DEPARTMENT OF PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

Student Teaching: Traditional vs. Co-Teaching


Traditional Student Teaching

Aim: The aim is on the academic preparation requirements of the student teacher.

Planning: Student teachers plan lessons, presenting them for approval to the cooperating teacher and/or mentor-coach, with little chance for feedback or improvement given the time constraints of schools.

Classroom Culture: Students can be stuck between two competing classroom cultures.

Solo. Often, cooperating teachers leave the classroom for extended periods of time, or develop a rhythm of ‘handing off the class.’ Only one teacher is expected to be leading instruction for any given lesson.

Shoreline. Student teachers spend the first stage of student teaching as silent, or uninvolved, members of the classroom.

Anyone can teach. Student teachers are expected to enter the student teaching experience proficient in the rocket science of dispositions, pedagogy and collaboration skills necessary to equitably serve today’s learners.

Co-Teaching

Aim: The aim is multiplying instruction to benefit all students in a co-taught classroom.

Planning: Cooperating teachers and student teachers share planning and purposefully choose a co-teaching strategy that best serves the needs of the students in learning that chunk of content.

Classroom Culture: Students have consistent classroom management and cultural norms.

This is rocket science. Everyone is provided training and ongoing support to build shared language, understand roles, adopt co-teaching strategies, and embed communication and reflective practices that allow the co-teaching experience to be successful for everyone involved, especially the students.

Gradual Release: Cooperating teachers understand and are supported in their role as mentor. They continually model and support student teachers in a gradual release of responsibility model until the student teacher is ready to be the “I” in I do-we do-you do and begin leading the co-teaching experience.

During initial training, co-teachers are given tools to make the shift to team-thinking. Student teachers are given strategies to help them find their voice. Cooperating teachers are given mentoring and coaching strategies to facilitate the learning of the student teacher.

Cooperative teachers understand and are supported in their role as mentor. They continually model and support student teachers in a gradual release of responsibility model until the student teacher is ready to be the “I” in I do-we do-you do and begin leading the co-teaching experience.

Divide to Multiply: Each teacher uses the shared lesson plan to instruct ½ of the students. Teachers facilitate the same standards and instructional strategies, but to only ½ the class. This is a great strategy in the initial stages of co-teaching, because the student teacher can feel supported by the shared plans, resources, and strategies of his CoTeaching.

Divide to Differentiate.: Each teacher uses the shared lesson plan to instruct ½ of the students. The two teachers facilitate the same standards but differentiate the process, or instructional strategies and resources, for their ½ of the class.

Team. For each part of an instructional day, for the duration of student teaching, co-teachers work simultaneously to meet the needs of students.

Dive In. Cooperating teachers introduce the student teacher as a co-teacher. Co-teaching begins Day 1.

Team Teaching: Well-planned, team-taught lessons exhibit an invisible flow of instruction with no prescribed division of authority. Using team-teaching strategy, both teachers are actively involved in the lesson at all stages. From a student perspective, there is no clearly defined leader, as both teachers share the instruction, freely interject information, assist students, and answer questions.


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