Best Practices for Collaborative Teaching





Collaboration is a style for direct interaction between at least two coequal parties voluntarily engaged in shared decision making as they work toward a common goal (Friend & Cook, 2017). It starts with the belief that what is done together can be better than what each could do alone, and includes the growth of trust, respect, and a sense of community (Friend, 2019). This concept is true for all students but is particularly important when collaborating to provide Specially Designed Instruction (SDI) to students with disabilities (SWDs) in general education settings.

Why Should General Education and Special Education Teachers Collaborate?

- IDEA and section 1003.57, Florida Statutes, both require access to general education curriculum for SWDs.
- Teachers and schools are accountable for the achievement of all students.
- Direct services for SWDs are provided in the least restrictive environment, and for most, this is in the general education classroom.
- Most students with IEPs, and many without, will need varying degrees of additional support to progress in the general education curriculum.

Roles and Responsibilities of General and Special Education Teachers

Both Teachers

- General Education Teacher
- Curriculum and instruction
- Focus on the pacing of instruction
- Classroom management
 for large groups of students
- Knowledge of typical students

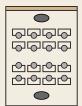
- Collaborative planning, instruction, and assessment
- Equal partners
- Common goals
- Effective communication
- Shared accountability
- Common rules and routines
- Shared implementation of accommodations
- Additional responsibilities outside the partnership
- Shares resources
- Student advocacy

Special Education Teacher

- Focus on mastery of IEP goals, then pacing of instruction
- Focus on the process of learning and SDI
- Understanding of individual student needs based on IEP goals
- Knowledge of compliance with federal laws for student with disabilities
- **Decide Together How You and Your Teaching Partner Will:**
- Set aside time for common planning and problemsolving.
- Explain your classroom organization to parents, students, and administrators.
- Define student expectations for assignments, homework and make-up work.
- Carry out assessment and instruction.
- Manage the classroom: physical set up, rules, discipline, and noise.
- Protect student and teacher confidentiality.
- Manage your individual pet peeves.
- Support and encourage each other.



Embedding Specially Designed Instruction (SDI*) Into Collaborative Approaches



Parallel Teaching

The classroom is divided in two. Each teacher works with a group of students teaching the same concept or skill.

Recommended Usage: Frequently

Example: Mrs. Wallace and Dr. Zurowski divide the class into two groups. Both teach a lesson on text structure. Mrs. Wallace uses a long story and asks the students complex questions. Dr. Zurowski uses a different and shorter passage with a small group of students who are struggling. At the end of the teaching session, the whole class discusses both passages and their meanings.

Example: Mrs. Tomlinson and Mrs.

Wallace use station teaching for a reading comprehension lesson. Mrs. Tomlinson leads

one group through higher-order thinking

a passage to answer factual questions. A

the passages.

questions. Mrs. Wallace has students re-read

third station is made up of students who are

independently completing an assignment on

Example: Mrs. McAllister reviews a story with the whole group, while Dr. Zurowski previews

Example: Dr. Zurowski and Mrs. McAllister

They take turns with the information, with

Dr. Zurowski giving the story overview and

co-present a lesson to introduce a new story.

Mrs. McAllister leading students in the use of

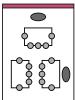
guided notes. Both teachers observe students carefully to assist with formative assessment

vocabulary with a flexible small group.



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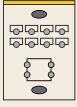


Station Teaching

The class is divided into three groups. Each station has differentiated work. The students rotate through each station depending on the

amount of time the two teachers set.

Recommended Usage: Frequently



Alternative Teaching

One teacher works with the large class, and one teacher works with a flexible small group for remediation, enrichment, or other purposes.

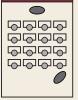
Recommended Usage: Occasionally



Teaming

Two teachers facilitate the lesson interjecting new information to the students.

Recommended Usage: Occasionally



One Teach / One Assist or One Teach / One Observe

One teacher presents the lesson, while one teacher assists students, or purposefully collects data on skills.

Recommended Usage: Seldom

Example: Dr. Zurowski collects data on specific students' conversational interactions to measure IEP goals. Later in the lesson, Mrs. Tomlinson teaches a writing lesson to the class while her teaching partner, Dr. Zurowski, provides individual assistance to struggling students.



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Watch OT/OA Video



The Florida Inclusion Network is a discretionary project of the Florida Department of Education, Bureau of Exceptional Student Education, funded under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Part B. www.FloridaInclusionNetwork.com

measures.

* For more information on SDI, refer to the Instructional and Teacher Leaders F.A.C.T. Folio, Volume 4, on our website or see our C.U.E. Card on SDI!





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