

A PEATC

Do You Know....



Fact Sheet for Virginia's Professionals Working with Families Effective Collaboration in a Co-Teaching Model

Collaborative Model for Students with Disabilities

The **collaborative teaching model** has existed for many years. It is also sometimes called **co-teaching** and is frequently used in classrooms that employ inclusive practices, i.e., general and special education students are educated together. In this model, **general education and special education teachers work together**, sharing students, lesson plans, and classroom management responsibilities. There are several models:

- ✓ **Both teachers work together** to plan and teach (team teaching).
- ✓ **One teacher teaches and the other one helps** the students.
- ✓ The **class is divided in two** and each teacher works with half the class.
- ✓ **One teacher teaches a larger part of the class** and the **2nd teacher works with a smaller group** that needs more assistance.

Collaborative teaching takes work and commitment. **It is not always easy**. Teachers need to be able to work together effectively, have good communication, and good problem-solving skills. They need to believe that **all of the students in the classroom are theirs**, regardless of whether they are general education students or students who have an **Individualized Education Program (IEP)**. They need to work together to create a **positive learning environment** and **positive relationships** with students and family members.

Tips for Effective Teacher Collaboration--from A Teacher

The following are excerpted in part from *Lynda's Top 10 Ideas for Collaboration*.

1. Share and recognize each other's **strengths**.
2. Develop **simple routines** for students to follow.
3. **Complement** each other. Show mutual appreciation.
4. **Plan together** to help ensure good communication.
5. **Communicate honestly** and respect the process of **learning about each other**.
6. Observe each other and other collaborators to **gain new perspective**.
7. Be sure you are **both are actively engaged** and moving about the classroom.
8. Help everyone, including students, **work together and be organized**.
9. **Review** what you have created and look for and implement **new ideas** together.
10. **Don't do things the way you've always done them**. Try things you can't do alone.

Resources on Collaborative Teaching Model

Don Johnston Human Learning Tools

Lynda's Top 10 Ideas for Collaboration

<https://learningtools.donjohnston.com/2013/01/top-10-ideas-for-collaboration/>

Education Week

What it Takes to Make Co-Teaching Work

<https://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2018/12/05/what-it-takes-to-make-co-teaching-work.html>

Flamboyant Foundation

Tool Kit for Collaboration

<https://flamboyanfoundation.org/>

Understood.org

What is Co-Teaching?

<https://u.org/3eqkJZ7>

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Fact Sheet for Virginia's Professionals Working with Families

Working with Families in a Collaborative Teaching Model

Families play an important role in their child's education and need to be invested in the collaborative model. Some of the tips recommended by the *Flampoyan Foundation* are summarized below.

- ✓ Talk to parents about **how the collaborative or co-teaching model works**.
- ✓ Be sure the parents **know both teachers equally**. Meet the parents together. Send joint emails, etc.
- ✓ **Establish parameters for communication**. Decide generally who will communicate with the parents and who should respond. This may vary dependent on the situation.
- ✓ **Ask the parents how they would like to communicate**. Do they prefer face to face, phone calls, email? Agree on **how frequently** you will communicate. Will the parent be communicating with one teacher or both, separately or together?
- ✓ **Provide contact information for both teachers**. Even if one is the lead in terms of communication, the parents should be able to reach both teachers directly.
- ✓ **Communicate with each other** (teacher-to-teacher) about the student's progress and provide updates to parents. Be sure you are both sharing positive information as well as any challenges.
- ✓ **Avoid sending mixed messages to parents**. Information from one teacher should be consistent with information from the other. **Don't duplicate each other!**
- ✓ Plan IEP meetings and parent/teacher conferences for a time **both teachers can attend**. This shows that you both are knowledgeable and supportive of the student's needs.



Additional Tips for Effective Co-Teaching

- ✓ **Be flexible**. Change strategies as needed.
- ✓ Establish and maintain **trust**.
- ✓ **Ask for the time, training, and resources** that you need to work together effectively on behalf of your mutual students.
- ✓ **Divide responsibilities** according to your different areas of expertise.
- ✓ Keep **communication lines** open. Establish a means of **resolving disagreements** in a positive, productive manner.
- ✓ **Learn from your mistakes** and move on together.



PEATC's mission focuses on building positive futures for Virginia's children by working collaboratively with families, schools and communities to improve opportunities for excellence in education and success in school and community life.

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