Co-Teaching: Providing In-Service Professional Development

While Strengthening the Teacher Candidate Internship Experience

Nimisha H. Patel

and

Tracey A. Kramer

Wright State University

*Nimisha H. Patel: Professor, Wright State University, 3640 Colonel Glenn Hwy, 347 Allyn Hall, Dayton, OH 45435, (937) 775-4474, nimisha.patel@wright.edu.

Tracey A. Kramer: Senior Lecturer, Wright State University, 3640 Colonel Glenn Hwy, 343 Allyn Hall, Dayton, OH 45435, (937) 775-2995, tracey.kramer@wright.edu.

*Corresponding author

Abstract

This paper describes how two full time faculty members in a teacher education department took advantage of a longstanding partnership between their institute of higher learning (IHE) and an area preK-12 school district. The faculty sought to provide effective professional development (PD) for teachers in this partnership district, while simultaneously strengthening the yearlong internship experience for graduate-level teacher candidates. The faculty designed and facilitated a co-teaching PD workshop for middle level teachers. They used an evaluation tool to determine if the workshop was effective in facilitating middle level teachers': (1) understanding of co-teaching, (2) ability to implement co-teaching approaches, and (3) recognition of co-teaching benefits. Participants included 41middle level teachers and middle childhood teacher candidates. Analyses revealed that participants attained a working knowledge of co-teaching and very practical ideas for implementing it immediately. Additionally, participants highlighted their ability to move towards utilizing the complex co-teaching approaches discussed.

Introduction

Graduate middle childhood level teacher candidates in a College of Education (COE) in the Midwest began their yearlong authentic internship experiences by being placed in an in-service teacher's classroom. In this role, these in-service teachers were referred to as cooperating teachers. Teacher candidates were placed with their respective cooperating teachers for three consecutive quarters (10 weeks each). Typically, candidates would lead-teach occasional lessons during the first two quarters as they attended their placement three days a week; they were also taking university courses. While student teaching during their final quarter, candidates were commonly thrust into the role of teacher-elect, fully responsible for teaching students in the assigned classroom. This process generally prevented candidates from being more involved in instruction during the first two quarters of their internship experience.

In the meantime, education policy has been focused on inclusionary practices. This often requires a general educator and an intervention specialist to work together in the same classroom in order to meet all students' needs. While two teachers may be in the same classroom together, it does not inherently mean that they are engaged in the most effective teaching processes as possible.

Providing middle level in-service teachers and the teacher candidates with professional development focused on co-teaching addressed both the issue of providing a more effective yearlong internship experience and the issue of assisting in-service teachers to enhance their collegial collaborations. By adhering to the principles of co-teaching, the collaborative efforts between the general educator and the intervention specialist would be maximized. These collaborative efforts facilitate teachers' abilities to utilize multiple learning and teaching approaches, which is one of the 16 key characteristics of effective middle schools according to

the Association of Middle Level Educators (AMLE) (AMLE, 2010). Co-teaching would provide specific methods by which the practicing teachers could be equal partners in the classroom. The utilization of co-teaching would also serve as an avenue to slowly transition teacher candidates into a lead role in the classroom during their student teaching quarter.

Literature Review

For decades now, there has been a push towards more collaboration between various instructional personnel (e.g., general educators, intervention specialists, reading specialists, ESL teachers) at the preK-12 level, the opportunities for which are fostered by inclusionary practices (AMLE, 2010; Friend & Cook, 1990; Friend & Reising, 1993). When intervention specialists become part of the classroom, their opportunities to assist students are enhanced; they are able to witness first hand the difficulties experienced by particular students, and are able to provide more immediate interventions (Austin, 2001; Rice & Zigmond, 2000). Unfortunately, inclusionary practices do not equate to collaboration and merely requesting that educators collaborate does not sufficiently lead to greater student outcomes. These broad requests often result in general educators providing content information, while specialists serve more as classroom aides. When this occurs, the authority and influence of the non-content area specialists diminish (Bouck, 2007).

Co-Teaching

The co-teaching model provides educators with specific avenues by which they may purposefully and thoughtfully collaborate and make use of both sets of expertise (Murawski & Hughes, 2009). Effective co-teaching can be practiced between any set of instructors; it is not limited to general educators and intervention specialists. Co-teaching manifested in the classroom is reflected in the equal responsibility of planning, organizing, delivering, and

assessing instruction, on the part of two or more people (Bacharach, Heck, & Dank, 2003). Thus, in co-teaching, there is no one leader and/or decision-maker. This process also allows for the implementation of various instructional approaches, which results in a more developmentally responsive classroom.

Co-teaching models. Cook and Friend (1995) suggest that co-teaching takes one of six forms. *One teach, one observe* involves one co-teacher focusing on observing particular behaviors (e.g., student participation, behaviors, attentiveness), and one co-teacher focusing on delivering the content. During *one-teach, one-assist,* one co-teacher leads the instruction, while one co-teacher assists individual students as necessary. With *station teaching*, various stations are set up around the room. Students are put into smaller groups and initially assigned to one of the stations. Each group then rotates through all of the stations. Each co-teacher may facilitate his/her own respective station during the entire activity, one station may be teacher facilitated allowing the other co-teacher to monitor the stations, or all stations may be designed to be independent. When half of the students are paired with one co-teacher and the other half is grouped with one co-teacher, *parallel teaching* is being implemented. Both teachers provide the same lesson and content to both groups, but with smaller student-teacher ratios. When co-teachers feel that a subset of the students could benefit from differentiated instructional opportunities, they may utilize *alternative teaching;* one co-teacher works with the small subset of students that requires either enrichment or remediation, while the larger group is with one co-teacher. Finally, with *team teaching*, both teachers equally share in the instruction of all students at the same time. They are both actively involved in the instructional discourse simultaneously; there is a seamless flow between the co-teachers.

Co-teaching benefits. The noted benefits of co-teaching, for teachers and students alike, support its re-emergence in the field of special education and its expansion towards various other teaching pairs. Research has indicated that all students in co-taught inclusion classrooms experience greater peer acceptance, leading to a greater recognition of the class as one unit instead of distinct groups within the classroom (Austin, 2001). Co-teaching has also been evidenced to diminish students' and teachers' negative stigmas about 'special education' (Bergren, 1997; Cook & Friend, 1995). Elementary students with disabilities have reported improved self-esteem and more positive attitudes about school when they are co-taught (Walther-Thomas, 1997). Additionally, Murawski and Hughes (2009), note that co-teaching fosters educators' abilities to support Tier I, Tier II and Tier III students within the Response to Intervention framework. Co-teaching's positive influence on achievement (Kohler-Evans, 2006; Murawski & Swanson, 2001) is not surprising as students who are co-taught tend to exhibit greater classroom participation (Austin, 2001) and more positive attitudes about content learned in school (Murphy, Beggs, Carlisle, & Greenwood, 2004). These positive outcomes are likely the result of co-teachers' abilities to discern students' comprehension of the content (Kohler-Evans, 2006), and their opportunity to bring varying areas of expertise, diverse opinions, and multiple perspectives into the classroom (Austin, 2001; Cook & Friend, 1995; Rice & Zigmond, 2000).

For teachers, co-teaching fosters more purposeful reflection of instruction (Walther-Thomas, 1997), thus promoting teachers' critical analysis of their own practice (Crow & Smith, 2005). Furthermore, teachers' pedagogical practice is enhanced (Bergren, 1997) by the stronger collegial relationships (Walther-Thomas, 1997), and support experienced with co-teaching (Bouck, 2007; Cook & Friend 1995; Kohler-Evans, 2006). Co-teaching has also been found to

increase teachers' pedagogical self-efficacy (Murphy et al., 2004), as it fosters specialists' content knowledge and general educators' practice of differentiation (Austin, 2001).

Professional Development

Professional development is a popular strategy used to improve the quality of teaching to impact student learning. Successful professional development (PD) has been defined as experiences that empower educators, teams, and educational organizations to improve curriculum, instruction, and student assessment. The overarching goal of such experiences is to facilitate student academic growth and development (Gordon, 2004); schools that show substantial student growth are those that consistently utilize effective PD (Mizell, Hord, Killion, & Hirsh, 2011). Professional development is typically reflected in focused faculty meetings, workshops and college courses, book studies, and peer coaching. Though PD can be exhibited in various ways, not all are equal in quality or have similar impacts on student achievement.

Effective Professional Development

Effective teacher PD generally includes several key characteristics. Professional development should be collaborative, allowing teachers and administrators to be part of the planning. Teachers who take part in the planning of PD activities often see it as a continuous, typical part of their careers, essential to their growth (Mizell et al., 2011). Darling Hammond (1996) further asserts that during PD experiences, teachers need to be engaged both as learners and teachers; they also need opportunities to reflect with other teachers about their new learning. Strong leadership and support from principals, collegiality and collaboration between teachers before and during PD, development of PD based on data, relevant learning activities during PD, and teachers viewing PD as 'a way of life' are noted as key elements of PD (Gordon, 2004). Additionally, research indicates that in order to be effective, PD should be relevant, on-going,

job-embedded, and guided by needs of teachers to understand their students (Hopping &

Stevensen, 2013). Furthermore, effective PD tends to focus on teaching methods, content, active

learning, and coherence (Quick, Holtzman, & Chaney, 2009).

Improving PD Effects

Effective PD takes time; it is a process, rather than a one-time event. Appropriate follow-

up activities help educators meet their professional goals. For positive growth to occur, educators

need to sustain PD for two years and implement the strategies learned for another one and a half

years (Hough, 2011). The follow-up activities related to PD experiences should focus on

teacher's daily work; this can be done via peer teaching, coaching, and teaching observations

(Mizell et al., 2011). After PD experiences, teachers must be provided time to implement what

was learned and opportunities to debrief the content with colleagues; doing so may mitigate the

effects of the one-stop shop workshop by making it longer lasting. This continued study and

honing of the strategies learned during the initial PD also better aligns the learning to the needs

of the individual teacher, allowing the PD to be more differentiated based on teacher need;

coaching and observations can be more focused for each teacher.

Workshop Goals

The workshop goals focused on providing in-service teachers and teacher candidates with

a background on co-teaching, in addition to modeling specific co-teaching practices that could be

utilized in their classrooms. Furthermore, this would be an excellent avenue by which teacher

candidates could transition into solo teaching. The quality of candidates' experiences would be

improved if they were engaging in significant co-teaching practices during the first two

internship quarters and then slowing transitioned into solo teaching during their student teaching

quarter. Consequently, the facilitators sought to determine if the workshop was effective in

facilitating participants': (1) understanding of co-teaching, (2) ability to immediately implement co-teaching, and (3) recognition of the benefits of co-teaching.

Methods

Background

Since 1992, the COE has partnered with local school districts to foster efforts producing qualified and effective preK-12 educators. One component of these partnerships included the utilization of site liaisons, typically COE faculty who support a school's professional development needs/requests. Two of the COE's full time faculty, who served as the participating middle schools' site liaisons, co-facilitated the co-teaching PD sessions. The liaisons' in-depth involvement with their respective middle schools led them to bring co-teaching to this partnership district. Additionally, they worked with the COE's Field Experience office, to ensure teacher candidates' participation. From hereon, the in-service/cooperating teachers will be referred to as *teachers*, while the teacher candidates will be referred to as *candidates*.

Participants

Participants included middle level teachers and candidates in a suburban school district in a Mid-western state. In total, 41 participants, 18 teachers and 23 candidates, attended the workshop. The 18 teachers taught in one of two buildings; some of the teachers taught in the intermediate building (grades 4-5), while the remaining taught in the middle school (grades 6-8). The teachers served as the cooperating teachers for the candidates who attended the workshop. The 23 candidates were all enrolled in one of two graduate level teacher licensure programs (grades 4-9 or grades 7-12). While most of the cooperating teachers attended, some were not able to do so. The content areas varied across teachers and candidates. Workshop participants attended one of two half-day 'introduction to co-teaching' workshops in October, about two

months into the internship experience. Approximately one-half attended each the morning and afternoon session.

Measures

Co-teaching survey. The co-teaching survey included five Likert-style items focused on the effectiveness of the workshop. Four items included a five-point scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. One item utilized a four-point scale, ranging from nothing to thorough knowledge. Three open-ended questions focused on the types of co-teaching models the participants were already implementing, the models that they could see themselves implementing immediately, and the value they have for co-teaching.

Procedures

The workshop facilitators were purposeful in their steps to model a variety of learning approaches during the workshop, thus promoting *This We Believe* characteristic four (AMLE, 2010). Given that co-teacher rapport and relationships influence co-teaching effectiveness, the workshop began with an exercise focused on professional characteristics, with the intention of fostering communication between co-teachers. To the extent possible, teachers were paired with their candidates. Participants ranked personal and professional traits they most value; sense of humor, flexibility, creativity, and punctuality were among the 12 traits used. While sharing their individual rankings, participants discussed their personal pet peeves, and their own strengths and weaknesses. This highlighted the need for co-teachers to share their professional beliefs and personal preferences with one another.

Following the opening activity, the participants engaged in parallel teaching, during which they separated into two equal groups. Each facilitator asked her respective group to share examples and non-examples of co-teaching, to generate a list of potential co-teaching benefits,

and to develop a co-teaching definition. This process honored participants' co-teaching prior knowledge and elicited possible misconceptions. Definitions from both groups included language related to collaboration and cited specific actions such as: planning, organizing, and assessing. Subsequently, the facilitators shared their more formal definition of co-teaching. This activity allowed the facilitators to model parallel teaching, to provide a more intimate small-group environment in which participants were able to share their thoughts and opinions, and to promote the development of an immediate rapport with the participants. Participants turned their chairs away from the other group, to facing their assigned facilitator to help to minimize noise and distraction, which are often cited as disadvantages of the parallel teaching model.

The facilitators incorporated team teaching as they described each co-teaching model, shared research on co-teaching, discussed teacher and student benefits of co-teaching, and provided a brief history about co-teaching. The facilitators divided key talking points, and in conversation mode, took turns sharing these and freely commented and asked questions about the information shared.

After providing a background on co-teaching, the facilitators implemented station teaching. Participants were assigned to one of four groups and rotated among four stations, all of which addressed varying components of co-teaching. While one facilitator led one station, one facilitator circulated among the stations to manage the time, keep groups on task, and answer questions. Groups visited each station for approximately five to six minutes. At station one, participants read various scenarios and determined which co-teaching approach was being described. For station two, participants worked with a facilitator to review alternative teaching and to generate specific ways to bring this model into the classroom. Station three involved responding to open-ended questions about the characteristics of effective co-teachers. Finally, at

station four, participants discussed the advantages and challenges of each co-teaching model and ways to overcome the possible challenges.

After processing the strengths of station teaching, such as participant engagement via the variety of activities, the small group size, and the time spent with the facilitator to gauge participant understanding, the whole group discussed communication issues between co-teachers. The facilitators began with a role-playing activity depicting a conversation between two co-teachers that demonstrated several ineffective communication methods. Participants were then asked to determine concerns with the communication techniques used in the role-play. After this introduction, participants were given a set of scenario cards describing different co-teaching related issues such as: personality conflicts, lack of respect, and equal responsibility. In pairs, participants role-played the conversations that would be required to solve the issues presented on the scenario cards. Tips for communication were then shared, including: establishing shared co-teaching goals, understanding one another's personality types, setting regular times to co-reflect, and establishing feedback rules.

Finally, the facilitators addressed planning issues by role-playing a planning session that featured a cooperating teacher and teacher candidate. The role-play began with the teacher leading the planning and culminated with the candidate in the lead role. The facilitators stressed that both teachers were involved with planning, but the responsibility shifted more to the candidate during the student teaching experience. Finding co-planning time is a concern often mentioned; suggestions such as using other co-teaching pairs or hiring a substitute to rotate among teachers were two ideas shared. Finally, participants were asked to complete the co-teaching survey.

Workshop Follow-Up Activities

In line with effective PD practices, the facilitators organized and facilitated a voluntary book group for eight teachers who sought to further their knowledge and practice of co-teaching. The book group met roughly every six weeks, for a total of four sessions for the remaining of the school year. In addition to providing participants with a forum for continued conversations about co-teaching, the book group also provided teachers with support for their co-teaching efforts. Participants were able to implement various co-taught lessons and reconvene in a small group to share their successes and their challenges. Finally, facilitators were able to spend more time discussing each co-teaching model and to discuss ways to address challenges associated with each model.

Since this workshop, the facilitators have led co-teaching PD for multiple area school districts. As such, it made sense to train candidates in their on-campus courses. Consequently, the facilitators added a mini co-teaching workshop to a graduate course required for candidates seeking a Middle Childhood Education (MCE) license; both facilitators work directly with these candidates. Furthermore, they began co-teaching a graduate course for MCE candidates. This would ensure that these candidates had a working understanding of co-teaching and were prepared to begin the co-teaching process when they began their internship experience.

Results

Quantitative analyses were utilized to examine data generated from the Likert-style survey items. First, all 41 participants either indicated "somewhat agree" or "strongly agree" when asked if they were provided a working knowledge of co-teaching. The same was true when participants were asked if they were provided with practical applications of co-teaching for their own classrooms. When teachers were asked about their co-teaching prior knowledge, two had

heard of it, 13 knew a few things about it, and three reported having a thorough knowledge of co-teaching. Similarly, two candidates had heard of it, 20 knew a few things about it, and one reported having a thorough knowledge of co-teaching.

The responses to the open-ended survey items were analyzed to identify common themes. Of the 17 teachers who responded, 13 indicated they utilized the one-teach, one-observe and/or one-teach, one-assist approach to co-teaching. Additionally, three incorporated station teaching, six utilized the alternative approach, one used parallel teaching, and two practiced team teaching. Similarly, 18 candidates reported that they engaged in one-teach, one-observe and/or one-teach, one-assist. Meanwhile, three candidates engaged in station teaching, nine in alternative teaching, two in parallel teaching, and six in team teaching. Hence, the middle level participants were designing plans that incorporated various learning and teaching approaches.

Teachers were asked to identify procedures they could implement immediately. The themes of planning schedules, planning time options and engaging in discussions of the different types of co-teaching prevailed. One teacher indicated he/she would begin using stations in class, while four focused on the alternative teaching approach. Three teachers felt that they could easily incorporate parallel teaching, while two indicated that they were prepared to begin team teaching with their teacher candidate. Three of the teachers made general comments of how they would like to begin making "better use" of the candidate by trying all of the approaches shared in the workshop.

The candidate responses to what could be implemented immediately were similar to teachers. It was revealed that four candidates felt they could commence the process of co-planning through helping to plan lessons during meeting time. One specified doing "a month-by-month outline of what kinds of tasks we should be undertaking." Many of the candidates

focused on general comments such as "probably everything," and some or all teaching strategies. When specifics were mentioned, two noted, "working towards team teaching," three focused on "alternative during regular instruction" time, and one addressed each parallel and team teaching.

When revealing their perspectives on the value of the co-teaching model, teachers focused on the positive outcomes for students. They shared how co-teaching "…enriches the learning of all students as teachers are able to provide …extra instructional assistance." Additionally, co-teaching helps students achieve because co-teachers are better able to "…have differentiated methods of teaching" and co-teaching allows "maximum learning potential through collaborative efforts." Moreover, teachers shared how co-teaching "lets students relate to two adults [and] have access to more time in small groups [for] individualized instruction." Teachers also noted that using co-teaching allows students to gain more feedback. Similarly, candidates focused on how students benefit with co-teaching and how "it's better for diverse learners [because it] allows for more instruction," helps to address different learning styles and "allows for more individual help."

In addition to student benefits, teachers noted how co-teaching would influence their own practice. They noted co-teaching helps them grow as professionals and co-teaching "provides support for the teacher candidate." The candidates continued by sharing how co-teaching helps them learn new ideas and practices; also, it helps them gain support from their cooperating teachers. Additionally, candidates revealed they "love the co-responsibility" and feel as though co-teaching helps them share in "the accountability." Finally, candidates mentioned that co-teaching fosters a "more relaxed, comfortable atmosphere" in the classroom.

Discussion

Review of Results

The results indicated that overall, participants came into the workshop with limited knowledge of co-teaching and left the workshop with not only a working knowledge of the process, but also specific ways by which they could immediately implement it within their classrooms. Professional development literature indicates that effective PD focuses on teaching methods and involves active learning experiences for participants (Quick et al., 2009). The facilitators ensured to develop a workshop that not only engaged participants in various ways, but that also modeled effective teaching practices. During the two and a half hour workshop, participants spent the majority of the session processing the information and participating in a multitude of activities; only 20 minutes were spent listening to the facilitators discuss the history of, the research on, and the approaches of co-teaching. Participants were mainly engaged in small discussions, communication role-plays and station activities. In addition to the active learning experiences provided, the facilitators utilized and modeled various co-teaching approaches throughout the workshop, thus focusing on effective teaching methods. This modeling allowed participants to see first hand how these approaches can be implemented in the classroom. The overall quality of the co-teaching workshop included the characteristics of effective PD. This could explain why teachers felt that they had developed a strong knowledge of co-teaching that could be implemented immediately. The facilitators also appreciated the importance of follow-up sessions, and offered them to all teachers. These sessions provided the interested and available teachers opportunities to continue to process the information, receive regular support, and discussion their implementation experiences.

Data analyses revealed that a majority of the teachers shared that they already implement either the one teach, one observe and/or one teach, one assist approach to co-teaching. This may be because both are by far the easiest to utilize. Very little, if any, co-planning or prior conversation is required in order to effectively use either of these methods; these approaches would not create additional work for teachers. Additionally, these two approaches are often used by teachers who work with candidates. The workshop was provided in early October, near the beginning of the academic year and the candidates' yearlong internship. It is logical that teachers viewed candidates' initial role as more of observer and assistant. Analysis of the candidate data supported teachers' assertion that they currently use these two co-teaching approaches.

Notable differences were found with respect to the teachers and candidates who indicated that they were already team teaching. While six candidates stated they were already team teaching with their teaching partner, only two teachers shared the same. While this difference could be because a few of the candidates' cooperating teachers were not in attendance at the workshop, it may more likely be the case of continued, not uncommon, misconception of the team teaching approach. Team teaching is often erroneously viewed as a *tag-team* event; one teacher teaches a component and then hands off the rest of the instruction to the teaching partner. Additionally, tag-team teaching is thought to be common during student-teaching experiences. It may be the case that some candidates maintained prior, albeit erroneous, views of team teaching.

The workshop facilitators were glad to see that multiple teachers and candidates focused on the beginning processes of co-teaching; the need to begin discussing co-teaching options, co-planning lessons, and opportunities for regular meetings. These activities set the foundation for effective co-teaching. Effective co-teaching must be a purposeful and intentional process; it is not a set of random collaborative instructional practices. Meaningful discussions about how to

co-teach, determining appropriate co-teaching approaches, and co-planning the instruction and assessment are integral to successful co-teaching.

Both teachers and candidates focused on alternative teaching as an immediately implementable approach. There may be two distinct reasons for this. First, participants may have felt this approach would take less time and effort. With alternative teaching, the teacher can plan for the large group, while the candidate plans for the small group. If confident in the candidate, the teacher may not feel the need plan out the small group activities with the candidate. Instead, the candidate and teacher would develop their respective plans individually, after perhaps a brief conversation regarding the content necessary to address. The teacher may then review the candidate's plan prior to implementation. This would not inherently require a great deal of collaborative work, but still utilizes co-teaching. The second, and perhaps more likely, reason is that the alternative approach allows teachers to differentiate, provide individualized attention, and meet the needs of all students.

Further analyses revealed that participants were least likely to begin using the team teaching and station teaching approaches, not surprising as these require more time and work. Co-teachers to be comfortable with having an equal role with all of the students in the classroom in order to team teach effectively.. Furthermore, co-teachers must be comfortable with adding to each other's comments and re-explaining information as necessary. The invisible flow required between the co-teachers reflects a level of rapport and knowledge of each other's teaching style that the participants may not have yet had with each other.

It is important to keep in mind that the relationship between a teacher and a candidate is quite different than that between two practicing teachers. Candidates are in the process of learning their craft; they are not truly equal partners in the classroom. Teachers' hesitation to

implement the more complex co-teaching practices may largely be due to the lack of candidates'

experience. Teachers seek to guide candidates throughout the year, aware of their novice skill

sets, especially at the onset of the candidates' yearlong internship. They may welcome the use of

all of the six co-teaching approaches as candidates student teach.

Limitations

While the information gathered from participants was valuable, it would have behooved

the facilitators to collect follow-up data from the participants. More specifically, it would have

been beneficial to examine participants' experiences implementing co-teaching and student

outcomes based on co-teaching. Additionally, more qualitative data may have provided

meaningful information about participants' attitudes about co-teaching and specific future co-

teaching plans. Initially, the facilitators were focused on ensuring teachers improved their

practices rather than a developing a formalized research project. Finally, in many cases, teachers

and their respective candidates were not in the same workshop session. Since the workshop

commenced during the school day, the schools would need substitute teachers for many

classrooms. To alleviate this need, the teacher attending the morning session while the candidate

taught their students, and vice-versa during the afternoon session.

Recommendations for Co-Teaching

The effectiveness of any co-teaching relationship is rooted in the belief system of synergy

and the concept of team; it is imperative that co-teachers share educational philosophies

(Bergren, 1997; Bouck, 2007; Cook & Friend, 1995; Kohler-Evans 2006; Rice & Zigmond,

2000). Co-teachers must create pre-determined plans for resolving conflicts, addressing

disciplinary actions, and assessing students' knowledge acquisition (Friend & Cook, 1990), all of

which is predicated on a relationship of mutual respect (Rice & Zigmond, 2000). It must be an

equitable partnership within which each teacher is valued and has equal rights and responsibilities in the classroom (Bouck, 2007; Friend & Cook, 1990). A key component of this is reflected in consistent and purposeful co-planning (Austin, 2001; Bergren, 1997; Rice & Zigmond, 2000; Simmons & Magiera, 2007).

Participation in co-teaching practices is also more effective when it is a voluntary endeavor (Bouck, 2007; Rice & Zigmond, 2000; Simmons & Magiera, 2007). When forced into collaborative efforts, teachers are likely to be lax in their abilities to offer critical and constructive feedback, to objectify problems, and to commit to planning sessions, all of which foster successful co-teaching experiences (Cook & Friend, 1995; Walther-Thomas, 1997). On the other hand, when teachers volunteer their involvement, they are more likely to expend greater amounts of effort towards these processes. In this case, the teachers had volunteered to serve as cooperating teachers for the year and sought to provide the most effective internship experiences for the candidates. Additionally, they wanted to be better able to collaborate with their educational specialist peers. While teachers and candidates are not truly equal in terms of experience and knowledge, the co-teaching model provides an avenue by which candidates are able to maximize their pre-career professional development.

Future Research

Future research should seek to measure student growth over time in co-taught classrooms. The PD literature clearly notes that the ultimate goal is to not only improve the quality of teaching but to also impact student learning. Additionally, in order to better understand the effectiveness of co-teaching PD with respect to teacher candidate internship experiences, researchers must take the next step of examining classroom practices. It is necessary to understand how co-teaching is implemented in classrooms and how candidates feel this model of

teaching has better prepared them for their own classrooms. Consequently, not only should classroom observations be part of the research methods, but so should the use of end-of-year surveys for co-teaching partners. Finally, it would be interesting to examine how candidates, who successfully co-taught during their yearlong internship experience, apply the various co-teaching approaches during their first year teaching in their own classrooms.

Conclusion

The co-teaching model is one that restructures the relationship between the cooperating teacher and the teacher candidate. Traditionally in the COE, the period of student teaching has not been considered a time for co-teaching; rather, teacher candidates often solo teach or fly on their own while the cooperating teacher observes. These traditional practices involve the candidate gradually taking control of the classroom, whereas the co-teaching model involves a collaborative teaching relationship between the teacher and the candidate, allowing the teacher candidate to become involved immediately.

Teacher preparation institutions may be able to change the more typical student teaching experience by offering PD to school administrators, university faculty, cooperating teachers, and teacher candidates that is focused on co-teaching practices. This would provide teachers with information to better collaborate with their peers and may provide a more beneficial experience for teacher candidates. Furthermore, candid conversations should be included with a COE's partnership schools about co-teaching and its benefits. While the collaborative and reflective practices of teachers involved in co-teaching are enhanced, the preK-12 students are the ultimate winners, as co-teaching fosters a developmentally responsive classroom that ensures the utilization of various instructional approaches to meet students' needs.

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