The Co-Teaching Spokes and Inclusive Principles,” offers the do’s, don’ts, and do betters of a co-teaching environment. This includes the co-teaching norms that avoid having one teacher viewed as the “real” one or teams looking for a magical formula. This chapter outlines how the inclusive environment needs to be a proactive, evidence-based one, with a variety of co-teaching models and the multitiered framework of co-teaching supports that incorporate a specific learner’s specially designed instruction. The collaborative goals address how to maximize successes through shared responsibilities of the inclusion principles, along with the flexibility, respect, integrity, time, honesty, and fidelity to co-deliver evidence-based practices to diverse learners in elementary and secondary classrooms.
Chapter 2, “The Relationship and Collaborative Roles,” invites teachers to learn about and from each other. Educators have different co-teaching skill sets and prior knowledge. Collaborative relationships begin with a solid foundation of communication, positive input, and respectful interactions that invite general and special education teachers to figure out how to collaboratively divide and conquer instructional roles and responsibilities. This chapter outlines what is nonnegotiable, including strengthening communications, possessing positive ability attitudes, and increasing the knowledge of research-based practices, learners, and the curriculum to advance everyone’s skill sets.

Chapter 3, “Planning for Instruction and Assessment,” outlines the co-teaching basics that ensure that co-teaching pairs increase learners’ knowledge and skills. This chapter covers how to plan lessons with meaningful and respectful co-taught instruction and assessment. This includes instruction with the whole class, small groups, centers/forums, cooperative learning, 1:1, parallel, and minilessons. This chapter includes how evidence-based practices, such as Universal Design for Learning, should be used to vary representation, engagement, and expression. Chapter 3 delineates how assessment monitors progress toward individualized educational program (IEP) goals and lesson objectives to drive the co-teaching decisions. The chapter also outlines how co-teaching includes modeling, scaffolding, and reinforcement. It offers elementary and secondary examples of how co-teachers collaboratively differentiate assignments based on learners’ skills and interests across the disciplines.

Chapter 4, “Collaborative Teaching in Action,” continues with what needs to occur during instruction. This includes the provision of verbal supports, the sharing of classroom spaces, and the necessary reflections on the benefits and challenges of the co-teaching models, along with how the data drive the instructional decisions. We offer a whole-part-whole design to vary learner grouping so that co-teachers can provide opportunities for enrichment, practice, and repetition. This chapter empowers all students to learn with co-teachers who act as co-facilitators able to collaboratively spin the bumps in the road into best practices.

Chapter 5, “Academic and Behavioral Co-Teaching Supports and Interventions,” shares what we know all teachers should do, what they commonly do and should stop doing, and where they should focus on improving. This includes assignments based on skill, interest, learning preferences, random grouping, and assistive technology. We share pragmatic ways for co-teaching pairs to clearly communicate the essential instructional and functional objectives to each other and the students. Chapter 5 offers information on how PBIS, social-emotional learning,
peer supports, and strategic learning allow the co-teaching pairs to select informative and responsive interventions.

Chapter 6, “Collaborative Reflections, Improvements, and Co-Teaching Celebrations,” explores how collaborative reflection works, offering guidelines for co-teachers on embedded interventions, functional scaffolding, reinforcement, and using feedback and results to guide their next steps. Reflections and celebrations are offered across the grades for students and co-teaching partners. The most important aspect is that the co-teaching should occur in a positive learning environment that breathes. This collaborative inhalation and exhalation includes trust, humor, and inquiry that support the lesson content for the learners and the co-teaching pairs. The last chapter acknowledges the challenges but also the skill sets of staff and students within a growth paradigm. The chapter sums up with the co-teaching reflections of what occurred, what was learned, and the next steps co-teachers can take to share the power to be powerful.
The Relationship and Collaborative Roles: The Do’s, Don’ts, and Do Betters to Guide and Strengthen Co-Teachers

Collaborative Goals

2.1: Develop the relationship as you learn about and from each other.
2.2: Connect to your students’ strengths and interests.
2.3: Discuss and define the how to and who will roles and responsibilities.
2.4: Be proactive with your relationship and roles.
2.5: Listen, respond, and validate.
2.6: Consider a lack of co-teaching experience or limited content knowledge as an opportunity for growth.
2.7: Value both face-to-face and online co-teaching options.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do’s ↑</th>
<th>Don’ts ↓</th>
<th>Do Betters ★</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learn about each other.</td>
<td>Think me as opposed to us.</td>
<td>Learn from each other.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learn who your students are.</td>
<td>Hog the stage.</td>
<td>Admit you don’t know everything.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop relationships with families.</td>
<td>Formulate a plan of action without running it by your partner.</td>
<td>Shine the spotlight on your partner.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learn together with reads, talks, walks, and more.</td>
<td>Offer lip service to avoid the difficult conversations.</td>
<td>Exhibit a positive attitude.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divide tasks and actions.</td>
<td>Be the teacher of only “those” kids.</td>
<td>Know the co-teaching work-arounds as you evolve together.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Be a pointer.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Best Practices: The Do’s

Knowing more about each other’s interactive styles, personalities, and prior knowledge enhances a co-teaching relationship. Learning about each other need not be complex or time-consuming, but through conversation, informal surveys,
and written communication, respect can be nourished. This chapter explores how
the collaborative roles and responsibilities can be meaningfully and appropriately
shared to match co-teachers’ and learners’ levels and needs.

**Collaborative Goal 2.1:**
*Develop the relationship as you learn about and from each other.*

Developing a solid co-teaching foundation requires educators to begin their
relationship by learning about each other. This ensures that the co-teaching roles
and responsibilities are meaningful, equitable, and responsive to each co-teacher
individually and then to the co-teachers as an instructional pair as they plan,
instruct, monitor, assess, and reflect on the evidence-based responsive practices.
In the do betters section, we explore how to achieve the second part of collabora-
tive goal 2.1, which is to also learn from each other.

↑ **Learn About Each Other**

Sometimes special and general education teachers are assigned to work with
one another as co-teachers, without receiving a formal invitation, introduction, or
even an evite. In these scenarios, educators share a room for the entire day, a por-
tion of the day, or during a specific subject or period with a person that they barely
know or in some cases have never even met. Co-teaching has often been likened
to a marriage (Karten, 2005; Murawski, 2010), with general and special educators
referring to their partner as a school husband or wife. As with arranged marriages,
omitting an acquaintance period results in varying degrees of compatibility. When
teachers don’t have much opportunity to get to know one another before they meet
their shared students, there is little time for planning and mapping out proactive
collaboration. To add complexity to the mix, sometimes teachers, either special
or general educators, are new to their assigned content and grade level. When
co-teachers show up to an ill-planned and rushed party to escort someone they
hardly know, the lack of buy-in and prep time often limits the relationship.

Doing the *co-teaching dance* (Murawski & Dieker, 2013) requires establishing
a rhythm and being familiar with the music. Spending a year together warrants
spending time to get to know, plan with, and learn more about the person you will
be accompanying down the classroom aisle. Taking the time to thoughtfully and
collaboratively determine and respect how to share the roles and responsibilities
will ultimately best serve your collective students and one another.

The next two reflective figures respectively offer a self-ranking inventory
and emojis under the category of Getting to Know Each Other. These tools invite
co-teachers to begin their relationship with reflective questions and nonthreatening communication. Figure 2.1 helps communicate prior co-teaching knowledge and experiences and set personal and collaborative improvement goals. Figure 2.2 offers visuals as a vehicle to catapult the co-teaching conversations. Adults, like students, learn differently and have varying learning preferences. You can even use Figure 2.2 to talk about whether you like to communicate with emojis or if they just annoy you!

Curriculum Connections: Emojis

In a 7th grade co-taught English class, Mr. Ashton and Ms. Tamarah (general and special educators) projected emojis such as the ones in Figure 2.2 (see p. 38) to invite their learners to share how they were feeling on a Monday morning. This was an anticipatory set, which segued into a unit on symbolism for *Milkweed*, a novel by Jerry Spinelli. This five-minute activity and co-facilitated discussion offered both academic and social-emotional objectives that invited the learners to attend to the reading and writing requirements that followed. The co-teachers then conferenced with individual students as the learners worked independently on the reading and writing assignments.

Curriculum Resource: Consult the Emojipedia site (https://emojipedia.org/people/) for more symbols that might give your team ideas on incorporating emojis into your lessons to connect with your students.

Learn Who Your Students Are

All educators should strive to be knowledgeable about the characteristics that students with specific differences may display and how to apply evidence-based practices that address those differences (Karten, 2017a.). Professional development needs to provide knowledge to general education teachers who feel inadequately prepared to use evidence-based instructional practices to address individualized learner needs (Murawski & Lochner, 2018). Some teachers have not had prior experiences working with learners with exceptionalities; they may just require additional supports and increased knowledge or strategies to succeed. As shared in the resources section in Chapter 1, the What Works Clearinghouse (https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/) and Council for Exceptional Children...
Figure 2.1

Co-Teaching and Collaboration Consensus

Directions: You are invited to rate yourself on the following descriptors as either New at This, Getting There, or an Expert. As co-teachers, share these reflections and think about which ones to individually or collaboratively hone during the school year to increase effectiveness.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Co-Teaching and Collaboration Consensus</th>
<th>New at This</th>
<th>Getting There</th>
<th>Expert</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. I understand the roles of the students, families, GE and SE teachers, paraprofessionals, related staff, and administration as they relate to the co-taught classroom.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Additional comments/thoughts:</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. I have a strong command of the subject matter.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Additional comments/thoughts:</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. I can implement ways to go beyond the lead and support model in a co-taught classroom.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Additional comments/thoughts:</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. I understand how to ensure that the specially designed instruction in a learner’s IEP is provided in addition to the GE curriculum.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Additional comments/thoughts:</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. I have an understanding of the available resources that will strengthen our collaborative roles and responsibilities.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Additional comments/thoughts:</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Co-Teaching Do's, Don'ts, and Do Betters

(www.cec.sped.org/) are two organizations that offer research practices with quality indicators to provide the information educators need to make evidence-based decisions. Co-Teaching Do's, Don'ts, and Do Betters focuses on evidence-based practices to answer the question “What instructional co-teaching strategies work best for learners with and without exceptionalities in our inclusive classroom?”

Figure 2.2
Co-Teaching Emojis

Directions: Select a letter (A–I) of an emoji, or create your own (J), that best fits each of the descriptors (1–10). You may use a letter more than once.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A.</th>
<th>B.</th>
<th>C.</th>
<th>D.</th>
<th>E.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>🧡</td>
<td>😞</td>
<td>😲</td>
<td>😞</td>
<td>😞</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>F.</th>
<th>G.</th>
<th>H.</th>
<th>I.</th>
<th>J.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>😞</td>
<td>😞</td>
<td>😲</td>
<td>😞</td>
<td>🔒</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. _____ This is how I feel on most school days.
2. _____ This is my reaction if my co-teaching input is ignored.
3. _____ This is how I look after a successfully co-taught lesson.
4. _____ When students do not view me as a “real” teacher, I look like this.
5. _____ If there is disagreement, you may see my face looking like this.
6. _____ When a student is receiving an assignment that I feel is inappropriate for his or her level, I may look like this.
7. _____ If I am not given the heads-up on the lesson, this would be me.
8. _____ When I am processing what was said or what happened, I might look like this.
9. _____ If I am distracted by an unrelated school matter, you’ll catch me like this.
10. _____ This is what I’ll look like when we are rocking it as effective partners.

Even though learners with the same disability may share similar characteristics, students are never clones of one another in terms of their needs, strengths, interests, and responses to interventions. However, it is essential to be proactive
and for co-teachers to have increased knowledge, which then fosters positive attitudes toward students with differences and increased self-efficacy for both the co-teachers and the learners. There are always practices to explore and knowledge to be gained. Together, co-teachers need to advance each learner’s abilities without highlighting his or her label of difference.

All educators need to be cognizant that each learner has unique characteristics and many strengths to honor, whether they have an exceptionality. Consequently, led by a co-teaching pair, instruction should look different than it would in a singly instructed class (Spencer, 2012). Together, general and special education teachers address perceived challenges as they increase their knowledge about their students, evidence-based practices, and each other. As co-teachers, both the general and special education teachers know each student and approach remediation under a strength paradigm.

The bulleted lists within each category of exceptionality in Figure 2.3 offer just a glimpse of strategies to whet co-teacher appetites to collaboratively learn more. Additional resources are offered in this chapter’s resource section, Continue the Learning.

**Collaborative Goal 2.2: Connect to your students’ strengths and interests.**

Learners with exceptionalities have strengths and interests that can be capitalized on and nourished by co-teachers. For example, Autism Speaks offers an open letter to teachers from Kamini Lakhani (2016), who is the founder of Support for Autistic Individuals Connections (SAI Connections). Her insights invite educators to view a learner with autism as an individual who has a brain that is wired differently and not to think of autism as a dysfunction or an abnormality. Her letter delineates that it is appropriate to provide more visuals; offer a schedule; know a learner’s likes, dislikes, and strengths; and collaborate with a behavioral consultant to formulate an informal behavioral plan. Most of those suggestions can easily be applied to students with and without exceptionalities.

Looking at learners’ likes and dislikes and applying this knowledge to the curriculum and your co-teaching actions serves to improve literacy, mathematics, and language skills. In addition, these actions can improve personal traits that help students better attend to, apply, remember, and connect to the lesson objectives. They can also help students to develop better relationships with peers, co-teachers, and families. Win-win-win!

The self-ranking inventory in Figure 2.4 offers an example that is intended to increase students’ and co-teachers’ knowledge of a learner’s preferences.
Figure 2.3

Strategies for Co-Teachers to Explore with Students with DisABILITIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Autism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Provide assistance with organization, transitions, and planning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Infuse verbal redirection and more visuals for procedures and curriculum connections.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Be aware of a student’s triggers (e.g., sensory overload).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Redirect repetitive behavior that may be evidenced to learner interests.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Blindness and Visual Impairments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Collaborate with related service providers (e.g., orientation and mobility providers).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Encourage practice, application, and independence to develop resiliency.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Minimize environmental classroom barriers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provide verbal, tactile, and tech tools (e.g., Braille, talking calculators, raised drawings, beeping physical education resources, screen readers).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deafness and Hard of Hearing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Offer instruction for language skills in the way that students learn best (e.g., oral, manual, and total communication methods).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Increase social participation with strategies, materials, and physical arrangements (e.g., facing a student when speaking; using circular seating; speaking in normal conversational tones without shouting or exaggerating words; using appropriate technology such as sound amplification, depending on degree of hearing loss presented).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dyslexia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Screen to individualize the literacy instruction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provide multisensory instruction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Offer systematic instruction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Honor learner’s age and interests with appropriate reading materials.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intellectual Disability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Offer concrete presentations, step-by-step instruction, repetition, and modeling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Value incremental steps toward objectives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Scaffold instruction based on learner achievements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provide feedback and reinforcement.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning and Attention Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Infuse movement into lessons to minimize distractibility and increase engagement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teach self-monitoring strategies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Offer organizational tools (e.g., graphic organizers).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Scaffold, monitor, and then fade academic and behavioral supports.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical Disabilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Explore appropriate adaptive devices (e.g., alternate writing tools, computer control switches).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Help, but do not enable students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ensure that mobility issues do not limit academic or social opportunities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Social/Emotional/Behavioral Differences**
- Empower students to reflect on their behavioral goals and plans.
- Break tasks into discrete steps (e.g., social narrative, solving algebra equations).
- Connect to student interests.
- Collaborate with related service providers and families (e.g., school psychologists, guidance counselors).

Source: Adapted from *Building on the Strengths of Students with Special Needs: How to Move Beyond Disability Labels in the Classroom*, by T. Karten, 2017, Alexandria, VA: ASCD. Copyright 2017 by ASCD.

### Figure 2.4
**Self-Ranking Inventory of Preferences**

Directions: List your choices in the order you prefer for each heading.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When my teachers are teaching...</th>
<th>When I’m doing the work...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 I prefer to see things in a visual format. I like my teachers to show me using visual materials (picture, poster, movie clip, Instagram).</td>
<td>1 I prefer to create or show something like a picture or photo (draw, paint, YouTube, Instagram).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 I prefer to hear information described or explained to me. I like my teachers to describe what we’re learning (through whole-class learning, partner discussion, and small groups). I like listening to videos like BrainPOP and songs.</td>
<td>2 I prefer to explain something through conversation or technology (to teacher, to peer, through cooperative talks or maybe a video made, voice to text, or a song created).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 I prefer to read things or see them in writing. I like my teachers to write things down for me to see (on the board, on a handout, in a paper or article).</td>
<td>3 I prefer to write my response (text, paper, tweet, essay, haiku, diamante, acrostic).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 I prefer a combination of formats. I like my teachers to use different things to teach me (discussion, video, writing notes, graphic organizers).</td>
<td>4 I prefer to...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (describe):</td>
<td>Other (describe):</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

My order for Teacher Preferences is: 1-2-3-4-5.

My order for Personal Preferences is: 3-4-1-2-5.
Develop Relationships with Families

One of the best ways co-teachers can learn these positive strategies is to become allies with families; often, strategies that work in the home environment can be adapted and generalized to the classroom (Murawski, Carter, Sileo, & Prater, 2012). Teachers, students, peers, and families need to collaboratively respect and honor diversity through their language and collaborative actions. As co-teachers, acknowledge that families of students with exceptional needs experience a gamut of emotions that may include shock, grief, anxiety, anger, confusion, powerlessness, and depression. Although family members may be protective or defensive, they often need affirmation and strategies to move forward in a positive direction. Co-teachers are allies in this collaborative process.

For more insights on family dynamics, explore these websites:
- www.parentcompanion.org/article/understanding-the-stages-of-grief
- www.edutopia.org/article/supporting-parents-students-special-needs

Learn Together with Reads, Talks, Walks, and More

Learning, like co-teaching, has many spokes. To connect to students’ strengths and interests, co-teachers need to be willing to keep learning. Reading fiction and nonfiction books can assist co-teachers in learning more about appropriate instructional practices, as well as more about the topics that interest individual students.

How about doing a book study in your class to allow students to learn more about differences? Co-teachers, grade level teachers, staff, families, and students can explore books, organizations, videos, and websites to gain strategies and resources across disability labels.

Learning can also take place in collaboration with colleagues. Educators who are new to co-teaching, to the grade level, or even to the teaching profession itself are encouraged to reach out to colleagues. Ask peers if it is OK to walk into their rooms or sit with them during their prep times to see them in action. Observing colleagues helps teachers gain additional knowledge and skills about instruction, class management, instruction, and planning. Murawski and Lochner (2018) suggest that co-teachers can form co-teaching communities of practice that observe one another and give feedback collegially in an effort to have no-fail continuous improvement.
To explore more books and movies for professionals, students, and families to increase their diversity knowledge, visit this website: www.pinterest.com/tkarten/.

**Collaborative Goal 2.3:**
Discuss and define the how to and who will roles and responsibilities.

The co-teaching division of tasks should be coordinated (Stickney, 2003). Co-teachers are encouraged to work to their own strengths but also to challenge one another. Co-teaching entails two or more certified teachers or professionals who share the intellectual expertise and instructional responsibility to create a learning environment conducive to positive student outcomes and teacher success (Hentz, 2017). This is different than merely collaborating with a paraprofessional or adult volunteer, a situation that does not include the parity and shared roles that co-teaching requires.

In a multistate study on fidelity to co-teaching that involved almost 200 co-teachers and more than 2,000 students, researchers observed that most co-teaching teams were at the emergent stage of co-teaching (Murawski, Kramer, & Serianni, 2017). Zigmond, Magiera, Simmons, and Volonino (2013, p. 116) clarify that “the lack of empirical support for co-teaching is not surprising; co-teaching may be a service, but it is not a ‘treatment’ that can be imposed with fidelity on an experimental group and withheld with equal fidelity from a control group.” This doesn’t mean that there isn’t research support for co-teaching, just that it is varied because it involves people collaborating. Collaboration is messy!

Ultimately, the goal is to provide a wide range of learning experiences for students that correspond to their needs. For example, when one co-teacher, either the general or special educator, provides new content instruction, the other co-teacher might write the key vocabulary words and definitions on an interactive board or circulate to offer increased proximity or one-to-one support as needed. If one co-teacher works with a small group for more math practice, another co-teacher ensures that students who are learning at math stations or centers are focused and supported. Co-teachers might decide to each take half of the class to share the same or different content with a smaller group of students. There are myriad choices of how to rearrange teachers and students, as we will explore in the next chapters.

The big umbrella of dividing and conquering is a skill that co-teachers learn to master with ongoing reflection. Classroom roles are often divided so that co-teachers can alternate who leads, who assists, and who monitors. Meaningful division of work includes, but is not limited to, coordination of planning, instruction, and assessment to ensure that diverse learners’ needs are honored with the
appropriate interventions. This includes working productively with one another, the students, related staff, administration, and families.

**Collaborative Goal 2.4: Be proactive with your relationship and roles.**

Proactive co-teachers anticipate challenges in their relationship and know that sometimes their roles or the lesson will be derailed from the initial plans. Learners with a variety of differences—from dyslexia to emotional differences, ADHD, and learners with physical, visual, and auditory diversity—do not fit molds. Neither do typical learners. *All* good teachers, including those who co-teach, know that their roles and responsibilities will vary at times, despite the very best of intentions, because... well, kids! For a variety of understandable and unfathomable reasons originating both at home and at school, students may present academic, behavioral, and social obstacles on any given day. It’s our job as teachers to meet them where they are, not where we would prefer them to be or where the curriculum says they ought to be.

Proactively communicate a simple statement such as “Let’s plan to ____ for ____ during the lesson on ____; but just in case, let’s also plan to ____ (specify additional interventions from the Co-Teaching Spokes, such as DI, UDL, PBIS, SEL).”

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**Curriculum Connections: Proactive Plan B**

Co-teachers Cristina and David decided to teach parallel lessons on figurative language found in the poetry the class had been reading, with Cristina emphasizing metaphors and David pointing out similes. Despite the best-laid plans of the co-teachers, one of their students, Elias, simply wasn’t able to listen and was displaying behaviors that needed the full attention of one of the co-teachers. Luckily, these proactive co-teachers had empowered the learners in their class that they may need to turn to their plan B of independent learning stations at any time. As Cristina worked with Elias, David got his group reading their poetry to start finding similes, while Cristina’s group moved to the ongoing learning stations that could be done independently (e.g., poetry corner, vocabulary sleuth, comprehension questions, web quests). After 15 minutes, Cristina wasn’t back yet, so David had the two groups switch. At the end of the day, David and Cristina met to discuss how to proceed tomorrow, as well as what they might do and who they would consult with to help facilitate Elias’s positive participation in the future.
Divide Tasks and Actions

Co-teachers, like all other teachers, have a plethora of responsibilities. The more co-teachers can determine in advance how to divide and conquer, the less overwhelming those tasks will feel. Strong teams consider all tasks and actions and then determine how they might divide them so that both members are working to their strengths. Co-teaching responsibilities might include the following:

- Keeping running observational records (e.g., to denote student levels and patterns to guide next instructional steps)
- Pre-teaching vocabulary (e.g., to assist learners with different prior knowledge and vocabulary funds)
- Reading aloud test directions or questions (e.g., when learners have varying literacy levels)
- Assisting students during whole-class and small-group instruction
- Asking the class or groups of learners clarifying questions (e.g., to ensure understanding and provide classroom management of expectations and procedures)
- Modeling explanation across the disciplines (e.g., during science experiments, writing models, step-by-step math instruction, word decoding skills)
- Checking for understanding with formative assessment strategies (e.g., with individuals or small groups or during whole-class instruction)
- Validating your co-teacher’s conversation (e.g., dialoguing with each other during whole-class instruction)
- Addressing attention and behavioral concerns (e.g., recording data or offering positive reinforcement to learners, communicating with related providers such as behavioral consultants)
- Circulating more (e.g., to ensure student focus and offer timely feedback)
- Presenting the lesson with different engagement (e.g., using Unifix cubes or math virtual manipulatives while the other teacher assists with multistep word problems)
- Preparing materials to ensure multiple means of representation, engagement, action, and expression (e.g., finding videos, bringing computer carts, providing chart paper and markers)
- Completing paperwork for IEP meetings and assessments (e.g., testing students, documenting progress on goals and objectives, setting up meetings)
- Approaching families, caregivers, and administration as a unified front (e.g., during Back-to-School night, parent-teacher conferences, IEP meetings, online forums)
Common Pitfalls: The Don’ts

Ever heard the phrase “play nicely with others”? Too many people seem to struggle with this concept. In this section, we identify some of the common issues among adults that derail the co-teaching collaboration. Note how these actions are all within your own control. By avoiding certain pitfalls, you can improve your co-teaching relationship with your partner as well as your relationship with your students.

Don’t Think Me as Opposed to Us

General and special education teachers instruct all students. Individuals or smaller groups of students may work on more specified objectives, either on a higher or lower level of complexity, but all of the students are part of one class. Having mutual and interdependent goals, avoid agendas that do not mirror learners’ needs and the curriculum objectives.

Just as we want to include all students in our conversations, co-teachers need to address the class as a unified team. Pronouns matter as you embark on your relationship to define mutual roles and responsibilities. Interdependence is essential to achieve effective teamwork. The co-teaching core competencies define this as using we language (Murawski & Lochner, 2015). Instead of saying, “I need you to get out your homework,” say, “We would like you to get out your homework.” Instead of “I am impressed with your hard work,” include your partner by saying, “We are impressed with your hard work” (even if your partner isn’t right there with you at that moment). Think us and we to teach all.

Don’t Hog the Stage

The bottom line is that each co-teacher is a facilitator, disseminator, supporter, and collaborator. No one owns either the curriculum or the students. The classroom stage is a shared one. This includes offering each other physical space in terms of desks and tables to work at, as well as placing both names prominently outside a classroom, on worksheets, on websites, in memos to the office, on e-mails, and in the sharing of the planning, instructional, and assessment roles. If the classroom is your stage, does it look like it belongs only to one actor?

When co-teachers coordinate their efforts and responsibilities, then learning is added, negativity is subtracted, and roles and responsibilities are meaningfully divided and collaboratively multiplied for all students in differentiated and shared
lessons. There have been too many solos on the classroom stage; it’s time for some duets. Your audience of students, families, and colleagues will be the beneficiaries.

**Curriculum Connections: Sharing the Stage**

**Elementary nonexample:** The general education teacher leads the 3rd grade place value lesson. The special education teacher passes out the math papers and then sits next to a specific student to make sure that she follows the oral and written directions.

**Elementary do better example:** The co-teachers team teach the lesson on place value. Both teachers take turns with instruction and ask questions of each other and the students to stimulate critical thinking skills (e.g., “What would happen if the numbers weren’t lined up correctly?”). As the students work independently on the place value assignment, the co-teachers each lead two smaller parallel groups for additional reinforcement and enrichment and conference with students to invite them to share their reasoning on how to solve given word problems.

**Secondary nonexample:** The high school environmental studies lesson begins with the students watching a PowerPoint presentation that the general education teacher created about organisms that were removed or destroyed due to human and nonhuman activities. Academic vocabulary includes terms such as *mangrove forests, coral reefs, erosion, nutrient depletion, chemicals, sewage,* and *pollution.* After the PowerPoint, the students are given 10 questions to answer and the special education teacher takes “her” kids to the kidney-shaped table at the back to go over the vocabulary they didn’t know and provide support on the 10 questions.

**Secondary do better example:** The high school environmental studies lesson begins with the students watching two PowerPoint presentations in separate groups that the general and special education teachers, respectively, created. One is about organisms that were removed or destroyed due to human activities (e.g., pollution), while the other is about organisms impacted by nonhuman activities (e.g., climate change). As students watch the interactive presentations, the co-teachers periodically ask questions to gauge comprehension. Learners are offered a writing frame/cloze exercise with a word box of the content-specific environmental vocabulary to fill in as they listen to each co-teacher. The learners then switch groups to

(continued)
view the other PowerPoint with the other co-teacher. For assessment, the students compose a short essay on how human and nonhuman activity affects the oceans. Learners refer to their cloze notes and additional websites for details and for use as a study guide. Some students use a provided graphic organizer to help organize their thoughts before writing the essay, while others choose to do their assignment as a video essay in lieu of a written one.

**↓ Don’t Formulate a Plan of Action Without Running It by Your Partner**

“Clearly, co-teachers need to know what their partner is thinking, feeling, doing, and bringing into the school environment in order to provide effective instruction for all students” (Conderman, Johnston-Rodriguez, & Hartman, 2009, p. 3). Although miscommunication may be unintentional, not running a plan of action by your co-teacher whittles away at a relationship. It is difficult to bring your expertise to the lesson when you find yourself on a ship that’s sailing to a different destination than the one you had planned. Even if you don’t have a complex lesson planned, helping out with instructional strategies and the preparation of resources requires running plans by each other. There is nothing more frustrating than spending time creating a lesson, designing activities, and bringing in materials to find your partner has unilaterally decided to move to a different topic “because there’s no time” or “I thought it would be easier to do something else.”

**↓ Don’t Offer Lip Service to Avoid the Difficult Conversations**

There are bound to be highs and lows in every co-teaching relationship. However, when insincerity replaces open communication, then the co-teaching partnership assumes a superficial level. Lip service is harmful to the co-teaching relationship. Having candid, reality-based conversations about class expectations, scheduling, instructional delivery, grading preferences, and more is not always easy, but it is imperative. Simply put, if you disagree, say so; if you have another idea you’d like to try, express that. Nodding your head and not communicating your candid and honest thoughts is not a way to go. Co-teaching is not the time to just go along to get along. We want strong, communicative relationships that can last.
Don’t Be the Teacher of Only “Those” Kids

Co-teachers have professional and equitable responsibilities as partners to teach all students. The special education teacher may be assigned to assist specific learners as per their IEPs, but the special education teacher is also the teacher of students without IEPs. The same holds true for the general education teacher, who is the teacher of students with and without IEPs. All learners are students of both teachers. Co-teachers may divide responsibilities, but they never exclude any one group of learners as only being taught by one teacher. There is a misconception at times that only the special education teacher can take a group of students who have special needs; that is simply inaccurate. If co-teachers have co-planned, they can both work with any student or group of students. Those kids in the class are everyone’s kids!

Don’t Be a Pointer

Though some students have IEPs that specify increased proximity, hovering over a student is far from advisable and can hurt more than it helps (Shepherd, Giangreco, & Cook, 2013). It is not effective co-teaching if a co-teacher is viewed as the one who points to the correct line that is to be read, which math problem is to be solved, or the document-based question that is being discussed. Pointing does not increase co-teaching collaboration, nor does it lead toward student independence, but it does promote learned helplessness (Wright, 2015). Instead, position yourself in a classroom location that offers the IEP-driven monitoring capabilities, but at the same time, doesn’t target one student or create learner dependence.

Diversify and expand your role beyond being a pointer when your co-teacher is leading the lesson. Circulate inconspicuously to monitor a learner or learners and to increase observation as you record data. Teach peers how to support one another if a student is lost by surreptitiously pointing to the right page or material, without an instructor having to do it. Teach colleagues to use proactive means of helping all learners know what page the lecture is on by including the page number on the top corner of the PowerPoint. This way, students are learning self-regulation strategies and all students are provided support, rather than merely isolating or helping one or two students. Offer support and feedback to your co-teacher and the students with increased dialogue, anecdotal notes, and curriculum connections so that the only pointing you are doing is pointing out the essentials.
Raising the Bar: The Do Betters

Aristotle stated, “The whole is greater than the sum of its parts.” As co-teachers, you are expected to learn from each other. The acronym TEAM denotes how the results are multiplied: Together Everyone Achieves More.

★ Learn from Each Other

Learning from each other means that there is professional respect for one another’s prior experiences, present needs, and future goals. “Co-teaching draws on the strengths of the general educator, who understands the structure, content, and pacing of the general education curriculum, and the special educator, who can identify unique learning needs of individual students and enhance curriculum and instruction to match these needs” (Hanover Research, 2012, p. 2). Teaming includes knowing what is important to each co-teacher, whether one agrees or not.

Collaborative Goal 2.5: Listen, respond, and validate.

“Co-teaching does not always realize its potential, often due to interpersonal or communication issues occurring between co-teachers” (Conderman et al., 2009, p. 2). Co-teacher compatibility and the art of listening and responding to another person’s perspective or differing personality have not always been concepts taught in preservice educational courses. This has been changing drastically as more and more teaching universities are including co-teaching and collaboration in their coursework (Hamilton-Jones & Vail, 2013; Pancsofar & Petroff, 2013) and modeling co-teaching at the university level between professors as well as during student teaching between master and apprentice teacher. In each of these situations, when co-teachers communicate and interact positively together, the benefits to learners are ongoing as students witness two people modeling interpersonal skills.

Collaboration includes being nonjudgmental, even when co-teachers’ styles of teaching or years of experience differ. If one co-teacher’s input is routinely viewed and weighted as being more valid, then parity and respect are whittled away between each other and in front of the students, staff, and families. Knowing and respecting each other’s input, whether there is total agreement of opinion, is an ongoing way to prevent smaller obstacles from snowballing into co-teaching conflicts. Validate input and dialogue during planning, on the classroom stage, and during regular reflection time.
⭐ Admit You Don’t Know Everything

Learning more means that you can admit that you don’t know something! General and special education co-teachers collectively need to acknowledge that there is always more to discover about learner differences, the curriculum, and one another. There is always something for both co-teachers to improve upon as they work to improve the knowledge and skills of their learners as well. Co-teachers should not only respect the fact that neither partner possesses all of the answers, but they should also share that information with students. Sweeping co-teaching issues under a rug creates a relationship based on inaccurate self-reflection and miscommunication.

Increasing knowledge, whether that relates to a better way to plan a co-taught lesson, knowing a student’s needs, figuring out class management, or learning the content, means that you might expose an Achilles’ heel. Admitting that you don’t know something shows strength and vulnerability, not weakness, and it demonstrates a growth mindset that values learning (Dweck, 2016). Teachers can model this mindset and vulnerability to their students as they work collaboratively and respect one another’s differences and questions. Co-teachers might say to one another in front of their class, “We may not know what to do yet, but together we know we’ll figure it out!”

⭐ Shine the Spotlight on Your Partner

And the Co-Teaching Oscar goes to… both teachers! Both general and special education teachers are valuable to the class and to each other. When co-teachers value one another as viable partners, effectiveness increases for all students. Shining a light on your co-teacher reflects on you as a professional. Strengthen and be strengthened by your colleague. Allowing your partner to share his or her strengths does not take away from your own. In fact, students need to see adults listening and supporting one another, not just talking and taking center stage. When you shine a light on your co-teacher, you shine a light on yourself and your students.

⭐ Exhibit a Positive Attitude

Whether you were drafted into a co-teaching partnership or you volunteered for the assignment, having a positive attitude in front of each other, students, administration, colleagues, and families is essential. Attitudes and perceptions influence results (Rodrigues, 2013). Educators who feel they lack the preparation
to work with students with disabilities can experience more negative attitudes, increased stress, and lower self-efficacy about meeting the needs of those students in general education classrooms (Gaines & Barnes, 2017). General education teachers often feel like they lack the expertise to address the needs of students with disabilities in inclusive classrooms (McLesky & Waldron, 2015). Preparation, increased knowledge, and collaborative supports circumvent this negativity. Why is it so helpful that co-teachers have a positive attitude about working collaboratively with a diverse group of students? Simple. Positive co-teaching attitudes do the following:

- Advance learner skills.
- Include shared visions that all students belong.
- Support students with and without exceptionalities.
- Increase smiles and potentials.
- Value high expectations for all students.
- Help partners believe in each other’s strengths.
- Circumvent the impasses.

**Collaborative Goal 2.6: Consider a lack of co-teaching experience or limited content knowledge as an opportunity for growth.**

When co-teachers plan and prepare for learners’ instructional needs, conflicting co-teacher personalities can get in the way (Petrick, 2015). If co-teachers are out of their comfort zone having to teach with someone they don’t know or in a class with curriculum they’ve never taught, then this needs to be addressed. Teachers like to know what they will be required to teach (content) and what the requirements are for co-teaching (competencies). That said, it is completely acceptable, and indeed expected, that one co-teacher is more of a master of the content than the other. The goal is not to have two math or English teachers with the same background; the goal is to bring in the expertise of two differently trained individuals with varying areas of knowledge. Don’t apologize for your lack of content knowledge; instead, emphasize the skills you do bring.

Murawski and Lochner (2015) offer a framework with four domains of co-teaching skills, knowledge, and behaviors. Their framework encompasses the national co-teaching competencies through the 4 domains (see Figure 2.5), 11 strands, and 120 competencies. Though co-teachers are not expected to master all 120 competencies, they are encouraged to work on the 22 core competencies in the areas of look fors, listen fors, and ask fors.
Instead of focusing on the content knowledge that is missing or the co-teaching competencies you haven’t yet mastered, spend time developing a relationship with your partner. Dedicate time to get to know each other and figure out the best way to collaboratively divide tasks to maximize everyone’s skills. Rapport develops within schools that communicate that all students belong. Co-teachers are expected to be supported and to support each other. This includes the provision of professional development on how to best implement co-teaching without stepping on each other’s toes and where and how to build in the time to talk about how to connect lesson objectives to the students and each other.

**Know the Co-Teaching Workarounds as You Evolve Together**

It is often challenging to schedule planning and instructional co-teaching times when some teachers service multiple subjects and grade levels. Some workaround do betters for planning and instruction include the following:

- Know that the set times during the day/week to reflect on co-teaching roles for students and units/topics/lessons will not always be ideal or enough on any given day or week. When and if something unexpected happens, which is usually a given in school environments, consider other avenues of communication, such as keeping a double-sided, shared co-teaching journal to
offer each other feedback on lessons, next steps, and what future co-taught lessons are needed.

- Ask for additional administrative support for planning during set time periods each marking period/month/week (e.g., providing substitutes, covering a class). If co-teachers say nothing about what is needed, then nothing will occur.

**Collaborative Goal 2.7: Value both face-to-face and online co-teaching options.**

Not every co-teaching team works in a brick and mortar school; some teach in online classrooms while others instruct hybrid courses that include both face-to-face and online components. We offer a Frayer model of definition, characteristics, examples, and nonexamples (see Figure 2.6) and some do’s, don’ts, and do betters (see Figure 2.7) for online co-teaching. Co-teachers should continue to use strategies to work collaboratively regardless of platform.

Remote instruction should never distance co-teachers from colleagues, students, and families. Here are some more online co-teaching strategies.

**Co-planning is still key.** Regardless of the teaching platform, co-planning remains critical to co-teaching success. Plan face-to-face via Zoom, FaceTime, Google Hangouts, and so on. Plan before or after an online class session, or use the chat feature during a lesson to communicate to the whole class, individual students, and each other. Define what observation looks like during an online lesson and how you will tweak supports. Along with district requirements, there are numerous websites (e.g., www.khanacademy.org/coach/resources) where co-teachers can access and differentiate lessons and resources across the curriculum and grade levels, whether they are teaching sight words or how to apply differential equations and derivatives. Co-teachers can post information for each other and their students on platforms such as Padlet (www.padlet.com) or Edmodo (www.edmodo.com). They can also share PDFs, videos, PowerPoints, step-by-step visuals, and tutorials with one another or use the co-teaching app Protégé (www.2teachllc.com/protege) to connect with other co-teachers and mentors and access resources for planning.

**Use breakout rooms.** One of the logistical concerns present when teaching in a school becomes moot when teaching remotely. Finding a space to take a small group and figuring out how long it will take students to transition now occurs with the click of a button. Co-teachers can use online breakout rooms when using parallel, station, and alternative teaching approaches. Co-teachers can set and adjust scheduled timers to help with movement and can offer virtual proximity by popping into breakout rooms.
**Figure 2.6**

**Frayer Model of Online Co-Teaching**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Two teachers, often a GE and SE teacher, work collaboratively to increase the knowledge and skills of students with and without exceptionalities within a digital environment. The same co-teaching principles to offer parity, monitor learner progress, be respectful, and invite input from students, families, and related providers are valued in the online setting.</td>
<td>Co-teachers share roles and responsibilities for content and students with planning, instruction, and assessment. Ongoing communications happen both synchronously and asynchronously among teachers, related staff, students, and families to ensure that the specially designed instruction is appropriately delivered within the digital environment.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>Nonexamples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Co-teachers teach parallel or alternate lessons to small groups of learners in online breakrooms.</td>
<td>One co-teacher leads the lesson while the other co-teacher cooks dinner for his or her family.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-teachers use Zoom, FaceTime, Skype, and Google Hangouts as online forums.</td>
<td>Co-teachers do not plan, instruct, or reflect on virtual lessons together.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-teachers split the screen during an online lesson so students see both teachers' faces.</td>
<td>Professional development is halted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-teachers offer opportunities for practice, repetition, and enrichment.</td>
<td>One co-teacher is the sole voice heard as the other teacher hangs back and waits for instructions.</td>
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</table>

**Co-assess frequently, strategically, and differently.** As one co-teacher leads direct instruction, the other can be monitoring, observing, or collecting data. The co-teacher in the support role can monitor attendance and time on task, ask individual questions to students with the chat feature, document answers as students type responses to questions, and even move a student to a breakout room for a quick chat regarding concerns, grades, responses, or any anxiety or personal issues that may be present.

**Be kind to yourself, your partner, and your students.** Realize that your co-instruction may simultaneously require structure and fluidity to accommodate home, family, and learner realities. Those may include limited access to a computer, losing connectivity, distractibility, or a student requiring a sensory diet.
As co-teachers, divide and conquer while also encouraging, assessing, and reinforcing the healthy habits of exercise, sleep, and resiliency—for your students and yourselves!

Figure 2.7
Do’s, Don’ts, and Do Betters for Co-Teaching in an Online Environment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do’s  ★</th>
<th>Don’ts ↓</th>
<th>Do Betters ★</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Focus on how to remotely and successfully deliver the co-teaching spokes.</td>
<td>Ignore or dilute co-teaching roles and responsibilities or take your eyes off curriculum and learner goals.</td>
<td>Continue the conversations with your co-teacher and students. Maximize results with both synchronous and asynchronous interactions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Define online co-teaching to share what it is, what it is not, and how it will collaboratively evolve. Share schedules that offer consistent routines but allow for flexibility and fluidity.</td>
<td>Stop listening to students, families, and each other to individualize the virtually co-taught lessons.</td>
<td>Balance academics with proactive and responsive social, emotional, and behavioral check-ins, activities, and guidance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target outcomes that match a continuum of learner needs such as prior knowledge; home support and circumstances; physical stamina; attention spans; and language, communication, and visual skills, needs, and levels.</td>
<td>Think that remote learning is synonymous with distancing yourself from your co-teacher or a child’s individual needs.</td>
<td>Collaboratively lead, assist, team teach, and offer alternate and parallel lessons. Virtually divide and conquer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan, instruct, conference, assess, and communicate what’s working and what needs tweaking with ongoing communications.</td>
<td>Limit inquiry with each other or students.</td>
<td>Value tech tools, but know that tech platforms are the vehicles, not the co-teachers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value a team approach with each other, students, related support staff, administration, and families.</td>
<td>Ignore home realities.</td>
<td>Think beyond PDFs and worksheets to include virtual concerts, fieldtrips, cooking, and sports.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Curriculum Connections: Co-Teaching in Online Settings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Co-Teaching Spoke</th>
<th>Elementary Connections</th>
<th>Secondary Connections</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Co-Teaching Model (CTM)</strong></td>
<td>Co-teachers team teach 3rd graders on equivalent fractions. They use virtual manipulatives in flipped classrooms with activities from NCTM Illuminations. Then whole-class fraction instruction continues by coloring equivalent fractions on paper plates.</td>
<td>Co-teachers of 8th grade history class use online stations with Animoto and Glogster. Students create musical videos or interactive digital posters on the separation of powers. Peers work cooperatively to complete assignments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Differentiated Instruction (DI)</strong></td>
<td>Fifth graders choose writing topics based on interest. Co-teachers set up a schedule for small-group and 1:1 digital writing conferencing to guide students who need more or less help with editing and revisions.</td>
<td>Co-teachers of 9th grade English can use interim assessments and plan graduated literacy supports with genre choices from Common-Lit’s digital library to sharpen inferential skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Multitiered Systems of Support (MTSS)</strong></td>
<td>All 2nd graders receive core literacy instruction on cause and effect as teachers co-read aloud <em>A Bad Case of Stripes</em>, which is followed by inquiry. Students then watch an animated video and take a Brain-POP quiz. Co-teachers review responses and schedule Tier 2 instruction for learners who require additional instruction.</td>
<td>Seventh grade students are learning how to add and subtract negatives on the number line. After core instruction, informal assessment reveals that 80 percent of the class is proficient. To assist the other students, the co-teachers offer step-by-step tutorials and small-group and one-to-one instruction in breakout rooms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (PBIS)</strong></td>
<td>One co-teacher leads instruction for a kindergarten class on vowel teams by pausing and asking questions while the other co-teacher monitors, records students who are on task, and gives out digital stickers.</td>
<td>Co-teachers of a 9th grade class offer “digital lunch clubs” as an incentive to students who reach their weekly SMART goals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Specially Designed Instruction (SDI)</strong></td>
<td>Co-teachers plan a social studies lesson on European explorers. Three 4th graders have graphic organizers for dysgraphia as per the occupational therapist. A student with ADHD has private reminders in the chat room to tally his behavior and to communicate when he needs a break.</td>
<td>Eleventh grade English class learns about symbolism in the poem <em>The New Colossus</em> by Emma Lazarus from Newsela. A student with visual impairment activates the alternative text description tool. Another student with dyslexia applies the text-to-speech features.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Co-Teaching Do’s, Don’ts, and Do Betters

Co-teaching Spoke  Elementary Connections  Secondary Connections
Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)  Fifth grade co-teachers share the screen in Class Dojo to highlight students’ participation. Learners self-select avatars and show their digital portfolios to families.  Co-teachers create an online poll to establish emotional check-ins with their 10th graders. One-to-one support is offered to assist students who reveal that they are anxious, upset, or depressed.
Understanding by Design Framework (UbD Framework)  Co-teachers assist 1st graders in learning addition and subtraction facts with numbers up to 20. Parallel lessons are offered on doubling and patterns of 10. Co-teachers create a 1-2-3 rubric that assesses who was able to complete the math with minimal to maximum supports and prompts.  Co-teachers plan a science lesson on nuclear reactions and radioactivity for 12th graders. They exchange dialogue and ideas on Google Docs to outline the unit’s understandings, essential questions, and evidence of learning.
Universal Design for Learning (UDL)  A 3rd grade Spanish class learns the language via online games, modified text, captioned visuals, and annotated recordings that learners stop and play at their own pace. Co-teachers collaborate with the world languages teacher regarding specific student needs. Due to a need for more frequent activity, they can suggest that she includes more movement (e.g., Simon Says in Spanish, home scavenger hunt).  Eighth grade students work in groups of four to tell the life story of a famous political activist (e.g., Rosa Parks, Harvey Milk, Malala Yousafzai). The students exchange ideas through chats, e-mails, and tracking tools. Co-teachers offer learners a choice of activities and online tools such as timelines, musical video creators, WebQuests, and online Tween Tribune articles.

Workarounds creatively honor reflective professional practices, positive attitudes, and ongoing communications. More discussion about planning for instruction and assessment continues in Chapters 3–6, but know that, often, avoiding the don’ts automatically creates the do betters!

Continue the Learning

Reflect on our relationship and collaborative roles. Based on what we learned in Chapter 2, we will divide tasks and actions if/when ____________.

A review of some of the co-teaching do’s, don’ts, and do betters from what we’ve offered so far is offered in Figure 2.8.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do’s  ↑</th>
<th>Don’ts  ↓</th>
<th>Do Betters  ★</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Solicit and invite input at the onset of a relationship, after a unit of study, and at the close of each marking period and school year.</td>
<td>Mandate co-teaching partnerships, without staff input to administration and each other on the roles and responsibilities of the partnership for the learners and the curriculum.</td>
<td>Provide pairs with professional development at the onset and during the school year for planning and reflection, and to strengthen relationships and learner outcomes. Use this time provided to discuss the learners and how, as a team, you will co-teach the concepts.</td>
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<td>Establish positive class climate with heterogeneous grouping that honors learners with and without IEPs, 504 plans, or cultural differences without singling out any one student or class as less capable than the next.</td>
<td>Stigmatize either students or co-teachers based on a learner’s label or perceived notions of an individual co-teacher’s competencies by capping his or her potential.</td>
<td>Accept differences through a strength paradigm that values differentiated instruction and a growth mindset for students and staff.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Collaborate with your co-teacher with a parity of roles and co-teaching models for planning, instruction, and assessment.</td>
<td>Resist changing past instructional practices or sharing responsibilities by thinking, “I got this, and I don’t need an assist.”</td>
<td>Solicit input from colleagues • If you do not understand how to instruct a learner with a specific exceptionality. • If you don’t have solid command of a subject. • For validation. • To invite other thoughts and perspectives.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communicate the continuum of supports needed.</td>
<td>Complain before offering conversation.</td>
<td>Justify requests with supportive student data.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Resources for Connecting to Students’ Strengths and Interests**

- National Science Foundation: [https://education.msu.edu/research/projects/eteams/pdf_s/VALUE_StudentInterestInventory.pdf](https://education.msu.edu/research/projects/eteams/pdf_s/VALUE_StudentInterestInventory.pdf)
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Resources on Exceptionalities for Co-Teachers to Explore

_Autism_

- ASD Pinterest: www.pinterest.com/tkarten/asd-adjust-strategies-dynamically
- Autism Speaks: www.autismspeaks.org/
- Temple Grandin website: www.templegrandin.com/templegrandinart.html

_Blindness and Visual Impairments_

- Bookshare: www.bookshare.org/cms
- Iris Center: https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/module/v01-clearview
- National Center on Deaf-Blindness: https://nationaldb.org/
- National Federation of the Blind: https://nfb.org

_Defehness and Hard of Hearing_

- Hearing Loss Association of America: www.hearingloss.org/
- Listening and Spoken Language Knowledge Center: https://www.agbell.org/Families/Listening-and-Spoken-Language
- Deaf Families Project: https://www.csun.edu/deafproject

_Dyslexia_

- Alliance for Excellent Education: www.carnegie.org/publications/adolescent-literacy-fact-sheet/
- Dyslexia Buddy Network: www.dyslexiabuddynetwork.com
- International Dyslexia Association: https://dyslexiaida.org
- Paths to Literacy: www.pathstoliteracy.org/technology-students-multiple-disabilities
- Yale Center for Dyslexia and Creativity: http://dyslexia.yale.edu
**Intellectual Disability**
- The Arc: www.thearc.org/learn-about/intellectual-disability

**Learning and Attention Difference**
- ADHD Pinterest: www.pinterest.com/tkarten/adhd-inclusion-strategies/
- CHADD: https://chadd.org/about-adhd/overview/
- National Center for Learning Disabilities: https://ncld.org
- Understood for Learning and Attention Issues: www.understood.org

**Physical Disabilities**
- PE Central: www.pecentral.org/adapted/adaptedmenu.html
- United Cerebral Palsy: https://ucp.org

**Social/Emotional/Behavioral Differences**
- Calm: www.calm.com/schools
- Child Mind Institute: https://childmind.org/
- Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning: https://casel.org/
- Do2Learn: https://do2learn.com/activities/SocialSkills/index.html
- Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance: www.dbsalliance.org
- Mental Health America: www.mhanational.org
- Mindful Schools: www.mindfulteachers.org/resources/explore-mindful-resources/
- Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports: www.pbis.org/
- Whole Brain Teaching: www.youtube.com/user/ChrisBiffle

**Recommended Texts**
- Building on the Strengths of Students with Special Needs: How to Move Beyond Disability Labels in the Classroom (Karten, 2017a)
- Exceptional Learners: An Introduction to Special Education (Hallahan, Kauffman, & Pullen, 2018)
- What Really Works with Exceptional Learners (Murawski & Scott, 2017)
References


Dieker, L. A. (2001). What are the characteristics of “effective” middle and high school co-taught teams? *Preventing School Failure, 46*(1), 14–25.


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Karten, T. J. (2017c). *Navigating the core curriculum: RTI strategies to support every learner*. Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree.


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About the Authors

Toby J. Karten—a staff developer, instructional coach, educational consultant, author, adjunct professor, and inclusion specialist—has taught populations of learners at levels ranging from preschool to graduate school. She has collaborated with administrators, staff, students, and their families at local, national, and international school sites and educational conferences as an invited speaker and inclusion coach. She has an undergraduate degree in special education from Brooklyn College, a master’s degree in special education from the College of Staten Island, a supervisory degree from Georgian Court University, and an honorary doctorate from Gratz College. Karten has been recognized by the Council for Exceptional Children and the New Jersey Department of Education as an exemplary educator, receiving two Teacher of the Year awards. Karten works with school districts across the country and internationally as a staff developer, inclusion coach, and educational consultant. More info about her inclusion strategies is offered at her website, www.inclusionworkshops.com.

Wendy W. Murawski, PhD, is the executive director and Eisner Endowed Chair for the Center for Teaching and Learning at California State University, Northridge. A former special education and high school German teacher, Murawski is passionate about inclusive education. Her research on co-teaching is widely published and has garnered both research and publication awards. She is the author or coauthor of 13 books on education, as well as co-teaching software. Her bachelor’s, master’s, and EdS degrees are from the College of William and Mary, and her PhD is from the University of California, Riverside. Murawski is the past president of the Teacher Education Division of the Council for Exceptional Children and the CEO and president of 2 TEACH LLC, an...
educational consulting company. She is a frequently requested keynote speaker and has presented in North America (Canada and the United States), Asia, Europe, and Africa on topics related to inclusive education.
Related ASCD Resources

At the time of publication, the following resources were available (ASCD stock numbers in parentheses).

*Beyond Co-Teaching Basics: A Data-Driven, No-Fail Model for Continuous Improvement* by Wendy W. Murawski and Wendy W. Lochner (#118007)

*Building on the Strengths of Students with Special Needs: How to Move Beyond Disability Labels in the Classroom* by Toby Karten (#117023)

*Communication Strategies for Successful Co-Teaching* (Quick Reference Guide) by Susan Hentz (#QRG118072)

*Co-Planning for Co-Teaching: Time-Saving Routines That Work in Inclusive Classrooms* (ASCD Arias) by Gloria Lodato Wilson (#SF117018)

*Co-Teaching Essentials* (Quick Reference Guide) by Susan Hentz (#QRG118073)

*Inclusion Do’s, Don’ts, and Do Better* (Quick Reference Guide) by Toby J. Karten (#QRG116082)

*Leading an Inclusive School: Access and Success for ALL Students* by Richard A. Villa and Jacqueline S. Thousand (#116022)

*Success with IEPs: Solving Five Common Implementation Challenges in the Classroom* (ASCD Arias) by Vicki Caruana (#SF117047)

*A Teacher’s Guide to Special Education* by David F. Bateman and Jenifer L. Cline (#116019)

*Your Students, My Students, Our Students: Rethinking Equitable and Inclusive Classrooms* by Lee Ann Jung, Nancy Frey, Douglas Fisher, and Julie Kroener (#119019)

For up-to-date information about ASCD resources, go to [www.ascd.org](http://www.ascd.org). You can search the complete archives of *Educational Leadership* at [www.ascd.org/el](http://www.ascd.org/el).

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