

# 1 - Start with building rapport

For co-teaching to be successful, each partner needs to feel comfortable in the working relationship. In some sense, the co-teachers are entering into a short-term marriage that is built upon speed dating rather than a lengthy courtship.

## Tips:

- a. *Speed dating is still dating*: Get to know each other on both a professional and personal level.
- b. *Build trust*: Make no assumptions, discuss your thinking and rationale for what you do.
- c. *Share*: Start with talking about your philosophy, management style, and instructional preferences.

# 2 - Clarify roles, responsibilities & lesson assignments

Each co-teacher needs to know what is expected of her for each lesson: the less ambiguity, the more successful the co-teaching.

## Tips:

- a. *Clarify your expectations* of your role and of your partner's role within each of the co-teaching formats each time you plan together.
- b. *Show respect* by giving the other person credit and support for their participation in the partnership.
- c. *Present a positive attitude* about yourself and what you offer to the co-teaching arrangement.

# 3 - Vary responsibilities & roles

Variation will increase learning opportunities and energize each co-teacher while maintaining student attention.

## Tips:

- a. It is *important that the students see both of you in an instructional leadership role* as this will help them accept your joint authority.
- b. *Try different co-teaching formats* and see how each feels. Discuss your preferences.

## 4 - Communicate, communicate, communicate

Ongoing conversation will solidify the relationship and show a united front to students. Planning together and then debriefing lessons clarifies responsibilities, keeps both partners alert to student needs, and allows you to confront concerns before they become problems.

### Tips:

- a. *Frame suggestions* or concerns in a positive light.
- b. *Discuss* your teaching philosophy, management style, and instructional preferences before something becomes an issue in the classroom.
- c. *Recognize* each other's strengths, forgive each other's weaknesses.

## 5 - Develop a protocol for your planning sessions

Whether it is in the form of the Co-teaching Planning Protocol (PDF), a common lesson plan, or a task sheet, co-teachers need to know what the "script" is for the coming lesson.

### Tips:

- a. *Agree upon a structure* for your planning time including who will lead the planning for any particular lesson.
- b. *Rely on preparation* rather than spontaneity for implementation of good lessons.
- c. *Capitalize* on what each partner does well.

## 6 - Take time to reflect & check in

Don't assume that just because a lesson is over and has gone well that there is nothing to talk about and learn from debriefing together. Catching each other quickly between lessons is not sufficient for co-teaching success.

### Tips:

- a. Regularly schedule *conference times* for both planning and reflection.
- b. *Share your observations* and listen to each other.
- c. No matter what stage of experience a teacher is at, it is important to *think about a lesson*.
- d. *Remember to laugh* together!