


How to Meaningfully Incorporate Co-teaching Into Programs for Middle School Students With Emotional and Behavioral Disorders

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Abstract

With the number of students with emotional or behavioral disorders who are being served in the general education classroom increasing, co-teaching has become a more common practice than ever before. Through the use of a hypothetical journey of a special educator placed in a co-teaching situation without prior experience, we provide practitioners with the context and rationale for implementing co-teaching effectively in combination with the incorporation of research-based instructional practices in an inclusion classroom.

Keywords

co-teaching, special education, emotional behavior disorder, inclusion

Co-teaching is an instructional delivery system in which two or more professionals deliver substantive instruction to a diverse group of students in the general education classroom (L. Cook & Friend, 1995). In the best circumstance, it involves a general educator and special educator flexibly and deliberately accommodating the needs of students with and without disabilities together (Friend, Cook, Hurley-Chamberlain, & Shamberger, 2010; Zigmond, Magiera, Simmons, & Volonino, 2013). Co-teaching likely impacts students with emotional and behavioral disorders (EBD) as now more than ever they receive substantial instructional time in the general education setting. In this article, we follow the hypothetical journey of a young middle school teacher thrust into a situation in which co-teaching becomes her reality. We track the journey of a new teacher, Ms. Wilson, during her early experiences with co-teaching, through struggles and successes in navigating the instructional delivery framework. We also highlight research-based practices that can be implemented with students diagnosed with EBD when co-teaching.

Co-teaching Context and Research

It is important to acknowledge that, quite likely, students with EBD, particularly secondary students, are receiving some form of co-teaching. We make that assertion because more students verified with emotional disturbance (as well as students with disabilities in general) are being served in the general education classroom for the majority of the

school day. McLeskey, Landers, Williamson, and Hoppey (2012) reported that general education placement rates for students with emotional disturbance more than doubled between 1990 and 2007, increasing from 152 students per 1,000 to 312 students per 1,000, a growth that was higher than the overall 93% increase in general education placement rates for all students with disabilities during that time span. Mooney, Ryan, Gunter, and Denny (2012) reported that the proportion of students with emotional disturbance in the general education setting 80% or more of the time increased steadily from 25% in 1998 to 35% in 2005. That proportion stood at 44.1% for the 2011–2012 school year, with data indicating that 40% of individual states reported proportions of 50% placement and above for this group (U.S. Department of Education, 2014). In short, in today's schools, inclusion of students with EBD is both likely and widespread.

Secondary-age students with EBD are also demonstrating greater success in school settings. The proportion of students with emotional disturbance who graduated high school with a regular diploma reached 51.1% in 2011–2012, up from 35.6% in 2002–2003 (U.S. Department of Education, 2014). Moreover, the proportion of secondary students with emotional disturbance who dropped out of school in 2011–2012

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Table 1. Co-teaching Models and Descriptions.

Model name	Brief description	Advantages	Disadvantages
One teach, one observe	One teacher delivers whole-group lesson while the other teacher observes lesson and/or collects data	Best for data collection or information gathering	Observing teacher's skills and expertise not utilized for instruction
One teach, one assist	One teacher delivers whole-group lesson while other teacher works with individual students	One-on-one help for struggling students	Second teacher, usually special educator, sometimes seen as assistant and not a coequal partner
Teaming	Both teachers deliver whole-group lesson together	Parity among teachers and different viewpoints or techniques used for delivering lesson	Requires a lot of planning and collaboration between teachers
Alternative teaching	One teacher delivers whole-group lesson while the other teacher works with small group	Best for preteaching, reteaching, and/or enrichment	Requires strategic placement of small group to reduce distractions and noise
Station teaching	With three stations, one teacher works with a small group, the other teacher works with another small group, and third group of students work independently	Lot of small group instruction, more student participation and engagement	Requires a lot of planning and pacing to maintain structure and order
Parallel teaching	Both teachers teach same content at same time to two separate groups of students	Groups can be broken up to better differentiate instruction, smaller than whole-group instruction	Requires planning to maintain organization, structure, and noise level

was 38.1%, down from 55.9% in 2002–2003 (U.S. Department of Education, 2014). That dropout rate, however, was still nearly double the rate for students with learning disabilities and students with disabilities in general.

Taken collectively, these data indicate that students who previously received services in a restrictive environment are now educated with their typically achieving peers for larger—and larger—portions of the day (McLeskey et al., 2012). Co-teaching, then, is likely being utilized as a mechanism for students with EBD to receive special education and related services. One of the ideas used to promote co-teaching by advocates has been the notion that two heads are better than one in terms of planning, delivering, and evaluating instruction (B. G. Cook, McDuffie-Landrum, Oshita, & Cook, 2011; Friend & Cook, 2013). Two teachers also have the opportunity to alter and adapt the delivery of co-teaching practice through a variety of models that are described in the professional literature. In middle and high school settings, research suggests that a model in which the general education teacher manages instruction and the special education teacher assists—one teach/one assist—is the predominant delivery model (Scruggs, Mastropieri, & McDuffie, 2007). However, there are models that seemingly better allow for shared responsibility of instruction and smaller teacher–student ratios, such as alternative teaching, station teaching, and parallel teaching (see Table 1). Co-teaching models that utilize smaller student–teacher ratios have been shown to evidence greater student engagement rates and academic achievement (Eschete, Mooney, & Lastrapes, 2016). Tables 1, 2, and 3 provide information on the six common co-teaching models,

implementation resources, and suggestions to increase the effectiveness of the instructional delivery model.

Efficacy of Co-teaching

The professional literature, including collaboration textbooks, suggests that a number of factors serve as facilitators of success in co-teaching arrangements, hopefully facilitating success for students with disabilities. Among those factors are voluntary participation, administrative support, collegial respect and parity, and adequate planning time (Friend & Cook, 2013; McDuffie, Scruggs, & Mastropieri, 2007). Results of a relatively large body of quantitative and qualitative scholarship urge caution in incorporating co-teaching instructional practices into educational programming for all students, including students with disabilities, and particularly students with EBD.

In addition to the instinctive appeal of having two educators in one classroom, there exists a gap of quantitative research evidence supporting the use of co-teaching. However, qualitative research has identified several perceived benefits for students with disabilities (McDuffie, Landrum, & Gelman, 2008). Some of these benefits include combined teacher content knowledge and instructional strategies, expertise in accommodations and modifications as needed, and smaller teacher–student ratios. Particularly in the middle and high school settings where teachers' content knowledge is focused in a given area (e.g., English, math, science), general education teachers are regularly described as content experts and special education teachers as individualization/adaptation

Table 2. Resources for Successful Co-teaching Implementation.

Website	Brief description
http://www.nea.org/tools/6-steps-to-successful-co-teaching.html	Six ideas for coteachers to collaborate in the planning process to build a working relationship prior to delivering instruction
http://education.byu.edu/cpse/co_teaching/co_teach_models.html	Videos of coteachers in action, focuses on both instruction and behavior management
http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2015/06/10/hurdles-in-pairing-general-special-education-teachers.html	Brief article outlining legal rationales for co-teaching and common practitioner experiences in cotaught settings
http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational_leadership/dec15/vol73/num04/An_Administrator's_Guide_to_Co-Teaching.aspx	Strategies and tips for implementing successful co-teaching from an administrative perspective

authorities. Two teachers, working well together, conceivably combine their expertise to provide more quality instruction, allowing for greater responsiveness to students' needs and reducing any negative stigma associated with a student with a disability's placement outside of the general education classroom (B. G. Cook et al., 2011).

Qualitative research findings have also reported positive perceptions by students (McDuffie et al., 2008). Walther-Thomas (1997) reported that students with disabilities in cotaught classrooms had positive feelings about themselves as capable learners. Dieker (2001) reported that co-teaching created a positive climate for learning, set high expectations for both behavior and academic performance, and allowed active learning to take place. For students with EBD, these positive outcomes may result from enhanced classroom management which facilitates enhanced academic and behavioral performance. For students with EBD and other disabilities in cotaught classrooms, academic instruction becomes increasingly important in reducing and preventing challenging behaviors. In the best of situations, this high-quality instruction comes in the form of research-based practices. In the context of students with EBD, McDuffie et al. (2008) recommended that the co-teaching instructional arrangement be a conduit "through which evidence-based instructional and behavior management practices might be effectively delivered" (p. 15).

Introduction to Ms. Wilson

Ms. Wilson is a first-year special education teacher who has been assigned a seemingly small caseload of eight students with EBD across three grade levels. Students' individual behavioral services range from brief twice-daily student

contact through a check-in/check-out program to intensive instruction for social skills in both general and special education classrooms. Academic supports range from special education classroom instruction to support across resource and general education classroom settings. Each student was assigned to general education teachers across content areas and scattered across classrooms during a seven-period day. After a thorough review of students' Individualized Education Programs and conversations with fellow teachers, Ms. Wilson selected a section of sixth-grade English, language arts, and writing with Ms. Madison in which to coteach for a student with significant academic and behavioral needs.

Ms. Madison is a veteran teacher with little experience working with a second teacher in what she considers "her" classroom. Classes are set to begin that day with very little time to discuss their co-teaching arrangement. As Ms. Wilson walks in on the first day of their co-teaching class, Ms. Madison makes it clear that Ms. Wilson should make herself at home in the classroom. During the first class period, Ms. Madison regularly makes comments to her students that it is "nice to have a second teacher in the room to help." Ms. Madison, who is only one year away from retirement, asks if Ms. Wilson would like for her to make a copy of the lesson plan that she will be using each week so that Ms. Wilson can prepare herself for Ms. Madison's lessons. Ms. Wilson's first co-teaching responsibility consists of handing out Ms. Madison's course syllabus to students. As the first week of classes near its end, it becomes abundantly clear to Ms. Wilson that neither teacher has any experience in effective co-teaching to draw upon. Moreover, Ms. Wilson realizes that there are already frustrations building, as she feels she is having problems communicating with her colleague successfully. She also doubts her own abilities to meaningfully contribute to instruction given her lack of prior experience within the classroom. Further, Ms. Wilson is struggling with how to best meet the needs of her included student with EBD.

A Research-Informed Individualized Program

Hitting the reset button, Ms. Wilson and Ms. Madison agree to work to do two things differently for the remainder of the first quarter before reevaluating their new course of action. First, they agree to devote time to shared planning and accept equal responsibility for instruction. Second, they incorporate research-based strategies into their programming. Both of these approaches have been advocated for in the professional literature. The desire to devote more time to planning and professional parity led to both sitting down with their principal and seeking her support in carving out time and resources to proceed more effectively. The principal was eager to support this collaborative effort. A collective planning time was endorsed and the principal even suggested that teachers use professional learning community time weekly for the remainder of the first quarter to review

Table 3. Best Practices for Effective Co-teaching Implementation.

Recommended practice	Description/rationale	Example/application
Find and maintain a mutual planning time	Coteachers need to be prepared to implement instruction together or in small groups, so planning is an absolute must in order for students to benefit from having two teachers in the classroom. Planning time also helps to build a more collaborative relationship between teachers	Set aside 20–30 min a day to evaluate instruction, plan future lessons, and problem solve classroom issues
Practice parity	Both the general and special educator should treat each other like equal partners, and this should be evident in communication, planning, delivering instruction, interacting with families, and assessing instruction	Avoid the “one teach-one assist” model to ensure the special educator is not perceived as an assistant
Start by volunteering	It is less likely that a forced relationship will be successful, so coteachers should volunteer to be placed in the context rather than being imposed by administration. Volunteering for co-teaching is also more likely to yield greater professional development and growth by opening the classroom doors to new teachers	Volunteer for peer observations and feedback prior to co-teaching to ensure it is a voluntary choice
Communicate openly	In any professional relationship, practitioners are likely to bring their own ideas and expertise to the table, so it is important that both educators voice their own opinions and feel comfortable communicating with each other	In a professional manner, express concerns to the coteacher by focusing on student achievement and outcomes
Sweat the small stuff	Having two teachers in one classroom allows for greater individualization of instruction and behavior management, so it is very important for coteachers to pay attention to details in the classroom and their collaboration	Track and monitor student progress daily to ensure students are benefiting from cotaught instruction

effective teaching practices (i.e., reading comprehension strategy instruction; classwide peer tutoring) to learn how to best deliver the practices in the setting in which they collaboratively were developing.

Greater Emphasis on Co-planning and Co-instructing

Co-planning is an essential part of co-teaching, but it is frequently the most difficult aspect to control (Murawski & Dieker, 2004). Like Ms. Wilson, special education teachers in middle and high school settings frequently work with several teachers across several subjects. Without the ability to coplan, teachers are less able to collaborate to determine which accommodations, modifications, and levels of differentiation are needed to ensure higher levels of success for the students (Murawski & Lochner, 2011). The purpose of teachers' planning together is to make certain that the special education instructor was able to share her knowledge of differentiation, accommodations, behavior support, and pedagogy to enable more of the students to access and learn the curriculum the first time it was presented.

When time constraints and/or obligations outside of school interfere with set planning times, it may be feasible to rearrange professional learning community or other scheduled time to incorporate deliberate planning. Devoting a regular planning time, where both teachers combine their knowledge and expertise, can lead to the development of differentiated tasks and assignments, scaffolding, clear roles for each teacher, and teacher letters home to parents with both

teachers' names. For initial guidance, teachers can utilize a co-teaching planning and implementation guide (see Figure 1) to facilitate the effective use of planning time and foster parity in instructional delivery.

For Ms. Wilson and Ms. Madison, differentiated planning for the particular student with EBD addressed efforts to increase correct student responding and use of parallel, station, and alternative co-teaching models. Gunter (cf. Mooney et al., 2012) has described research indicating that students' disruptive behavior is reduced if instructional delivery involves telling students what they need to learn, asking them questions about what they need to learn, and praising correct responses, a sequence known as positive reciprocal instructional interaction. While not directly targeting students with EBD, Eschete and colleagues (2016) nonetheless demonstrated that both student engagement and content achievement were higher in small-group (i.e., station, alternative, parallel) co-teaching models versus large-group formats (i.e., teaming, one teach/one observe, one teach/one assist.)

Co-instructing is often what is envisioned when new educators think of co-teaching. Co-instructing occurs when there are two teachers providing the lesson, falling under the teaming co-teaching model. Regardless of the model chosen, it is important to consider the partners as equals. For the special education teacher, then, deliberate effort can be undertaken to ensure that neither adults nor children perceived that professional as the “second” teacher, “other” teacher, or “glorified assistant.” In this circumstance, the special education teacher becomes a collaborating teacher with equal responsibility and equal partnership. While difficult to attain, especially when a

CO-TEACHING PROCEDURES		
Roles/Responsibilities	General Education Teacher	Special Education Teacher
Anticipatory Set		
Modeling		
Guided Practice		
Independent Practice		
Closure: (Summary of instruction and/or assessment of learning)		
Transfer: (Opportunities for continued practice and transfer of learning beyond classroom)		
Engagement: (How you plan to involve your students in the lesson) Questions that you want to ask (script them):		

Figure 1. Co-teaching planning and implementation guide.

Table 4. Research-Based Instructional Practices for Implementation in Co-teaching Frameworks.

Instructional practice	Steps for instructional use
Collaborative Strategic Reading	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify students who need more support in reading comprehension 2. Teach strategy: Before reading—brainstorm and predict; during reading—comprehension monitoring and main ideas; and after reading—summarization and questions/answers 3. Assign roles to each member of group 4. Monitor and analyze effectiveness of strategy
Classwide peer tutoring	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create heterogeneous pairs of students 2. Assign one student in each pair to be tutee and other to be tutor 3. Teach pairs how to implement model (tutee gets 2 points for correct answer, 1 for fixing incorrect answer after help from tutor) 4. Provide practice and point collection 5. Monitor student use of peer tutoring

Note. Additional resources: Boardman, Swanson, Klingner, and Vaughn (2012), *Collaborative Strategic Reading*; Delquadri, Greenwood, Whorton, Carta, and Hall (1986), *Classwide peer tutoring*.

special education teacher is traveling into a general education teacher's classroom, this condition of co-teaching is considered necessary for effective practice (Murawski & Dieker, 2004). Evidence of co-instructing is shown through modified class materials, shared data collection, and documentation, such as that displayed in Figure 1. To accomplish this, teachers can increase their use of small-group co-teaching models and make concerted efforts to actively engage students more in discussion to increase participation and student involvement.

More Explicit Use of Research-Based Instructional Practices

Along with an increased emphasis on co-planning and co-instructing, teachers should incorporate instructional practices with research to support their use with students with disabilities including EBD. Focusing specifically on English, language arts, and writing, the general and special education teachers can work toward improvement in reading comprehension strategy use and active engagement via classwide

peer tutoring during implementation of co-teaching. The practice of supplementing co-teaching instructional delivery with research-based intervention practices was chosen as the research-based interventions could effectively be implemented within co-teaching models that utilize smaller student-teacher ratios. As some co-teaching models afford the opportunity for smaller student-teacher ratios, interventions that target academic skills may be more easily, effectively, and consistently implemented in the classroom. Table 4 provides more information on each of the instructional practices chosen as well as additional resources for review.

Reading Comprehension Strategy Intervention

After a brief review of the reading comprehension strategy instruction literature, the teachers decided to teach and implement *Collaborative Strategic Reading* (CSR; Klingner, Vaughn, Dimino, Schumm, & Bryant, 2001) in their parallel and alternative teaching structures. CSR is a reading comprehension intervention that applies theories from

cognitive psychology and sociocultural theory and uses modified reciprocal teaching and cooperative learning (Vaughn et al., 2011). This strategy teaches students how to both describe what it is they are reading in their own words as well as to monitor their comprehension. Proven effective with middle school students at risk for reading difficulties, CSR incorporates key elements that enhance performance for students with academic difficulties, including explicit instruction, procedural strategies, interactive instruction, and clear communication (Vaughn et al., 2011). The intervention is collaborative in that it teaches students to be supportive team members in the comprehension of reading material. Because of the collaborative nature of CSR, it is important that teachers are able to implement this particular practice in small groups consistently. Co-teaching models such as alternative teaching or station teaching provide the opportunity for teachers to implement this practice in small groups on a daily basis. There is plenty of evidence demonstrating its efficacy in raising reading achievement for students with disabilities, but it is made possible through co-teaching arrangements that provide plenty of small group opportunities (Vaughn et al., 2011).

CSR is strategic in that it shows students how to predict, brainstorm, identify main ideas, comprehension monitor, ask and answer questions, and summarize. The intervention was deemed appropriate for use in the cotaught classroom because it emphasized both academic and social skill development. To promote generalization, Ms. Wilson included her student with EBD in her parallel and alternative co-teaching structures and worked to increase positive interactions with peers and adults in that setting by having him serve the roles necessary for group discussion. Using this strategy, reading was broken up into stages, and students were assigned roles in the discussion.

For Ms. Wilson, the first step in this strategy involved teaching the strategies and the cooperative roles individually to the student in the resource room setting. She provided him opportunities to practice successfully and receive praise when correct. When teaching the strategy to all of her students in the parallel and alternative co-teaching model structures, each stage was taught separately so that students had ample practice using each part of the strategy. Before reading, students focused on preview, where they brainstormed what they already knew and made predictions about what they may read. Activating background knowledge may help students with EBD become especially engaged during this phase, if they enjoy sharing their own experiences with the group.

During reading, both teachers focused on “clicks” and “clunks,” or ideas in the text that are easily understood (clicks) or more difficult to comprehend (clunks). For the clunks, students were shown how to use fix-up strategies. That is, they were taught to reread, look for clues, and break apart words. Such strategy instruction becomes an opportunity for general education students of higher cognitive levels to think more

critically for the text as well as assist their peers. After reading, students focused on wrap-up, often led by a discussion surrounding questions about the text and a review of the most important ideas. During and after reading, a large emphasis was placed on getting the gist of the text, where students focused on the most important people, places, and things as well as the important ideas surrounding them.

A unique aspect of CSR is the group roles required for the strategy to work. Students take on the role of leader, clunk expert, get-the-gist expert, question expert, encourager, and time-keeper. Teaching the roles took considerable time to practice and master, but both teachers thought it was time well spent as the level of active engagement was judged by both to be greater following instruction and practice.

Classwide Peer Tutoring

The final component of the two teachers’ co-teaching improvement effort was to implement classwide peer tutoring (CWPT; Delquadri, Greenwood, Whorton, Carta, & Hall, 1986). Classwide peer tutoring is a research-based teaching strategy that involves programmed interactions between peers and holds promise for the education of students at risk who display antisocial behaviors. McDuffie, Mastropieri, and Scruggs (2009) examined the differential effects of a peer tutoring intervention in seventh grade cotaught and non-cotaught classes. Findings demonstrated statistically significant effects for co-teaching on both unit tests and a cumulative posttest, providing evidence for the incorporation of CWPT in cotaught settings (Kauffman & Hallahan, 2011). Given the research evidence supporting CWPT particularly in cotaught classes in terms of student achievement, this research-based practice holds a lot of promise for positive student outcomes, including those with disabilities.

Teachers must first explain and model the necessary procedures to the whole class. They can begin by giving students 2 to 3 min to turn and talk to a partner about what they knew about CWPT, and then have students share their responses with the class. The teacher can then present a description of CWPT as a comprehensive instructional strategy based on peer tutoring and group reinforcement where the entire class is actively engaged in the process of learning and practicing basic academic skills simultaneously in a fun way. Teachers can let the students know that they are divided into pairs to tutor each other on course content during class time. After, the teacher can assign pairs based on heterogeneous grouping of low and average or high students. Students can be allotted 20 to 30 min to practice depending on the length of the reviewed material.

The teachers can then explain specific rules for the CWPT procedures to set clear behavioral expectations for all students, and especially set boundaries for students with EBD. The student who asks the questions is known as the tutor and the student answering is the tutee. Two points are awarded if the tutee answers correctly on the first try, and one point is

earned if the tutee writes the correct answer down after receiving help from the tutor. Zero points are awarded if the answer is not written down. Tutors are provided with the questions and answers after the teacher explains to the class that the only supplies needed are a pencil and paper. Two students can model CWPT initially for the group with both teachers providing feedback on performance strengths and areas for improvement. Groups then practice at the same time with the teachers observing and providing feedback. Once both teachers agree that students are ready to implement the process on their own, they can incorporate CWPT into co-teaching arrangements, building on the intervention described by McDuffie et al. (2009).

Ms. Wilson and Ms. Madison chose to incorporate CWPT into their station teaching efforts, with both teachers establishing their own station teaching arrangements and having collections of student pairs working in the independent (non-teacher-directed) station to complete CWPT. Ms. Wilson kept track of her student's point total and agreed to reward the student with EBD with additional resource room computer time if his total was among the top 25% of the classroom groupings. With this opportunity for reinforcement, the teachers hypothesized that the setting would encourage the student to increase his correct responding as well as foster the correct responding of his tutoring partner. When they first began CWPT, Ms. Wilson and Ms. Madison found that their student with EBD became very frustrated when he did not answer correctly and had to be corrected by the tutor. For the first few days, the student began to exhibit challenging behaviors during and after CWPT when he would answer incorrectly. To intervene and prevent further challenging behaviors, Ms. Wilson began modeling an appropriate response to a tutor during CWPT and coaching him through his own incorrect answers. They also allowed the tutor and the student with EBD to switch roles, so he was able to understand that both partners would get questions wrong. After a few more days of regularly switching roles, the student with EBD began to decrease his challenging behaviors and exhibited appropriate behavior when he answered a question incorrectly.

With the complete program in place, over the next 7 weeks the professional relationship of Ms. Wilson and Ms. Madison continued to grow. The extra planning time allowed them to discuss their individual and collective strengths and struggles. Increased use of parallel, alternative, and station teaching models allowed them to be able to feel more comfortable and successful in co-teaching as well as more easily manage classroom transitions from whole class to small group to one-on-one instructional settings. Both teachers and the principal were pleased with the increased levels of active engagement for the students collectively. Students liked the cooperative roles during CSR and the chance to collect points for correct responses during CWPT. Ms. Wilson's student with EBD reduced the number of disruptive incidences across resource and general education classroom settings and earned significant computer use due to his successful

role as CSR encourager. Both Ms. Wilson and Ms. Madison perceived collective academic achievement in the form of grades to improve as a result of the combination of co-teaching and effective instructional elements. After 9 weeks, they agreed to continue the positive partnership established after those initial few days of frustration.

Conclusion

Co-teaching is an instructional delivery framework that is becoming more commonplace in our schools. Educational stakeholders likely view it as a service delivery model to meet the least restrictive environment requirement, granting students in special education the presumptive right to be placed in the most integrated setting possible. As a result, increasing numbers of students with disabilities are being placed in cotaught classrooms (Yell, 2015). New and experienced teachers need to know how best to navigate these arrangements. Research on student outcomes attributable to co-teaching practice suggests that educators should proceed cautiously in implementing this service delivery model in the education of students with disabilities and particularly students with EBD. Suggestions for moving forward include focusing time and resources on the collective practice of co-planning, co-instructing, and coassessing. Recommendations also urge the incorporation of research- and/or evidence-based instructional/intervention practices such as reading comprehension strategy instruction and CWPT into service delivery. For students with EBD in particular, developing, implementing, and evaluating programming that incorporates research- and/or evidence-based instructional, behavior management, and social skills practices inside and outside of the co-teaching framework will likely provide the best chance for all involved in these students' education to contribute to meaningful student educational progress. In sum, co-teaching in and of itself is simply a service delivery model, and it is the effectiveness of the implementation that will make all of the difference for all of those involved. By incorporating planning on the front end and research-based instructional practices throughout, teaching professionals can likely provide students with the best chance to gain meaningful and substantive benefit from the general classroom environment.

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