

The [Co-Teaching Practice Profile](#) has been developed to provide educators a clear picture of what co-teaching looks like in practice, when prioritizing the critical need for equity and inclusion. The profile is divided into four competencies:

1. Designing Physical Space and Functional Structures
2. Planning Learning Experiences for All Learners
3. Delivering Targeted, Individualized Instruction
4. Assessing Student Learning and Providing Feedback

This presentation will focus on the first competency: Designing Physical Space and Functional Structures. Please have the slideshow script and materials ready before you continue.



Learning Objectives

- 1. Understand the purpose of a practice profile**
- 2. Understand and apply Competency 1.a. to your own environment (think about your space, routines, learning tools, and your group of learners)**
- 3. Understand the importance of the shared roles of co-teachers and apply the learning to your team. (Competency 1.b.)**

Functional Structures are defined in the glossary of the Practice Profile as :How a school organizes their resources, time, space, and personnel for maximum effect on student learning.

By the end of this module, you will:

1. Understand the purpose of a practice profile
2. Understand and apply Competency 1a to your own environment (think about your space, routines, learning tools, and your group of learners)
3. Understand the importance of the shared roles of co-teachers and apply the learning to your team. (Competency 1.b.)



Prior to viewing this module did you...



Review the Co-Teaching Practice Profile



Watch Co-Teaching Foundations



Create a district or school leadership team to assist in the identification and elimination of barriers in order to support an inclusive community.

This presentation is second in a series that builds background knowledge for the practice of co-teaching, positions the practice within inclusive school communities, defines elements of a co-taught environment, and explains why these elements are critical to a successful and replicable co-teaching experience.

To maximize this professional learning activity, please be sure to:

- Review the Co-Teaching Practice profile before you begin, especially the first competency which is the focus of this presentation;
- Watch the first presentation in the series, Co-Teaching Foundations: Building an Inclusive Environment. This will assist in understanding that co-teaching practices are part of an overall inclusive learning environment;
- Work with leadership in your school and district to support school leadership teams that can position co-teaching as one of a number of practices to support a diversity of learners.



Practice Profile

Anatomy of a Practice Profile – How it Works

Core Competency	Contributions to Systems Transformation		
The specific role of the practitioner	In this section, you will see a description of <i>why</i> each competency is important to achieving the outcome and how it contributes to a greater likelihood that practitioners can operationalize and engage in the essential functions. <i>This describes the "why"</i>		
The components provide a clear description of the features that must be present to say that inclusive learning practices are in place. The components break down the competency and provide a more detailed definition.	Expected Use in Practice	Developmental Use in Practice	Unacceptable Use in Practice
	This column includes observable behaviors that exemplify educators who are able to generalize required skills and abilities to a wide range of settings and contexts; use these skills consistently and independently; and sustain these skills over time while continuing to grow and improve in their position. <i>This describes the "how"</i>	This column includes observable behaviors that exemplify educators who are able to implement required skills and abilities, but in a more limited range of contexts and settings; use these skills inconsistently or need consultation to complete or successfully apply skills; and would benefit from setting goals that target particular skills for improvement in order to move educators into the "expected/ proficient" category. <i>This describes the "developing how"</i>	This column includes observable behaviors that exemplify educators who are not yet able to implement required skills or abilities in any context and often can cause harm to the clients served. Often times, if an educator's work is falling into the unacceptable category, there may be challenges related to the overall implementation infrastructure. For example, there may be issues related to how regions, schools or districts are selecting or training staff, managing the new program model, or using data to inform continuous improvement. <i>This describes the "how not"</i>
<i>This describes the "what"</i>			

Practice Profiles identify the core components of a program, innovation, practice, or intervention, and describe the key activities that are associated with each core component. Practice profiles enable a program to be teachable, learnable, and doable in typical human service settings. ([NIRN practice profiles](#))

Practice Profiles begin with the why of each competency; “The Contribution to Systems Transformation” - in this case why is this component important to achieving a high functioning co-taught environment?

Practice Profiles employ 3 rubric headings: Expected, Developmental, and Unacceptable. (descriptions are from [Practice Profile Planning](#))

Expected/ Proficient - includes activities that exemplify practitioners who are able to generalize required skills and abilities to wide range of settings and contexts; use these skills consistently and independently; and sustain these skills over time while continuing to grow and improve in their position.

Developmental - includes activities that exemplify practitioners who are able to implement required skills and abilities, but in a more limited range of contexts and settings; use these skills inconsistently or need supervisor/coach consultation to complete or successfully apply skills.

Unacceptable variation - includes activities that exemplify practitioners who are not yet able to implement required skills or abilities in any context. Often times, if practitioners' work is falling into the unacceptable category, there may be challenges related to the overall implementation infrastructure. For example, there may be issues related to how the district is selecting or training staff, managing the new program model, or using data to inform continuous improvement.

Contributions to Co-Teaching Practice

When co-teaching partners intentionally and collaboratively design physical spaces and functional structures for all learners, they allow for equitable and inclusive learning environments which promote learning and achievement.



[Using UDL to Create Flexible Spaces](#)

Each competency in the practice profile includes a reason, a purpose, or the WHY? of the competency. Referring back to Simon Sinek's work regarding the Golden Circle, it is imperative to understand the "why" of our actions in order to complete the "how" and what". So, what is your "why" around co-designing for learners? It may help to think of this first competency as setting the stage for a successful co-teaching experience. When teachers try to begin thinking about collaboration in teaching and learning, without first considering the environment, the routines, or how to organize learners to foster self-direction, it can lead to unnecessary frustration with the experience.

This is a good moment to hear how one teacher has planned physical spaces to support students to learn best when there are many options in their physical space.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KVvb53t9WWo> Flexible space and Universal Design for Learning (UDL) video Elementary teacher



Co-Designing for Learners

There is evidence that the environment was intentionally designed to provide accessibility and flexibility for academic, physical, social, and emotional learning.



Intentional design of space will provide accessibility and flexibility for all academic, physical, social and emotional learning. A well thought out design of the environment impacts accessibility and flexibility which in turn supports learner variability and specially designed instruction. Intentionally designing the environment can make specially designed instruction easier to plan because the supports are already embedded in the environment. Such intention allows for a natural weave of flexible learning spaces and Universal Design for Learning (UDL).

How does your space support learner variability and specially designed instruction needs?



Do you need a teacher desk?



How do we want students to work?

[Ruckus Research](#)

The [CAST website](#) suggests a well designed environment with flexible learning space will naturally accomplish the following in **supporting** Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles:

- Support intrinsic motivation and engagement.
- Address self-regulation explicitly
- Plan for individual differences, which are more likely than uniformity.
- Provide sufficient alternatives to support learners with very different aptitudes and prior experience to effectively manage their own engagement and affect. (CAST)

How does your current space support learner variability and specially designed instruction needs? Consider the following: Do both teachers have equal access to move around the classroom and have adult furniture available to ensure students see them both as 'teachers'? How do you want students to work? Do you need a teacher desk?

How does your current space support learner variability and specially designed instruction needs?

Give One, Get One Activity

Give One, Get One activity Directions:

1. Take a minute to develop your personal response to the question based on your current work.
2. Read and answer the question under future considerations.
3. Invite peers or colleagues to find a partner or partners.
4. Share your future considerations with your partner.
5. Record new ideas shared with your partner in the Get One column. If time allows, repeat this process with a second partner

Use your Give One, Get One activity worksheet to address the question: How does your current space support learner variability and specially designed instruction needs?



Natural Proportions

The classroom makeup is intentionally developed for representative distribution that avoids clustering and is reflective of the school's learners across all sub-categories.



Building on the ideas shared in *Your Students My Students Our Students* (Jung, Frey, Fisher, and Kroener): When natural proportions are followed, different abilities are normalized and naturalized, not concentrated. In a co-taught classroom we should avoid clustering, which occurs when students with IEPs make up 33% of a co-taught class. Clustering magnifies the perception of disability, a phenomenon that occurs when you observe people with similar characteristics in close proximity to one another. When there aren't sufficient peer supports and peer models in a clustered classroom, expectations can become skewed as inequitable learning conditions have been created. As a result, co-teachers tend to rely more on whole-group instruction and which supplants time that otherwise could have been dedicated to more precise supports in small groups and co-instruction. Inequity is created when a significant portion of the learners are identified by a common need and then are clustered for instruction.

Flexible Learner Groupings - Your Superpower

Flexible learner groupings occur over 70% of the instructional week within the classroom, with both teachers controlling and utilizing the space. When small groups are used, groups stay within the classroom and are not removed to a segregated setting in the building.



This descriptor describes how flexible grouping (with a preference for groups being of mixed ability) works in a co-taught environment. When thinking about the physical space, co-teachers must consider the variability of the learner needs by maintaining a 70/30 split. We know from research that co-teaching increases individual student achievement when a preference is given to using small group instruction during the co-taught lessons. These small groups are intentionally co-planned, with varied learner participation, where all adults are active and instructing at the same time. When this is achieved, student groups stay in the natural learning environment.

For more information about the 70/30 split refer to the first presentation, [“Co-Teaching Foundations: Building an Inclusive Environment”](#).



Mixed Ability Grouping



[John Hattie on ability grouping](#)

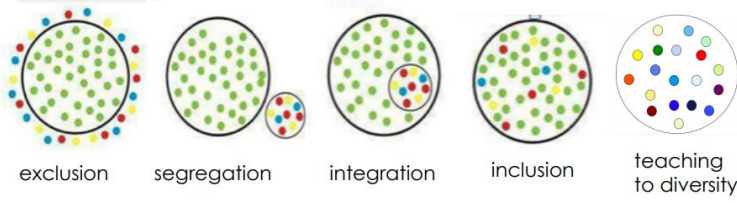
John Hattie's research on mixed ability grouping tells us that there is an increase in student engagement when students of differing abilities share knowledge and skills. In addition, it improves the interpersonal relationships between students of differing abilities and across racial and ethnic backgrounds. Please click on the link to view John Hattie's video on ability grouping.

Hattie, 2009



Dr. Jeannie Oakes on ability grouping

The evolution of inclusion



[Dr. Jeannie Oakes on ability grouping](#)

(Moore, S., 2016)

Returning to the work of Shelley Moore, when she asks her audience to think about how we organize our learners, she suggests an option beyond current practice and understanding. She asks us to consider that all learners are unique. She challenges us to teach to diversity, acknowledging that each learner has a unique set of strengths, needs, preferred learning style, and pace. Thus, the creation of the last circle has joined what she now calls, the evolution of inclusion process. When all learners have purpose to the places they go; with purposeful roles, responsibilities and peer connections, meaningful inclusion is realized.

For example, when you remove a group of students to a quieter space down the hallway so you can read to them, that is a support process that undermines the goal of teaching learners how to develop the executive function skills they need to thrive in the kind of dynamic environment they will encounter when competing in the workplace (Kunkel, 2012).

Remember that **co-teaching should fundamentally change how you instruct**. This requires a different level of sharing instruction that makes **grouping and re-grouping students a possibility, so all learners continue to have the same opportunities**. *As co-teachers choose the co-teaching models that support the instructional learning targets, they must also remember that mixed ability grouping increases student engagement. Relying on ability groups within our co-teaching models only serves to perpetuate the notion of 'tracking' students. For more*

information on the models of co-teaching, refer to the first presentation ,
[“Co-Teaching Foundations: Building an Inclusive Environment”](#).

It is important to remember that when there is little communication on what the other adult is doing, the educators might begin by working in the same space, but they fail to connect their teaching practices. So the classroom might look inclusive, **but the teaching practices remain exclusive**. This is not an example of parity.

Let’s take a few minutes and watch Dr. Jeannie Oakes explain the limited possibilities of ability grouping for all learners.

How does your current co-teaching team decide on when and how to use mixed ability groupings?

Give One, Get One Activity

Give One, Get One activity Directions:

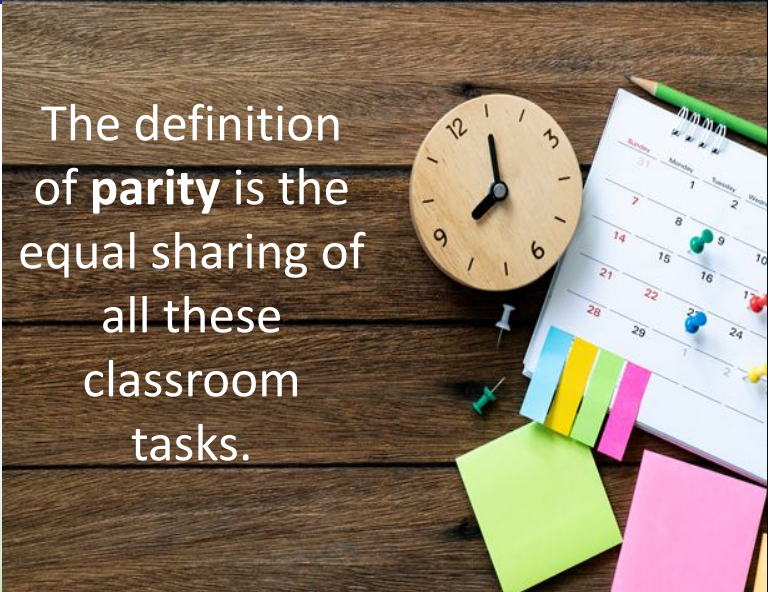
1. Take a minute to develop your personal response to the question based on your current work.
2. Read and answer the question under future considerations.
3. Invite peers or colleagues to find a partner or partners.
4. Share your future considerations with your partner.
5. Record new ideas shared with your partner in the Get One column. If time allows, repeat this process with a second partner

Use your [Give One, Get One activity](#) worksheet to address the question: How does your current co-teaching team decide on when and how to use mixed ability groupings?

1b. Relationships, Roles and Responsibilities

Co Teaching partners share the collective responsibility for instruction, structures, routines, norms and procedures through a defined and regular planning time.

The definition of **parity** is the equal sharing of all these classroom tasks.

A photograph of a wooden desk with a round wooden clock, a calendar, and several colorful sticky notes (yellow, green, pink) pinned to it. The clock shows approximately 10:10. The calendar is a monthly grid with some dates marked with colored pins. The desk surface is made of dark wood planks.

The concept of parity underpins this competency. In general, parity has been explained as both Co Teaching partners sharing the collective responsibility for instruction, structures, routines, norms and procedures through a defined and regular planning time. Parity occurs when co-teachers perceive that their unique contributions and their presence on the team are valued. Parity can be demonstrated by alternatively engaging in the dual roles of teacher and learner, expert and novice, giver and recipient of knowledge or skills between Co Teaching partners. The outcome is that each member of the Co Teaching team gives and takes direction for the co-teaching lesson so that the students can achieve the desired benefits (Cushman)

Co-teachers need, through a regular planning time, to negotiate how the roles and responsibilities in the classroom will be split between them. Possible questions around parity might include: How will teachers communicate with parents? What happens if one teacher prefers to call parents on the phone while the other teacher is more comfortable emailing or texting? How do both teachers handle disruptions in the class? What rises to the level of 'disruption' for each of you? Negotiating how you will approach collective responsibility helps establish trust and parity. There are many great resources and checklists for creating parity in the co-teaching relationship. It would be beneficial for your team to explore some and take the time to negotiate your roles. The goal of parity is to ensure that both teachers are considered to be teachers of equal

stature in the classroom.

Building parity in the relationship is essential because in its absence the specialist in the room turns to a 'supportive' role. A supported classroom is fundamentally different from a co-taught classroom. Support takes no additional planning, no specialized skills, and is frequently performed by an unlicensed staff member in response to specific student needs.

Parity for co-teachers is a deeper commitment and requires that two licensed teachers share the instructional responsibility and accountability for the entire group of students in the classroom.



1b. Relationships, Roles and Responsibilities

Co-teachers model positive and collaborative relationships to create a strong partner team.

[Co Teaching is a Marriage](#)



When entering into a co-teaching team you are entering into what people term a partnership, a marriage, or even a business partnership. Regardless of how you describe your relationship, you must have a common understanding of co-teaching and share a vision for collaborating around student achievement. Your first step in creating parity in your relationship is to begin to have conversations about each of your teaching styles, aspirations, attitudes, and expectations for one another. In the following video, *Co-Teaching is a Marriage*, you will listen to the experience of two teachers as they share their working relationship and co-teaching experiences. Please click on the link to view the video.



The Concept: Parity

Co-teaching partners enjoy parity of roles and responsibilities--they are treated as equals both mutually and by learners although they may not necessarily perform identical tasks.



It is important to note that while the teaching partners are equal in that they both hold teaching licensure, 'equal' doesn't mean the 'same.' Co-teachers bring different expertise, content knowledge, and knowledge of student-specific needs. The teaching partners bring their specialties together to benefit the class as a whole, and establish a service delivery model where teaching partners actively instruct and manage the classroom experience. Note that this **MUST** be planned in advance. Co-teaching is a pro-active, not a re-active, model.



Equal is Not the Same

General Educator

Provides the content for co-designing instruction

Co-designs formative and summative assessments that are delivered within the co-taught classroom and which inform the direction of instruction

Specialist

Provides strategies for the whole learner during the co-design of instruction

Co-designs to coordinate support to address student specific needs and progress monitors for goal attainment

Specialists bring ideas for strategies that support the whole learner. These can be instructional, behavioral, physical, etc and traditionally may have only been used for individual students with learning needs, or used in a small group or intervention time.

These strategies are brought to the general education classroom by the specialist to be used for the entire classroom of learners. Many co-teaching partners share that the general education teacher often benefits from learning these strategies and incorporates them into their own practice when the specialist isn't in the classroom.

The specialist also serves as the primary coordinator for students with IEPs or EL plans. It is the specialist's role to ensure that the individual student's behavioral, instructional, and medical needs are being met. Within this role, they are also responsible for leading the progress monitoring of IEP or EL goals, and subsequently documenting the specially designed instruction that occurred within the co-taught lesson. Additionally they document the progress the individual students are making as a result of the specially designed instruction. Without this documentation IEP and EL goal attainment runs the risk of being lost within the general education classroom.

The general education teachers are the content experts and act as a partner to

the specialist in co-designing classroom instruction that meets the needs of the range of learners in the class. The general educator provides the content expertise during the co-planning sessions and, when a specialist is learning specific content, also functions as an instructional mentor to the specialist.

Both the general education teacher and the specialist co-design the formative and summative assessments that are aligned with their co-taught lessons. In the co-taught classroom, students with learning needs are not removed from the classroom to be 'probed' to measure their progress. Instead, this is done as a matter of practice in the co-taught classroom and informs the direction of the instruction. While the general education teacher is responsible for the achievement of all students in the classroom, the specialist retains the responsibility for specially designed instruction and the learner's response to it.

The most significant hallmark of a true co-taught classroom is the shared contribution to instruction. In classrooms where the general education teacher does the majority of the instruction and the specialist 'helps' the power of the co-taught service delivery model is not realized and should be considered a 'supported' classroom rather than a 'co-taught' classroom.



The Concept: Parity

Co-teaching partners adjust and adapt their roles and responsibilities quickly and efficiently through non-verbal communication and mini-conferences as learner needs are assessed during the lesson.



Once the relationship has begun to be effectively established co-teachers find that they understand one another so well that they begin to use non-verbal cues and mini-conferencing with one another during instruction as they respond to learner needs. Part of the strength of the co-taught classroom is this ability to spontaneously change the instructional plan as the co-teachers conduct formative assessment of the learners. The commitment for a successful co-teaching relationship begins and continues to be supported in the co-planning sessions as they negotiate roles and responsibilities and learn to collaborate effectively with one another.



Language is Key

When communicating with each other or with stakeholders, language is inclusive, being asset based and person-first and reflective of 'our' students.



Parity is affected by the language that co-teachers use in the classroom. Using language that reflects 'your' or 'my' students doesn't set up teacher equality in the classroom. Continually use inclusive language that reflects 'our' students and avoid language that sets the teacher, or a group of students, apart. An example of this is asking the specialist to take 'your' group to the kidney bean table. Use language in the classroom that clearly establishes parity to students and others--you are the role models! Encourage groups to work together in mixed-ability groups so that expectations conveyed are spoken using the same language for all students. When working with mixed-ability groups, teachers naturally do not differentiate their language to single out the students with special learning needs.



The Concept: Parity

Both teachers take equal responsibility for all learners in the classroom regarding classroom safety.



Parity in the co-taught classroom is not achieved if one teacher is consistently handling classroom disruptions. Both teachers discuss what proactive classroom management strategies look like to create parity. These often need to be re-taught to students, particularly if they are not used to being transitioned to small groups or working in independent stations. Co-teachers work together to define the expectations for group work, partner discussion, whole group participation rules, and independent work. Students can assist in setting expectations as well. When learners have ownership, there is better student buy-in and a greater responsibility for one's own learning.



Co-Teaching Time is Sacred!

One teacher should NEVER be:

- Pulled out of the instruction for an emergency meeting
- Pulled out of the instruction to handle a behavior issue in another part of the building
- Scheduled into an IEP, testing situation or committee meeting during co-teaching or co-planning times



To ensure parity, the co-teaching team should meet with the building's administration to construct a contingency plan ensuring the specialist stays in the classroom during co-planned instruction. If not, the planned instruction with co-teachers will be disrupted. Other staff in the building must be called upon to understand and support co-teachers, and part of that is understanding that co-teaching is an instructional model that includes the dedicated and equal participation of both teachers.

As teachers build parity in their relationship they are building trust with one another. If the two teachers have constructed a co-taught lesson that requires the presence of both teachers and the specialist is pulled out or never shows up, the trust that has begun to be built is compromised. It's not necessarily even the trust between the teachers--general education teachers will often commiserate with the magnitude of the specialist's job. In this case, what is deteriorating is the trust that the model of co-teaching is supported as a viable instructional model within the culture of the school. Inevitably, co-planning also deteriorates if the general education teacher cannot trust that the co-instruction will occur and continually needs to prepare a Plan B.

Create Your Co-Teaching Culture



When administrators and co-teaching teams work together building a school wide culture that supports co-teaching teams, teachers are empowered to implement the best practices that flourish in this setting. Ultimately every learner benefits!