

# CO-TEACHING

## A New, Innovative Student Teaching Experience Awaits You at UNK!

Co-teaching is defined as two teachers working together with groups of students and sharing the planning, organization, delivery and assessment of instruction and physical space.

Co-Teaching is an attitude...

- An attitude of sharing the classroom and students
- Co-Teachers must always be thinking “We’re both teachers”

Co-Teaching strategies have been used successfully at all grade levels and in every content area; from pre-school to senior high, teacher candidates and their cooperating teachers have effectively incorporated co-teaching into the classroom.

### Co-Teaching is a way:

to build stronger connections between universities and their school partners

to increase opportunities for placements

to provide both support and professional development for cooperating teachers

to better meet P-12 student needs

for teacher candidates to have more opportunities to teach

for teacher candidates and cooperating teachers to enhance their communication and collaboration skills

for teacher candidates and cooperating teachers to build strong relationships

for university supervisors to become a stronger part of the triad to induct and mentor teacher candidates

### Why Co-Teach?

Increased options for flexible grouping of students

Enhanced collaboration skills for the teacher candidate and cooperating teacher

Professional support for both the cooperating teacher and the teacher candidate

- Another set of eyes to watch and help problem solve
- Flexibility to try things you wouldn't be able to do alone
- Collaboration in classroom and lesson preparation
- Help with classroom management
- Diversity and size of today's classrooms
  - Reduce student/teacher ratio
  - Increase instructional options for all students
  - Diversity of instructional styles
  - Greater student engaged time
  - Greater student participation levels

### Co-Teaching Strategies

There is no hierarchical order for implementing these strategies – pairs are asked to determine where, within the curriculum or daily schedule, strategies would best fit. Strategies can be used individually or in combination. The goal of Co-Teaching is to find ways to keep both teachers actively engaged with students and their learning.

Although pairs may combine strategies to best meet student needs, we begin by defining each strategy – establishing a common language. Once both the cooperating teacher and teacher candidate have an understanding of the benefits of each strategy we encourage them to combine them as they see fit. These are the Co-Teaching strategies that are used in our project:

**One Teach, One Observe** – one teacher has primary instructional responsibility while the other gathers specific observational information on students or the (instructing) teacher. The key to this strategy is to focus on the observation – where and how the teacher is doing the instruction and observing specific behaviors. It is important to remember that either the teacher candidate or the cooperating teacher could take on both roles.

**One Teach, One Assist** is an extension of one teach, one observe. One teacher has primary instructional responsibility while the other assists students with their work, monitors behaviors, or corrects assignments, often lending a voice to students or groups who would hesitate to participate or add comments.



**Station Teaching** occurs when the Co-teaching pair divides the instructional content into parts—each teacher instructs one of the groups, groups then rotate or spend a designated amount of time at each station—often independent stations will be used along with the teacher led stations.

In the **Parallel Teaching** approach, each teacher instructs half the students. The two teachers are addressing the same instructional material and presenting the material using the same teaching strategies. The greatest benefit to this method is the reduction of the student to teacher ratio.

The **Supplemental Teaching** strategy allows one teacher to work with students at their expected grade level, while the other teacher works with those students who need the information and/or materials re-taught, extended, or remediated.

## Alternative or Differentiated Teaching

Strategies provide two different approaches to teaching the same information. The learning outcome is the same for all students; however, the avenue for getting there is different.



**Team Teaching** incorporates well-planned, team-taught lessons, exhibiting an invisible flow of instruction with no prescribed division of authority. Using a team teaching strategy, both teachers are actively involved in the lesson. From a student's perspective, there is no clearly defined leader—as both teachers share the instruction, are free to interject information, and available to assist students and answer questions.

### What Co-Teaching is NOT:

- A way to hide weak candidates
- A less rigorous student teaching experience
- Simply dividing the tasks and responsibilities among two people
- For example, co-teaching is NOT:
  - One person teaching one subject followed by another who teaches a different subject
  - One person teaching one subject while another person prepares instructional materials at the Xerox machine or corrects student papers in the teachers' lounge
  - One person teaching while the other sits and watches
  - When one person's ideas prevail regarding what will be taught and how it will be taught

