

# Sharing the Classroom: Collaborative Teaching for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

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## Context

- Problem: As Wisconsin moved into state-wide Educator Effectiveness policies to measure teacher effectiveness, the number of teachers willing to host university students declined.
- Previous Research: Co-teaching research from St. Cloud State University emphasizes the positive student outcomes from implementing a co-teaching model between teacher candidates and cooperating teachers.
- Plan: This research intends to gather data to support the co-teaching model in Wisconsin and its focus on Educator Effectiveness. Originally five faculty and staff attended co-teaching training to share previous research and strategies with university students, faculty, and local school districts. To model co-teaching within this research, three faculty members invited two university students each to participate. With grant funding, student researchers and faculty co-created 2-hour workshops to train cooperating teachers in local school districts.

### Language Use

Co-teaching: two teachers working together with groups of students – sharing the planning, organization, delivery, and assessment of instruction, as well as the physical space

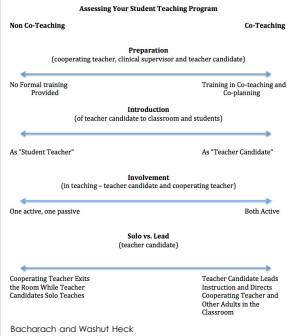
Teacher Candidate: a university student working cooperatively as a pre-service teacher with a licensed teacher to receive supervised experience required for full-time teaching licensure

## Philosophy

"Co-teaching is an attitude of sharing the classroom and students."

"Co-Teachers must always be thinking... We're both teaching!"

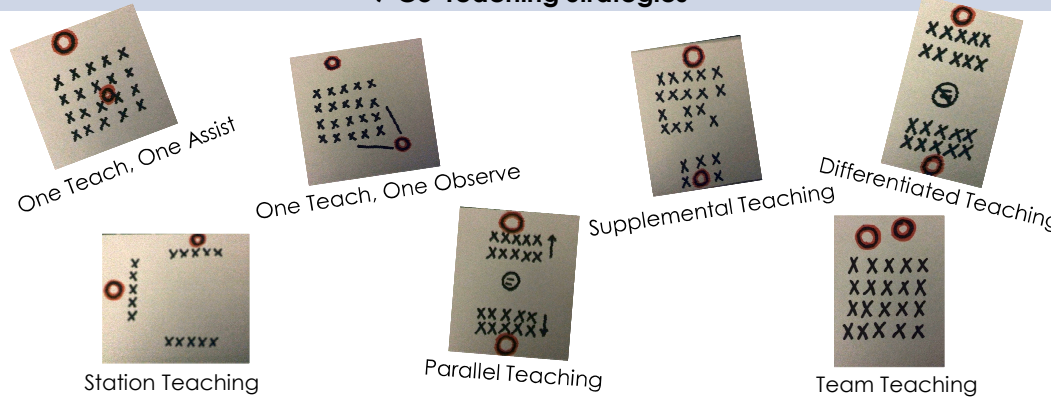
"The main focus of co-teaching is to find ways to keep both teachers actively engaged with students and their learning."



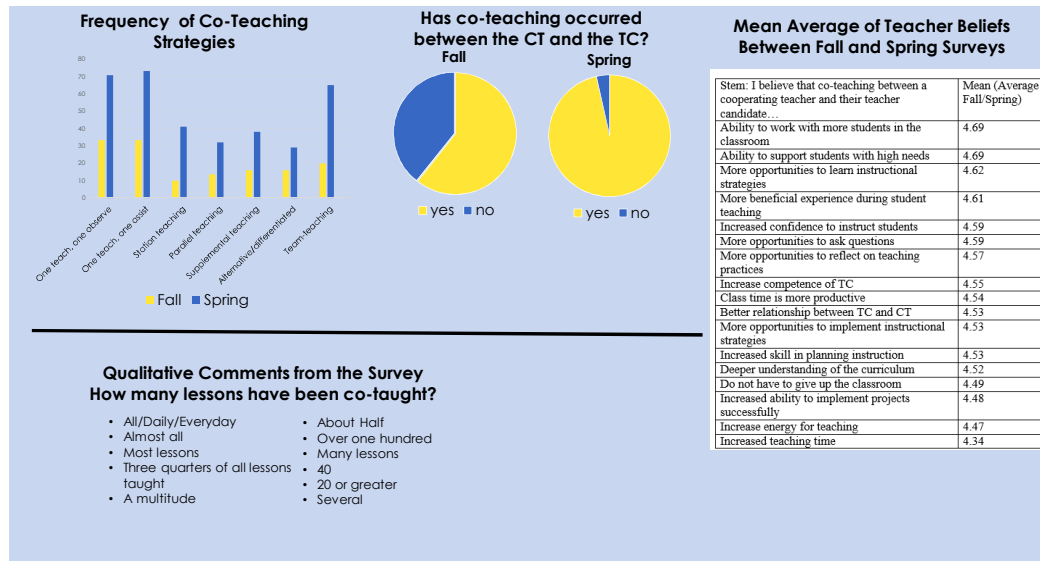
## Methods

- Phase 1
- 5 Teacher Education faculty trained at 2-day workshop in July 2014 in St. Cloud, MN
  - 65-318 Students trained by student research team
  - Cooperating teachers not trained
  - Presentation to Teacher Education faculty
  - Pre-survey to pre-service teachers and block cooperating teachers
- Phase 2
- Workshops involved co-teaching training for cooperating teachers
  - Workshops involved activities for teacher candidates and cooperating teachers to develop rapport and begin planning
- Phase 3
- Focus groups from workshop attendees interviewed
  - Post survey to pre-service teachers enrolled in SPED 434 and their cooperating teachers
  - Comparison between trained and non-trained cooperating teachers
- Workshops
- Chippewa Falls Middle School (Dec. 17)
  - South Middle School of ECASD (Dec. 18)
  - Altoona School District (Feb. 19)
- Relationship Building (colors inventory, introvert/extrovert, value cards, roots of our identities)
- Collaboration and Role Discussion
- Self-Assessment Tool
- Communication Skills
- Strategies and Co-Planning

## 7 Co-Teaching Strategies



## Pre- and Post-Survey Results



### Qualitative Comments from the Survey How many lessons have been co-taught?

- All/Daily/Everyday
- Almost all
- Most lessons
- Three quarters of all lessons taught
- A multitude
- About Half
- Over one hundred
- Many lessons
- 40
- 20 or greater
- Several

### Teacher Candidate Focus Group Responses

- "When lessons are planned together, everyone knows what is happening. So, if someone gets interrupted, the other one can jump in."
- "Students see you as a teacher immediately. It sets up a good environment."
- "No days were lost when a sub was present because the TC could take over."
- "It allows lessons to flow because you can send struggling students to get extra help and not cause interruptions."
- "Another set of eyes when something couldn't be seen by the lead teacher."
- "A variety of instruction can provide more than one point of view or type of instruction. Better ability to describe the same thing in a different way."

### Cooperating Teacher Focus Group Responses

- "Kids not doing well have improved, their attitude is better."
- "The failure in my 8<sup>th</sup> grade science class have gone from 5 students to one. The student still failing is a TR3 student. Even his grades have still improved."
- "Noticing that with four eyes in the room, we can notice all of the kids so kids don't fall through the cracks."
- "Improved homework completion because they are accountable to more than one person."
- "Kids are more engaged and less likely to misbehave with two teachers in the room."
- "Your engagement and connection to your own students is better. You can build better relationships with your own kids because you can take on a different role."
- "Has helped me personally to have another professional in the room – two great minds to help, especially out in the rural areas."
- "There were great conversations between the 3[CT, TC and SPED teacher]. Differentiated instruction was seen from different perspectives. It was a rich conversation everyone learned from."
- "Grading is a lot faster with two of us."

## Discussion

### Frequency of Co-Teaching Strategies:

- We noticed one teach/one observe, one teach/one assist, and team teaching were the three strategies most often used in the spring. Some possible explanations:
- Most respondents were secondary teachers. Secondary cooperating teachers are more accustomed to whole group lessons.
- Working with a TC that does not have the same experience might create a higher risk situation for small group work.
- The strategies used require less planning time and would be easier to implement.

### Has Co-Teaching Occurred?

- The placement in the fall was only a five week placement and occurred in the middle of the semester. In the spring the placement was either a quarter or an entire semester and it occurred during the beginning of the semester. The additional length of time and the timing of the placement may have contributed to the comfort and opportunity to incorporate co-teaching into the teaching environment.
- A higher percentage of respondents who answered the post survey may have been those who implemented co-teaching strategies.

### Mean Average of Teachers' Beliefs:

- On a Likert Scale of 1-5 teachers' beliefs regarding the benefits of co-teaching ranged from 4.34 to 4.69 indicating a positive response from CTs.
- The most beneficial outcome of co-teaching was increase student performance.
- Purpose of school is student learning. Our data shows that respondents believe that they have a greater ability to work with more kids addressing and supporting their needs while allowing more time for reflection. Professional development is taking place in the classroom between the teacher candidate and the cooperating teacher. They teach each other.

### Focus Group Discussion:

- Acknowledging the decline of teachers interested in hosting teacher candidates, many host teachers found that the student teaching experience was more beneficial than it was in the past.
- We saw a large amount of shared ownership, such as assigning grades and addressing parent/guardian concerns together.
- In the change from traditional student teaching, removing the transition from observer to instructor eliminated the perceived hierarchy.

## Next Steps

- Analyze data and use it to create a revised workshop to be implemented in K-12 schools
- Plan a revised workshop that reflects the analysis of the data collected
- Contact local area school districts to determine interest for a future co-teaching workshop in their school with faculty and staff
- Create a list of K-12 schools that have shown interest in the co-teaching model and our workshop.
- Develop a schedule for these future workshop opportunities

## Acknowledgements

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