

# "Co-Teaching"

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Dr. Richard A. Villa has worked with thousands of teachers and administrators throughout North America and the world, to develop and implement organizational and instructional support systems for educating all students within general education settings. Rich has been a middle and high school classroom teacher, special educator, special education coordinator, pupil personnel services director, and director of instructional services. In addition to working with schools, governmental and non-governmental agencies, and advocacy organizations, Rich has authored over a hundred articles and book chapters regarding inclusive education, differentiated instruction, collaborative planning and teaching, and school restructuring. Dr. Villa has co-edited fifteen books and developed three multi-media kits for teachers, administrators, and parents. Possessing the conceptual, technical, and interpersonal skills required to work effectively with others and facilitate change and progress in education, he has presented at numerous national and international conferences, and is known for his enthusiastic, knowledgeable, and humorous style of presenting.

## **RESOURCES**

### **Co-Teaching:**

- Villa, R., Thousand, J., & Nevin, A. (2013). *A Guide to Co-Teaching: New Lessons and Strategies to Facilitate Student Learning (3<sup>rd</sup> Edition)*. Thousand Oaks, California: Corwin Press. . (800) 818-7243
- Villa, R., & Thousand, J. (2011). *RTI: Co-Teaching and Differentiated Instruction*. National Professional Resources. (800) 453-7461
- Villa, R. Thousand, J., & Nevin, A. (2010). *Collaborating with Students in Instruction and Decision Making*. Thousand Oaks, California: Corwin Press. (800) 818-7243
- Nevin, A., Villa, R., & Thousand, J. (2009). *A Guide to Co-Teaching with Paraeducators Practical Tips for K-12 Educators*. Thousand Oaks, California: Corwin Press. (800) 818-7243
- Villa, R., Thousand, J., & Nevin, A. (2008). *A Guide to Co Teaching: Practical Tips for Facilitating Students Learning (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition)*. Thousand Oaks, California: Corwin Press. . (800) 818-7243
- Villa, R., Thousand, J., & Nevin, A. (2008). *Co-Teaching: A Multimedia Kit for Professional Development*. Thousand Oaks, California: Corwin Press. (800) 818-7243
- Villa, R. (2002). *Collaborative Planning: Transforming Theory into Practice*. National Professional Resources. (800) 453-7461
- Villa, R. (2002). *Collaborative Teaching: The Co-Teaching Model*. National Professional Resources. (800) 453-7461

### **Differentiated Instruction:**

- Thousand, J., Villa R., & Nevin, A. (2015). *Differentiated instruction: Planning for Universal Design and Teaching for College and Career Readiness (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.)*. Thousand Oaks, California: Corwin Press. (800) 818-7243.
- Villa, R., & Thousand, J. (2011). *RTI: Co-Teaching and Differentiated Instruction*. National Professional Resources. (800) 453-7461

### **Inclusion:**

- Villa, R., & Thousand, J. (2016). *The Inclusion Checklist: A Self-Assessment of Quality Inclusive Education Practices*. Naples, FL: National Professional Resources.
- Villa, R., & Thousand, J. (2011). *RTI: Co-Teaching and Differentiated Instruction*. National Professional Resources. (800) 453-7461
- Villa, R. Thousand, J., & Nevin, A. (2010). *Collaborating with Students in Instruction and Decision Making*. Thousand Oaks, California: Corwin Press. (800) 818-7243
- Villa, R., & Thousand, J. (Eds.). (2005). *Creating an Inclusive School*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. (800) 933-2723
- Thousand, J. & Villa, R. (Eds.). (2002). *Creativity and Collaborative Learning: The Practical Guide to Empowering Students, Teachers, and Families*. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes. (800) 638-3775
- Villa, R. & Thousand, J. (Eds.). (2000). *Restructuring for Caring and Effective Education: Piecing the Puzzle Together (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition)*. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes. (800) 638-3775

Materials from: Villa, Thousand, & Nevin (2013) *A guide to co-teaching: New lessons and strategies to facilitate student learning (3rd ed.)* and Thousand, Villa, & Nevin (2007) *Differentiating instruction: Collaborative planning and teaching for universally designed learning* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

## Similarities, Advantages, & Differences of Co-Teaching Approaches

### Similarities Among the Four Co-Teaching Approaches

- Two or more co-teachers are in the classroom.
- They capitalize on specific strengths and expertise of both co-teachers.
- They provide greater teacher-to-student ratios and additional one-on-one support for students in the classroom.
- All approaches have benefits and cautions associated with their use.
- Students are primarily heterogeneously grouped by mixed abilities and interests.
- There are shared responsibilities.
- Each approach requires trust, communication, planning time, and coordination of effort. (Note: The need for all of these elements increases as you move from supportive to parallel, parallel to complementary, and complementary to team teaching co-teaching.)

Supportive Differences	Parallel Differences	Complementary Differences	Team-Teaching Differences
<p>One co-teacher is in the lead role; the other provides support. Who is in lead and who provides support may change during a lesson.</p>	<p>Co-teachers work, monitor, or facilitate different groups of students in the same room. (There are at least seven different options for arranging the groups.)</p>	<p>One co-teacher teaches content; the other facilitates access (e.g. clarifies, paraphrases, simplifies, provides visual scaffolding, records content.)</p> <p>One co-teacher may pre-teach specific study or social skills and monitors students' use of them; the other teaches the academic content.</p>	<p>Both co-teachers are equally responsible for planning, instruction of content, assessment, and grade assignment.</p> <p>This approach requires the greatest amount of planning time, trust, communication, and coordination of effort.</p>
Supportive Advantages	Parallel Advantages	Complementary Advantages	Team-Teaching Advantages
<p>Allows immediate support (academic or behavioral) to students.</p> <p>Can be used when there is little or no planning time.</p> <p>A way for a new member of a co-teaching team to get to know other co-teachers, the students, the curriculum, and the classroom routines.</p> <p>New content is introduced by the teacher with the greatest content mastery.</p> <p>Allows the supportive co-teacher to monitor and collect data.</p>	<p>Reduces student to teacher ratio. (Divide and conquer).</p> <p>Increases teacher feedback to students.</p> <p>Each co-teacher instructs and uses instructional expertise.</p> <p>Co-teachers can be viewed as equal partners.</p> <p>Allows for greater individualization, data collection, monitoring, and relationship building with students.</p> <p>Students have greater opportunities to engage in conversation and peer-mediated instruction with partners, at stations, or in cooperative groups.</p>	<p>Complementary "experts of access," regardless of their level of content mastery, influence instruction by making content more accessible.</p> <p>Co-teachers are viewed as teachers of all students in the classroom.</p>	<p>All co-teachers are viewed as equal and teachers of all students.</p> <p>Content experts acquire and practice access skills.</p> <p>Access experts acquire and practice content skills.</p> <p>It is difficult to identify who is the "content" vs. the "access" expert.</p>

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Supportive Cautions	Parallel Cautions	Complementary Cautions	Team-Teaching Cautions
<p>Beware of the “Velcro effect,” where the supportive co-teacher hovers over one or selected students, stigmatizing both the student(s) and the co-teacher.</p> <p>Beware of making the supportive co-teacher the “discipline police,” materials copier, or in-class paper grader, rather than an instructor.</p> <p>Beware of ineffective use of the supportive co-teacher’s (e.g. special educator, ELL specialist) expertise.</p> <p>Beware of resentment, if the skills of the supportive co-teacher (e.g. special educator) are not being used or the lead co-teacher (e.g. content teacher) feels an unequal burden of responsibility.</p> <p>Beware of staying “stuck” in the supportive role due to lack of planning time.</p>	<p>Beware of creating a special class within the class and lowering student achievement by homogeneously grouping lower-performing students together.</p> <p>Beware that the noise level can become uncomfortably high when numerous activities are occurring in the same room.</p> <p>Beware of failing to adequately prepare other co-teachers to ensure that they deliver instruction as intended, since co-teachers cannot monitor one another while all are simultaneously co-teaching different groups.</p>	<p>Beware of failing to closely monitor students, as co-teachers co-instruct in the front of the class.</p> <p>Beware of too much teacher talk, repetition, and reduced student-student interaction.</p> <p>Beware of “stepping on one another’s toes.”</p> <p>Beware of “typecasting” the co-teacher delivering content as the “real” or “expert” teacher.</p> <p>Beware of failing to plan for “role release” or “role exchange,” so that all co-teachers get a chance to lead instruction of the content.</p>	<p>Beware of failing to closely monitor students, as co-teachers co-instruct in the front of the class.</p> <p>Beware of too much teacher talk, repetition, and reduced of student-student interaction.</p> <p>Beware of “stepping on one another’s toes.”</p>

## **Examples of Parallel Co-Teaching Structures**

### **Activity – “In what ways might I/we use each one?”**

#### **Split Class**

Each co-teacher is responsible for a particular group of students, monitoring understanding of a lesson, providing guided instruction, or re-teaching the group, if necessary.

#### **Station Teaching or Learning Centers**

Each co-teacher is responsible for assembling, guiding, and monitoring one or more different learning centers or stations.

#### **Co-Teachers Rotate**

The co-teachers rotate among the two or more different groups of students, with each co-teachers teaching a different component of the lesson. This is similar to station teaching or learning centers, except in this case the teachers rotate from group to group rather than the groups of students rotating from station to station.

#### **Cooperative Group Monitoring**

Each co-teacher takes responsibility for monitoring and providing feedback and assistance to a given number of cooperative groups of students.

#### **Experiment or Lab Monitoring**

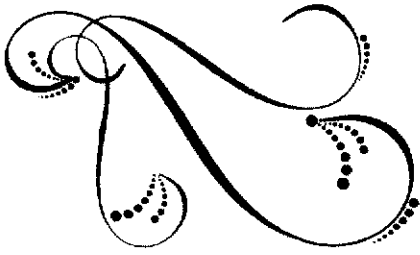
Each co-teacher monitors and assists a given number of laboratory groups, providing guided instruction to those groups requiring additional support.

#### **Learning Style Focus**

One co-teacher works with a group of students using primarily visual strategies, another co-teachers works with a group using primarily auditory strategies, and yet another may work with a group using kinesthetic strategies.

#### **Supplementary Instruction**

One co-teacher works with the rest of the class on a concept or assignment, skill, or learning strategy. The other co-teacher a) provides extra guidance on the concept or assignment to students who are self-identified or teacher-identified as needing extra assistance, b) instructs students to apply or generalize the skill to a relevant community environment, c) provides a targeted group of students with guided practice in how to apply the learning strategy to the content being addressed, or d) provides enrichment strategies.



# **Issues for Discussion and Planning**

## **Collaborative Teaching**

### **1. Time for Planning**

- How much time do we need?
- Where will we find the time that we need?
- How will we use our time together?
- What records can we keep to facilitate our planning?

### **2. Instruction**

- What content will we include?
- Who plans for what content?
- How will we share teaching responsibility?
- Who adapts the curriculum and instructional procedure for select students?
- What are our strengths in the area of instruction?
- How will the content be presented – will one person teach and the other(s) arrange and facilitate follow-up activities, or will all members share in the teaching of the lesson?
- How do team members arrange to share their expertise – so they observe on another and practice peer coaching?
- Do team members rotate responsibility?
- How will we evaluate the effectiveness of our instruction?

### **3. Student Behavior**

- Who decides on the disciplinary procedures?
- If we could each have only three class rules, what would those be?
- Who carries out the disciplinary procedure and delivers the consequences?
- How will we be consistent dealing with behavior?
- What will our plans be for proactively addressing behavior?

#### 4. Communication

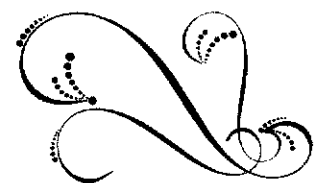
- What types and frequency of communication do we each like to have with parents?
- Who will communicate with parents? Is it necessary that we divide communication with parents for those students with identified special education needs and other students?
- What types and frequency of communication do we each like to have with students?
- Who will communicate with students?
- How will we address our communication needs with each other?
- Who communicates with administrators?

#### 5. Evaluation

- How will we grade/assess students?
- Who evaluates which group of students – do team members collaborate in evaluating all students' performances, or is each team member primarily responsible for evaluating a subset of students?
- How will we monitor ongoing students' progress?

#### 6. Logistics

- How will we explain this collaborative teaching arrangement to the students and convey that we are all equals in the classroom?
- How will we explain this collaborative teaching arrangement to the parents?
- How will we refer to each other in front of the students?
- How will teacher space be shared?
- How will the room be arranged?
- Who completes paperwork for students identified as needing special education?
- How is the decision made to expand or contract the team membership?
- How will a balance of decision-making power be maintained among group members?





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### **Prenuptial Agreements for Co-Teaching Roles and Responsibilities**

Directions: Insert P, S, E, or I to designate level of responsibility. Plan to revise based on changes in co-teacher skills and/or needs of the students for whom you are co-teaching.

RESPONSIBILITIES	PERSON RESPONSIBLE			
	NAME	NAME	NAME	NAME
Develop units, projects, lessons				
Create advance organizers (e.g., concept map, lecture guide)				
Monitor and assess student progress				
Assign grades				
Schedule/facilitate team meetings				
Assign responsibilities to paraeducators				
Train paraprofessionals				
Supervise paraprofessionals				
Recruit and train peer tutors				
Facilitate peer support and friendship				
Communicate with administrators				
Communicate with related service providers (e.g., speech and language)				
Communicate with parents				
Developing Individual Education Programs (IEPs)				
Other:				

CODE KEY:      P= Primary Responsibility      S=Secondary Responsibility  
                     E=Equal Responsibility      I=Input into the Decision Making

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**Role Differentiation During Instruction**  
**“If one of us is doing..., the other could be doing...!”**

<b>If one of you is....</b>	<b>The other can be ....</b>	<b>Co-Teaching Approach</b>
Providing direct instruction to whole class	Circulating, providing one-on-one support as needed	<b>Supportive</b>
Circulating, using proximity control for behavior management	Setting the objectives for the day with the entire class	
Facilitating stations or groups	Facilitating stations or groups	<b>Parallel</b>
Checking for understanding with large heterogeneous group of students	Checking for understanding with small heterogeneous group of students	
Giving instructions orally	Writing down instructions visual illustrations on board	<b>Complementary</b>
Creating basic lesson plans for content curriculum	Providing suggestions for differentiation for diverse learners	
Guide students through odd steps of a procedure	Guide students through even steps of a procedure	<b>Team</b>
Considering differentiation and enrichment needs	Considering differentiation and enrichment needs	

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### Co-Teaching Tracking Matrix: Which Co-Teaching Approaches do We Use?

**Week of:**

**Directions:** Monitor, plan, and document your co-teaching experiences! For each co-teaching approach briefly describe what co-teachers plan to do or did each day.

	Supportive	Parallel	Complementary	Team	Additional Notes
Monday					
Tuesday					
Wednesday					
Thursday					
Friday					
Notes and Plans for Next Week					

**Supportive** - One co-teacher takes the lead instructional role and the other(s) rotates among the students providing support. The co-teacher(s) taking the supportive role watches or listens as students work together, stepping in to provide one-to-one tutorial assistance when necessary while the other co-teacher continues to direct the lesson. The role of lead and supportive co-teacher can switch.

**Parallel** - Two or more people work with different groups of students at the same time in different sections of the classroom. Co-teachers may rotate among the groups; and, sometimes there may be one group of students that works without a co-teacher for at least part of the time.

**Complementary** – All co-teachers have a large group instructional role. One may introduce the new academic content while the other makes it more accessible through complementary instruction (modeling note taking, use of different examples or analogies, paraphrasing, creating visuals).

**Team** - Co-teachers equitable share responsibility for that which one teacher otherwise would have performed alone; namely, planning, teaching, and assessing the instruction of all assigned students. Co-teachers are comfortable using and do use each co-teaching approach based upon the needs of students and the demands of the lesson.

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### “Are We Really Co-Teachers?” Self-Assessment

Directions: To what degree do you agree with each statement? Use your results to set goals!

<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Always</b>	<b>Usually</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Rarely</b>	<b>Never</b>

#### Culture of Collaboration

- |   |   |   |   |   |  |
|---|---|---|---|---|--|
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |  |
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 1. We depend upon one another to follow through on tasks and responsibilities.                               |
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 2. We share ideas, information, and materials.   |
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 3. We identify the resources and talents of each co-teacher.   |
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 4. We model collaboration and teamwork for our students.   |
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 5. We are both viewed by our students as their teachers.   |
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 6. We ensure that each co-teacher teaches each student at some time.   |
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 7. We share responsibility for differentiating instruction.  |
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 8. We are aware of what one another is doing even when we are not directly in one another’s presence.        |
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 9. We communicate freely our concerns.   |
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 10. We have a process for resolving our disagreements, and we use it when faced with problems and conflicts. |
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 11. We celebrate the process of co-teaching as well as outcomes and successes.                               |
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 12. We have fun with the students and each other when we co-teach.   |

#### Planning

- |   |   |   |   |   |  |
|---|---|---|---|---|--|
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |  |
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 13. We have regularly scheduled times to meet and discuss our work.  |
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 14. We share responsibility for deciding what to teach.  |
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 15. We agree on the curriculum standards that will be addressed in a lesson.   |
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 16. We decide which co-teaching approaches we are going to use in a lesson based upon the needs of and benefits to the students. |
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 17. We identify student strengths and needs.   |
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 18. We share responsibility for deciding how to teach.   |
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 19. We share responsibility for deciding who teaches what part of a lesson.  |
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 20. We share responsibility for how student learning is assessed.  |

#### Implementation

- |   |   |   |   |   |  |
|---|---|---|---|---|--|
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |  |
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 21. We use a variety of co-teaching approaches.  |
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 22. We effectively implement the chosen co-teaching approach(es) we’ve planned for the lesson. |
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 23. We are flexible and make changes as needed during a lesson.                                |
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 24. We agree on discipline procedures and jointly carry them out.                              |

#### Reflection

- |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |   |
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 25. We give feedback to one another on what goes on in the classroom. |
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 26. We make improvements in our lessons based on what happens.        |
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 27. We can show that students are learning when we co-teach.          |
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 28. We can see our own growth in co-teaching together.                |

#### Promoting Co-Teaching

- |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |   |
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 29. We seek and enjoy additional training to become better co-teachers. |
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 30. We are mentors to others who want to co-teach.                      |
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 31. We communicate our need for logistical support and resources.       |

Materials from: Villa, Thousand, & Nevin (2013) *A guide to co-teaching: New lessons and strategies to facilitate student learning (3rd ed.)* and Thousand, Villa, & Nevin (2007) *Differentiating instruction: Collaborative planning and teaching for universally designed learning* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

### CO-TEACHING PLANNING GRAPHIC ORGANIZER

When Co-Teaching Partners plan for instruction for each section of their instructional time, they also plan the Co-Teaching approaches they will use. This graphic organizer is a tool designed to facilitate the planning conversation for co-teaching. Writing in the graphic organizer is *optional*. The tool prompts co-teachers to: 1) identify what content is being taught and how; 2) **identify student learning challenges and differentiation needs**; 3) identify the co-teaching approach(es) that best supports student differentiation needs and content demands; and 4) describe what each co-teacher does in his/her co-teaching role.

Instructional Content: In each section of instructional time, what are we teaching & how?	What learning differences do students experience? What differentiation is needed that co-teaching supports?	Which co-teaching approach(es) do we plan on using?	CO-TEACHER	CO-TEACHER
			What will I do? (If I do this...)	What will I do? (I will do this...)
		Supportive Parallel Complementary Team		
		Supportive Parallel Complementary Team		
		Supportive Parallel Complementary Team		
		Supportive Parallel Complementary Team		
		Supportive Parallel Complementary Team		

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### Middle Level Math Example Using the Co-Teaching Planning Graphic Organizer

<b>Instructional Content:</b> <b>In each section of instructional time, what are we teaching &amp; how?</b>	<b>What learning differences do students experience? What differentiation is needed that co-teaching supports?</b>	<b>Which co-teaching approach(es) do we plan on using?</b>	<b>CO-TEACHER</b> <hr/> <b>What will I do?</b> <b>(If I do this...)</b>	<b>CO-TEACHER</b> <hr/> <b>What will I do?</b> <b>(I will do this...)</b>
Review math homework	Several students are easily distracted; several students likely will need clarification and redirection	<b>Supportive</b> Parallel Complementary Team	I am leading. I go over the answers for the math homework and clarify concepts as needed.	I am supporting. I make sure students are attending and tutor as needed to be sure questions are answered.
Math mini-lesson: Absolute value (use of number line)	Four students need visual and concrete modalities to help construct understanding	Supportive Parallel <b>Complementary</b> Team	I am leading content instruction. I teach the mini-lesson on the concept and skills of absolute value	I am complementing. I provide graphic illustration and models on the board while my co-teacher teaches the concept/skills.
Guided practice of determining absolute value (in teacher-designated table groups)	Small group application, with manipulatives (for all tables) provides target students support	Supportive <b>Parallel</b> Complementary Team	I monitor 3 groups that included students who need paper number line strip manipulatives to determine absolute value.	I monitor the rest of the groups of students who are ready for paper and pencil problems (with number lines also provided)