REIMAGINING OUR PRACTICE: WHAT’S NEW?

TRADITIONAL STUDENT TEACHING MODEL

The pre-service teacher is placed with a cooperating teacher and university supervisor in the student teaching setting. The pre-service teacher spends the first couple of weeks observing, then gradually takes responsibility for teaching one content lesson or class hour. The pre-service teacher eventually takes full responsibility for the classroom for many weeks, while the cooperating teacher spends time outside of the classroom.

CO-TEACHING MODEL

The pre-service teacher engages with potential mentor teachers and university supervisors at professional development school (PDS) sites to lay the groundwork for collaboration during the co-teaching experience. Careful match-making occurs as final placements are determined. The pre-service teacher is active in the classroom from the first day of the student teaching experience and, since s/he has been involved with the school site since the beginning of the year, engages with kids as a member of a teaching team. The pre-service teacher works collaboratively with the cooperating teacher throughout the entire experience, serving as a partner in lesson planning, assessment, and instruction. Unlike the traditional student teaching model, when the student teacher takes full responsibility in the co-teaching relationship for leading the instruction, planning, and assessment, the cooperating teacher remains engaged as a partner in the classroom, supporting and assessing the needs of the student learners.

For more information contact Stacy Ernst, sernst@umn.edu
BENEFITS OF THE CO-TEACHING MODEL

- The pre-service teacher learns to manage adult resources in the classroom.
- The pre-service teacher learns how to work collaboratively with paraprofessionals, parent volunteers, team teachers, and school professionals.
- The pre-service teacher engages directly with kids from the beginning of the experience.
- The cooperating teacher remains engaged in the classroom, helping kids and improving learning.
- Both adults in the classroom are focused on the children throughout the experience.
- Research findings indicate the co-teaching model improves student learning. Research conducted by Nancy Bacharach and others at St. Cloud State University (coordinating the co-teaching model for the last four years through the Teacher Quality Enhancement Partnership Grant program) found:
  - Differences in proficiency demonstrate when comparing MCA measures for 1st through 6th grade students in co-taught classrooms to [students in classrooms with] one licensed teacher, there is a statistically significant difference in both reading achievement and math achievement favoring students in co-taught classrooms.
  - On the Woodcock-Johnson III Research Edition, researchers found "that in reading we have statistically significant differences in all years favoring students in co-taught classroom. In math, differences two out of the four years were statistically significant, with the other two very close [to significance], also favoring students in co-taught classrooms" (Bacharach as cited by Zastrow, 2009)
  - Difference in absolute terms, Bacharach reported percentages as "65% versus 53% or 74% versus 52% ... so, while education always looks at statistical measures, in terms of real kids there is a huge impact on our population from these co-taught classrooms (Zastrow, 2009).

RESOURCES

- The UMN’s CEHD will be offering professional development on co-teaching this academic year to schools that are professional development school sites in the TERI project. Contact Stacy Ernst (sernst@umn.edu) for details.
- This overview was adapted from a longer article about a local co-teaching initiative. See the full article at: http://www.learningfirst.org/visionaries/NancyBacharach
- This website provides an online overview of the co-teaching model used in some United Kingdom’s elementary schools to provide more effective science learning environment. The website is available at: http://www.azteachscience.co.uk/ext/cpd/coteaching/index.html