

## Collaborative Relationships

Collaborative relationships are all about working together to achieve a common goal. The term “collaboration” means that two or more people work together to produce something that is new and/or improved, based on each person’s contribution. The term “relationship” implies that there is trust, reciprocal communication, and dedication to cooperation that is solution oriented.

Educators and other school service providers engage in a variety of collaborative partnerships to achieve positive outcomes for all learners in a general education class. This means planning for effective class-wide instruction as well as identifying the unique and customized instructional adaptations and supports for learners who are striving to acquire a skill or receive specialized services.

Sometimes collaboration occurs through a **team of 3 or more** professionals who share responsibility for goals, tasks, and outcomes. They meet regularly and engage in shared decision-making and leadership. The decisions it makes and actions it takes represent the combined expertise and experiences of all members. To reap the many benefits of collaboration, a team cultivates trusting relationships and follows practices and norms that promote shared ownership and creative problem solving.



At other times, collaboration is between **2 educators and/or service providers**. This always involves planning for one or more learners and may also involve collaborative implementation of those plans and assessing the impact on one learner or the whole class. Planning may involve:

- ◆ Designing **core academic instruction**, for example: [evidence-based instructional practices](#) to achieve grade-level standards or implement a curriculum, etc. It may involve creating universally designed lessons, methods to scaffold instruction for some learners, or differentiate instruction for the class.
- ◆ Providing **specialized services**. Examples are: implementing a [504 plan](#); customized instruction for [multilingual learners](#) who receive instruction designed for English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL); instruction for [gifted and talented](#) learners, often called Gifted and Talented Education (GATE); and special education services – called

[specially designed instruction](#) as well as related services that are outlined in a child's [Individualized Education Program](#) (IEP).

- ◆ Creating **assessments** for daily or weekly lesson design such as formative assessments, summative assessments to evaluate achievement of benchmarks or unit expectations, or progress monitoring for learners receiving an intervention. This understanding will [inform teaching strategies](#) as well as report on learner progress.
- ◆ Construct the learning **environment** to reflect the [culture of the class](#) as well as inform learners about the instructional goals and strategies to engage in learning. [This](#) involves a minimalist (uncluttered) setting, clear routines, consistent expectations, organized materials, opportunities for personal time/reflection for those who need it.

**Collaborative relationships** are a building block of both foundational general education instruction as well as specialized instruction that adapts the general education instruction for an individual or small number of class members.

- ✓ Barriers to learning are removed from curriculum, instruction, assessment, and environment.
- ✓ Planning is centered around learner perspective, interests, and support/challenge needs which results in learner engagement.
- ✓ Planning with essential stakeholders (i.e., educators, learners, parents, administrators, specialists, supervisors, directors, coordinators, etc.) brings together multiple perspectives and knowledge bases. It creates a holistic and coordinated effort to teach and support each learner.
- ✓ Partnerships are essential to disrupting confirmation bias\*
- ✓ All stakeholders are responsible and accountable and increase their knowledge and skill as they transfer their talents to each other.
- ✓ Learners can develop strong Academic Mindsets\* if the team seeks the success of all learners in the class, grade, or subject area.

\*indicates a term defined on page 7

The information on the following pages provides additional information on the collaboration among 2 professionals: the classroom general educator and a specialized educator or service provider.

To establish collaborative relationships, we consider and do the following (this list is not exhaustive):

Do	Consider
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Reflect and build capacity with beliefs, mindsets, and sociopolitical consciousness*</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ How each individual in the collaborative relationship is impacted by culture</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Learn about your partner's previous experiences, strengths, interests, and areas of support.</li> <li>✓ Collaboratively establish norms/agreements and structures</li> <li>✓ Reflect on partnership and work through changes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ How you establish the relationship as a true partnership</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Be willing to share ideas, experiences, and expertise with others; ask for input, perspective, and guidance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ How each member processes information (including how much time members need to process information)</li> <li>✓ How to ask questions and provide feedback to extend understanding</li> </ul>

## Types of Collaborative Relationships

When learners receive services in general education, the general educator, and other specialized educators (i.e., special educator, related service providers, ESOL educators, etc.) work together (i.e., co-planning, co-assessing, co-teaching) in collaborative relationships.

Collaborative relationships are based on the needs of the entire class, type and intensity of services and support, as well as the capacity and confidence of the general educator. There are three types of collaborative relationships that can be assigned to meet the needs of the class:

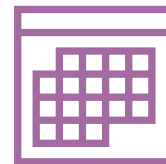
### Consultation



### Co-Taught Daily



### Co-Taught Targeted



### CONSULTATION:

Consultation is defined as a specialized educator(s) providing input or advice about how a general educator can provide effective instruction and support to specific class members, based on their area of specialty.

The model allows the specialized educator(s) to partner with multiple general educators without being physically present in the classroom when instruction occurs. The key characteristics of consultation are:

- ◆ The general educator provides core academic instruction and support to all learners in the general education class.
- ◆ The specialized educator(s) meets with the general educator to review learner data and to co-plan for effective instruction, providing supports, creating learning challenges, aligned with designated services.



### CO-TEACHING DAILY:

Co-Teaching is defined as two educators with joint and equal responsibility for classroom instruction. They are physically present in a heterogeneous, general education classroom every day for the duration of the class period or content (i.e., math, reading, art, etc.). Co-Teachers are equally accountable for the learning of every member of the class through co-planning, co-assessing, and co-teaching. This includes selecting various co-teaching models to support equitable and inclusive environments and culturally responsive content, services, instruction, and assessment.



### CO-TEACHING TARGETED:

Key characteristics of targeted co-teaching are:

- ◆ The specialized educator(s) is assigned to the general education classroom on a schedule which may be flexible to allow for co-planning and/or co-assessing/teaching with the general educator.
- ◆ The frequency of in-class support is based on how well the general educator can meet the needs of the class based on the complexity of learner variation and individual supports and services that need to be provided.
- ◆ The specialized educator may co-teach on specific days/times or for specific content based on what specialized support is needed by the general education class teacher.
- ◆ In the class, the specialized educator and/or general educator select various routines and co-teaching models to support equitable and inclusive environments and culturally responsive content, services, instruction, and assessment.



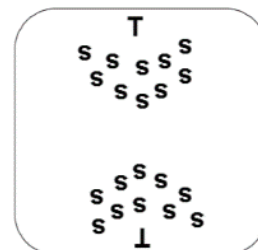
## Co-Teaching Model Descriptions

### Parallel: Frequency - often

- ✓ Learners are divided into two (2) groups.
- ✓ Each educator takes a group of learners to a different location in the SAME room.
- ✓ Educators present the same information or activities at the same time to their group.
- ✓ Learners have more opportunity to share, receive support from an educator.
- ✓ Educators can collect formative data to drive instruction.

#### Key:

T = educator  
S = learner



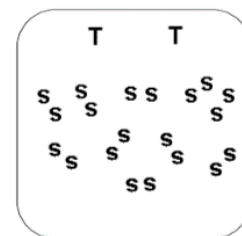
### Station: Frequency - often

- ✓ Two (2) small groups each led by an educator and one learner led group.
- ✓ Each station should function independently from each other.
- ✓ Pre-teach expectations about noise level in small groups as well as when working independently.
- ✓ Co-educators may want to use a timer to ensure that both groups will be finishing at the same time.



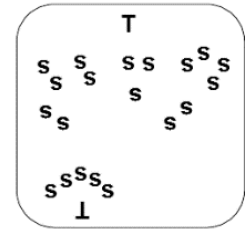
### Team: Frequency - occasional

- ✓ Learners are in a whole group.
- ✓ Both educators are in front of the classroom sharing responsibility of leading instruction and modeling.
- ✓ This model increases engagement. It promotes modeling, questioning, and problem-solving processes.
- ✓ It can lend itself to creativity in presentation and allows educators to demonstrate different perspectives and ways of thinking.
- ✓ This model should be used occasionally. When used, it should be implemented for a short period of the class time because it highlights the educators' voices, not the learners' voices. Learners need time to hear their peers– not double the lecture.



**Alternative:** Frequency - occasional

- ✓ One educator facilitates the large group, while the other educator takes a small group for a specific instructional purpose.
- ✓ Small group time allows for addressing individual needs, connecting with learners, promoting large and small group instruction simultaneously.
- ✓ Great opportunity for enrichment, remediation, previewing, formative assessment, etc.
- ✓ It is crucial that both educators are seen in both roles as the large group educator and small group educator.
- ✓ It is crucial that all learners experience small groups. Small groups are not just for learners with IEPs. It will be damaging if this model is used in this fashion.



## Definitions

**Academic Mindsets:** has four components which contribute to the schema for a fixed or growth mindset. Developing strong Academic Mindsets are critical for learning as it is the premise for safe-risk-taking and growing into independent learners. The four components to Academic Mindsets are:

1. I belong to this academic community.
2. I can succeed at this.
3. My ability and competence grow with my effort.
4. This work has value for me.

**Confirmation Bias:** is the tendency to interpret new evidence as confirmation of one's existing beliefs or theories.

**Culturally Responsive Instruction:** is a process of using familiar cultural information and processes to scaffold learning. Emphasizes communal orientation. Focused on relationships, cognitive scaffolding, and critical social awareness.

**Equitable and Inclusive Environments:** provides each learner in a class with the supports they need to be a valued member with a sense of belonging to the class and school community, participate in all academic and social activities, and learn content related to grade level standards. Most learners will receive generalized instruction that considers the extent to which the vocabulary and content related to the realities of their current life and family culture. Some learners will need unique support to belong, participate, and learn.

**General Education Instruction:** refers to universal instruction and supports for academic and positive social-emotional-behavioral performance in the general education classroom that is equitable and inclusive of all learners in the class. It includes both core curriculum (English/Language Arts, mathematics, social studies, and science) as well as resource or "encore" subjects (e.g., health, art, music, technology, physical education). The goal is for all students to receive high-quality, standards-aligned instruction, using culturally and linguistically responsive teaching that meets the full range of student needs.

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