Scheduling for Co-Teaching and Other Inclusive Practices:

[Type the document subtitle]

Marilyn Friend, Professor Emerita
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro
marilynfriend@marilynfriend.com

Laura Hamby, Director of Educational Services
Department of Exceptional Children
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools
l.hamby@cms.k12.nc.us

Debra McAdams, Executive Director
Department of Exceptional Education
Metro Nashville Public Schools
Debbie.McAdams@mnps.org
Overview and Objectives

Co-teaching is a service delivery option in which a general education teacher and a special education teacher share instructional responsibility and accountability for a diverse group of students, some of whom have disabilities, with the goal of improving outcomes and reducing the achievement gap for those students. Co-teaching is premised on each educator bringing clearly identified and different types of expertise to the classroom blending their skills to create a classroom that is instructionally appropriate for each student; specially designed instruction is integrated into the general education curriculum. Co-teaching is widely implemented nationwide and selectively around the world.

However, even when professionals are committed to co-teaching and prepared to implement it, barriers often arise related to the logistics of implementing it as a sustainable service delivery option. The most frequently mentioned concern pertains to scheduling. This includes scheduling students into co-taught sections, populating co-taught sections with other students, assigning special educators and general educators to co-taught classes, and arranging for common planning time. Topics such as these are the focus of this presentation.

Objectives

At the conclusion of this session, participants will

1. Describe the steps and related procedures for appropriately grouping students with disabilities (and other students) in general education classrooms.

2. Identify and apply a realistic system for providing common planning time for general and special education co-teaching partners.

3. Outline a decision-making process for determining the number, distribution, and frequency of co-taught classes in elementary, middle, and high schools.
Scheduling Universals

Before discussing specifics of how to think about, plan, implement, and revise schedules for co-teaching, several universal principles need to be kept in mind. If these foundational concepts are not understood and appropriately reflected in district and school policies and practices, other scheduling efforts are unlikely to be successful.

- **Co-teaching is not a service panacea**

  Co-teaching generally should not be the only type of special education service offered in a school. Some students with disabilities should receive supplemental instruction in a separate setting, and a few need extensive services in separate classes.

- **Not all students with disabilities in general education classes need co-teaching**

  Some students with disabilities can succeed in general education without co-teaching. They should be assigned to classes accordingly.

- **Schedule students with disabilities first**

  Unless working with a scheduler who can manipulate the scheduling software to create reasonable class populations, it may be simpler, especially when this type of scheduling is a new undertaking, to first arrange clusters of students with disabilities in specific class sections and then to populate the rest of the class with a representative sample of other students in the school.

- **Schedule based on individual needs, not in absolutes**

  Each student’s assessed needs and IEP goals should be the basis for determining student schedule. That is, some students should have co-teaching on their IEPs for the whole class period or subject while others may need only partial support. Not all secondary students should have co-teaching in all core academic areas, nor should elementary students have all-day or even half-day co-teaching. Determine needs and services, and then determine the amount of co-teaching.
• **Cluster students, but avoid tracking them**

Grouping students with disabilities in co-taught classes is usually required to make service delivery feasible. However, if so many students with disabilities are grouped into a single class that curriculum momentum cannot be maintained, the number is too high. Recommended proportions range from 20-40 percent of a class being students with disabilities. Of course, that is based on the assumption that the remainder of the students have a range of abilities and needs. Ultimately, no classroom should be a dumping ground of struggling students.

• **Pay special attention at transition grade levels**

One common issue for scheduling co-teaching occurs at transition grade levels. For example, IEPs 5th grade students heading for middle school reflect elementary staff members’ concerns about increasing expectations. The result is an increase—often to an unreasonable level—of services provided. The same happens in the transition from middle school to high school.

• **District expectations**

Some principals are successful in scheduling for co-teaching because of their personal commitment to this service delivery option and their confidence in its potential to improve student outcomes. However, without district support and accountability, services are likely to vary widely across schools, making it difficult to sustain this inclusive practice.

• **Collaborate, collaborate, collaborate**

Scheduling seldom is successful when completed in isolation. The more collaboration is prioritized, the more creative solutions will be found.
Mapping Procedures

What is mapping? Mapping is designing a schedule to ensure that all student needs and services are met as outlined on their individual education programs.

Prior to Mapping:
1. Gather student information using the IEP onto one spreadsheet (attached).
   a. This information should include service hours, present levels of educational performance, disability, student goals, and any other pertinent information needed to assist with scheduling.
2. Use the information gathered on to the spreadsheet to create post it notes for each child.
   a. There should be a post-it note for each class that should include the service, amount of time and location. (Example- Reading-Resource-30min/day, SPED setting)
   b. **Helpful Hint:** One option for making post-it notes is to do a mail merger using your spreadsheet and print mailing labels with the information included. These labels can be attached to the post-it notes
3. Color code post it notes based on grade level- Purple (5th grade), Yellow (6th grade), etc.
4. Have draft of master schedule available
5. Invite special education teachers who know students to assist, at least two persons from the Department of Exceptional Education, and school personnel who are responsible for scheduling (Administrators, Guidance Counselors)
Steps in Mapping:
1. Categorize post-it notes based on student’s needs
2. Recreate master schedule on board for each grade level being mapped.
   a. It is also important to include common planning for the special educator that provides the most support for that grade level.
3. Map students with the most hours of special education services first, ensuring that they are assigned to all of their classes in the appropriate setting.
4. Complete the mapping process one grade level at a time.
5. Students should be scheduled throughout the day (e.g., if a student has toileting needs this needs to be incorporated into the map. If a student has significant behavioral needs and the child needs someone to “check in” with his/her 3 times a day- this needs to be reflected on the map.
6. After all of the students have been mapped, determine which special education teachers and para professionals will provide supports to students and the location the service will be provided.
7. Record map on Excel Spreadsheet

Things to Remember:
1. Refer to the Middle School Scheduling “Non-Negotiables” to ensure that you are meeting all of the requirements outlined.
2. The present levels of educational performance and service hours should guide the schedule for each student. In cases where those mapping feel that the service hours are not appropriate for that student based on their current levels of educational performance, please make a note that an addendum needs to be held in order to change the service hours to reflect what is appropriate for that student.
3. When scheduling students with disabilities, think in terms of minutes of services needed, not classes offered.
4. Keep in mind that the map is a working document, and that changes will need to be made throughout the year to accommodate new students and changes in current student’s progress.
## Exceptional Education Scheduling Template

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Grade/Disability</th>
<th>Present Level of Educational Performance (PLEP) Math</th>
<th>PLEP Reading</th>
<th>PLIEP Writing</th>
<th>Behavior Needs</th>
<th>IEP Service Hrs.</th>
<th>Class/Schedule Needs</th>
<th>Notes/Recommendations/Assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ulysses S. Grant</td>
<td>8th grade SLD</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.0GE WCJ III</td>
<td>6.5GE WCJ III</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>30 mins. ELA/day – Inclusive Setting</td>
<td>Co-Taught – ELA – Inclusive Regular Education Setting</td>
<td>No additional notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Has responded well to specialized instruction in math class</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1hr Math/day – Special Education Setting</td>
<td>Math – Special Education Setting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
DEPARTMENT OF EXCEPTIONAL EDUCATION
MIDDLE SCHOOL MASTER SCHEDULING-“NON-NEGOTIABLES”

Reminder: 80% of all students receiving special education do not have an intellectual disability. Therefore, the majority of their instruction should occur in the general education classroom.

1. Every special education teacher should be assigned and be an active part of a grade/content area team for common planning. However, this does not mean that the teacher cannot support students in other grades if needed and necessary. Co-Teaching planning can be a periodic part of overall team planning activities.

2. Some students with disabilities will fully participate in general education classes without the presence of a special educator or paraprofessional. It should not be assumed that if a student with an IEP receives instruction in a general education class that the student must be accompanied by a special education teacher or para-professional.

3. In co-taught classes, it is fully expected that both teachers will participate in the delivery of instruction, often by using multiple strategies for grouping students and focusing during class on both the content and the process of learning. Co-taught classes are based on assessed needs of students and not school and teacher preference. Every special education teacher should be considered eligible to teach in a co-taught class.

4. When two teachers are sharing a class it is called a “co-taught” class. The terms “inclusion class” or “inclusion teachers” are not appropriate.

5. No more than 40% of any one general education class should be populated with students who have IEPs. When students have more intensive need, the percentage of students who have IEPs should be lower in a given class. There should be an even distribution of instructional needs in the class. Do not develop a “below basic” or “at risk” class.

6. If a student with an IEP requires additional support and/or supplementary aids, additional personnel should be considered only after all other supports have been explored.

7. It is the responsibility of the general education teacher to address issues related to behavior and classroom management when a student with a disability is in the general
education classroom. Services for students with IEP's accessing general education should remain consistent. Teachers should work proactively and collaboratively to address the needs of the student.

8. 10. Each school should maintain a continuum of services. Every student with an IEP will not automatically receive instruction in the general education setting.

9. 11. Math, Reading/Language Arts should be priorities when scheduling students in co-taught general education classes. Science and Social Studies are secondary. Students with IEP's do not have science and social studies deficits, and their likely reading deficits should be addressed through high quality instruction.
# Student Information Sheet

## Transition to High School

### Middle School: _________________________________ High School: ____________________________

## Directions:
- Middle school team completes one form per student for the receiving high school.
- Record student information.
- Collaborate with high school to determine proposed service delivery and scheduling recommendations.

## Data to be Considered

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information</th>
<th>Educational Testing</th>
<th>State Testing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading:</td>
<td>ELA Reading</td>
<td>7th grade Reading EOG:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing:</td>
<td>ELA Writing</td>
<td>7th grade Math EOG:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math:</td>
<td>Math</td>
<td>8th grade Reading Formative/Summative:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Consult</td>
<td>8th grade Math Formative/Summative:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Additional Information

### Academic:

### Behavior:

### Interests:
1. Collaborate with administration to identify anticipated service delivery options for students with disabilities.
2. Record the number of sessions and session length for each special education service.
3. If a service delivery option is not available for a course offering, write “Not Offered” in the corresponding box.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>9th Grade Course Offerings</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Math</th>
<th>Science</th>
<th>History</th>
<th>Learning Lab</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Found./Eng. 9</td>
<td>Eng. 9</td>
<td>Found./ Alg. 1</td>
<td>Alg. 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultation</td>
<td>EC and general education teacher communicate progress related to IEP goals, academic needs, classroom performance, and behavioral expectations. EC teacher documents direct service time.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-Teaching</td>
<td>Students with disabilities spend instructional block in a general education co-taught class.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Split Schedule</td>
<td>Students with disabilities spend portion of instructional block in general education co-taught class and are pulled for EC services for a portion of that block.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students with disabilities spend time in a general education class and are pulled out for EC services for a portion of the block.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The general education teacher provides instruction by coming into the EC class for a portion of the block. Students with disabilities stay in special education class with the EC teacher.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| EC Class                   | Learning Lab  
  • study strategies  
  • content based remediation | | | | |
|                            | EC content class taught by an EC teacher that is HQ in that content area and EC. | | | | |
|                            | EC and general education teachers co-teach in an EC class | | | | |
|                            | NC Virtual School | | | | |
| Self-Contained Class       | Please list any self-contained programs offered: | | | | |
Graduation Project Funding

- Supported and funded by district leadership

- Formed school and district level teams
  - Included a part-time retired principal

- Included summer work sessions and supported professional development.
Exceptional Children (EC) Graduation Project 2014 Funding Request

Overall 2014-2015 School Year EC Graduation Project Funding Request

The EC Graduation cohort rate increased a total of 8.7% from the 12-13 to the 13-14 school year. This increase is partially attributed to the work of the EC Graduation Project teams in the schools. This project provides team members paid time to review each individual student with a disability's transcript, IEP, and schedule to ensure accuracy for the student to graduate in a timely manner. The project builds capacity in EC and Guidance staff and encourages collaboration between both departments at the school.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High School Phase I</td>
<td>March 2014</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Phase II</td>
<td>June 2014</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>July 2014</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>August 2014</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-Time Admin Support</td>
<td>March-August 2014</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle School Training</td>
<td>April 2014</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle School Core Scheduling Team</td>
<td>July 2014</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall Cost:

Breakdown of Request

High School Phase I: March 2014

- Two day work session for each high school team to review EC students for 2014-2015 schedule planning. Substitutes will need to be provided to the EC teachers and EC Core Scheduling team to attend the training. It will be requested that a guidance counselor attend with the school team. The Core Scheduling team will need extended employment to develop the training. This is a proactive approach to continue the best practice of scheduling EC students first.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staff</th>
<th>Substitute/Extended Employment Cost</th>
<th>Number of Days/Hours</th>
<th>Estimated Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6 EC Core Schedulers Extended Employment for planning 2-day work session</td>
<td></td>
<td>6 hours</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 EC Core Schedulers that need substitutes for days</td>
<td></td>
<td>2 days</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45 EC teachers</td>
<td>2 days</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 2 EC teachers for 19 schools</td>
<td>2 days</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 1 EC teacher for 7 schools</td>
<td>2 days</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 Counselors</td>
<td>N/A- Excused by Principal</td>
<td>2 days</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
High School Phase II: Summer 2014

- June 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staff</th>
<th>Substitute/Extended Employment Cost</th>
<th>Number of Days/Hours</th>
<th>Estimated Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6 EC Core Schedulers Extended Employment for July planning</td>
<td>16 hours</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- July 2014 - after rollover
  - Each high school team made up of a guidance counselor and EC teacher(s) will complete a database reviewing students’ transcripts, schedules, and IEPs to plan for the 2014-2015 school year. The number of staff to attend and the number of PD days (up to five total) will depend on the number of students with disabilities the school has enrolled. Training opportunities (SAC, AU, SBS, OCS scheduling best practices) will be embedded over the five days.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staff Request</th>
<th>Extended Employment Cost</th>
<th>Number of Hours</th>
<th>Estimated Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6 EC Core Schedulers</td>
<td></td>
<td>30 hours</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- 2 days of training
- # of schools with <25 high school SWD: 3
- # of staff requested per school: 2 (6 total)
- 3 days of training
- # schools with 25-75 high school SWD: 5
- # of staff requested per school: 2 (10 total)
- 5 days of training
- # of schools with over 125 high school SWD: 18
- # of staff requested per school: 3 (54 total)

Total:

- The EC Core Scheduling team will make school site visits to ensure changes are implemented and support the schools scheduling students with disabilities.
### Staff

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staff</th>
<th>Extended Employment Cost</th>
<th>Number of Hours</th>
<th>Estimated Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6 EC Core Schedulers</td>
<td></td>
<td>50 hours</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 EC Core Schedulers Training</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45 EC Teachers</td>
<td></td>
<td>6 hours</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 Counselors</td>
<td></td>
<td>6 hours</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 EC Core Schedulers Scheduling Support</td>
<td></td>
<td>20 hours</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total:**

- **August 2014**
  - Teams will reconvene after summer school completion in August 2014 to determine additional schedule changes to communicate with their schools. Teams will also ensure that necessary changes have been completed from the July review process.

### Middle School:

- Due to the success of the EC Graduation Project by increasing the understanding and accuracy of scheduling students with disabilities at the high school level, the EC department would like to conduct scheduling training to the middle school level for the second year. Survey results from last year’s middle school scheduling PD indicated that 98% would like the same training opportunity this year as they found it helpful to have training and time to work with their administrators.

  The EC department is requesting that a team from every middle school (master scheduler and two EC teachers) come to training where student data and staff allotments are reviewed to help guide planning for the 2014-2015 school year. Middle school department chairpersons change
from year to year, so some may be new to scheduling and lack the experience and knowledge to make sound scheduling decisions. The goal of the training will be that every school has a proposed effective EC schedule for next school year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staff</th>
<th>Extended Employment Cost</th>
<th>Number of Days/Hours</th>
<th>Estimated Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 80 EC Teachers  
(2 EC teachers from 40 schools) | | 1 day | |

Total:

**K-8 Core Scheduling Team: July 2014**

- The EC Core Scheduling team will make school site visits to ensure changes are implemented from the middle school training and support schools as requests are made.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staff</th>
<th>Extended Employment Cost</th>
<th>Number of Days/Hours</th>
<th>Estimated Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 Middle School EC Core Schedulers</td>
<td></td>
<td>60 hours</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total:
### Delivery Options That Fulfill HQ Requirements for Students with Disabilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Delivery Options</th>
<th>IEP Documentation</th>
<th>NCWise</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>classroom support</td>
<td>EC assistant supports students with disabilities.</td>
<td>Existing staff assigned by school to support physical, educational or behavior needs.</td>
<td>Does not count as IEP time if an EC teacher is not present.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>collaboration</td>
<td>Professional interaction between the EC and general education teacher to develop instructional strategies for students with disabilities.</td>
<td>Time spent with general education teacher planning for instruction.</td>
<td>Is not documented on an IEP.</td>
<td>General education teacher is TOR*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>consultation</td>
<td>Instruction provided in general education by general education teacher only. EC teacher monitors student progress through direct student contact.</td>
<td>EC and general education teacher communicate progress related to IEP goals, academic needs, classroom performance, and behavioral expectations. EC teacher documents direct service time.</td>
<td>Time: Determined by IEP team based on student need Location: Regular Education OR Special Education</td>
<td>General education teacher is TOR*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>co-teaching</td>
<td>Instruction provided in general education with EC and general education teacher both actively teaching.</td>
<td>Students with disabilities spend instructional block in a general education co-taught class.</td>
<td>Time: Amount of EC service needed in a co-taught class Location: Regular Education</td>
<td>General ed. teacher TOR*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Students with disabilities spend portion of instructional block in general education co-taught class and are pulled for EC services for a portion of that block.</td>
<td>Time: Amount of EC service needed in a co-taught class Location: Regular Education and Time: Amount of time in SE Location: Special Education</td>
<td>EC teacher listed as “Teacher 2”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>split schedule</td>
<td>Instruction provided in a general education classroom by a GE teacher. A portion of instruction is provided in an EC setting by an EC teacher.</td>
<td>Students with disabilities spend time in a general education Class, pulled out for EC services for a portion of the block.</td>
<td>Time: Amount of EC service needed Location: Special Education</td>
<td>General education teacher is TOR*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Instruction provided in an EC classroom by both an EC and general education teacher.</td>
<td>The general education teacher provides instruction by coming into the EC class for a portion of the block. Students with disabilities stay in special education class with the EC teacher.</td>
<td>Time: Entire block Location: Special Education</td>
<td>General ed. teacher is TOR*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>EC teacher listed as “Teacher 2”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EC class</td>
<td>Instruction is provided in an EC setting.</td>
<td>Learning Lab (Elective course)</td>
<td>Time: 9th or elective block Location: Special Education</td>
<td>EC teacher is TOR* (Content HQ not applicable)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- study strategies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- content based remediation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>EC content class taught by an EC teacher that is HQ in that content area and EC.</td>
<td>Time: Entire Block Location: Special Education</td>
<td>EC teacher is TOR* (Content HQ not applicable)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Occupational Course of Study (OCS) Prep. and Lab courses taught by EC teacher.</td>
<td>Time: Entire Block Location: Special Education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Co-teaching in a content EC class</td>
<td>Time: Entire Block Location: Special Education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- EC and general education teachers co-teach in an EC class</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- CMS developed Moodle Courses (HS OCS)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- North Carolina Virtual Public School (HS only)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Distance Learning (HS only)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*TOR- Teacher of Record

Rev 6/12
Planning Time: A Three-Part Co-Planning Model

Planning is a critical co-teaching topic, but it needs a fresh look. First, realize that time is a problem in every field, not just education. Next, a logical question is this: How are other professions addressing the time squeeze? Most importantly, which of the ideas being used in other disciplines might work in education?

The result of this problem solving process is a new way of thinking about co-teaching planning time. It is a three-part model, drawn from other professions, with these components:

1. Periodic face-to-face planning

Face-to-face planning is important, but it should be periodic, directed toward data interpretations, and focused on an analysis of past and future instruction. When principals move from master scheduling planning time and instead find a means to provide coverage for co-teachers for at least an hour once every four weeks for macro planning, Planning seems much more feasible.

2. Electronic planning

Co-teachers should use electronic planning as a complement to their face-to-face planning. However, this does not mean sending each other random e-mails that often end up lost or inadvertently deleted. Nor does it mean counting on text messaging as a key planning tool. So many electronic collaboration platforms exist that they have become an essential co-teaching planning mechanism. Such resources are included at the back of these materials.

3. On-the-spot planning

Even when face-to-face and electronic planning have been effectively used to prepare for co-teaching, plans sometimes go awry. Teachers get behind in terms of pacing, a special program leads to a shortened schedule, or one of the educators has been absent for two days for professional development. In these many other cases, teachers need just a few minutes to touch base. If they have a prescribed procedure for students to follow while they briefly meet, they are able to get back on track while avoiding a loss of instructional time for students.
Ideas for Finding Co-Planning Time

Planning in the 21st century entails using creativity to find periodic, high quality face-to-face planning time. These are some of the common strategies:

1. Use other adults to help cover classes—including principals, assistant principals, counselors, social workers, department chairpersons, volunteers, paraprofessionals, psychologists, and supervisors. Of course, be sure to follow local policies on who can supervise groups of students. If a non-licensed person is supervising students working on a project or assignment, teachers may need to stay in the room or very nearby.

2. Seek funds for substitute teachers—or ask if subs already in the school (because of others’ absences) could be assigned during the available preparation period to cover for a set of co-teachers.

3. Find “volunteer” substitutes—retired teachers, members of social or civic organizations, teacher trainees from local universities. Again, students should have instructionally appropriate work to do during this time, and teachers must remain nearby.

4. When school-based staff development sessions are scheduled, arrange for them to begin late or conclude early with the saved time being used for co-planning.

5. On district professional development days, arrange for co-teachers to be exempt from one of the planned activities so that they may use the time to plan.

6. Treat collaboration as the equivalent of school committee responsibilities, especially if you are operating a pilot program. Time that others in school spend in committee meetings is spent working collaboratively.

7. Plan after school, but work with administrators to arrange to receive continuing education credit for the time spent, possible because this is beyond standard teacher planning.

8. For special educators, reserve time in the weekly schedule that is not obligated to specific responsibilities. Use this time flexibly with lunch, planning, and other time to meet with teachers.

9. Request release from particular duties in order to make up for the extra time that planning for co-teaching takes.
60-Minute Co-Planning Protocol

PRE-MEETING

GE teacher reviews upcoming curriculum for discussion at the meeting.

MEETING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TIME ALLOCATED</th>
<th>TOPIC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12 minutes</td>
<td>1. The general education teacher outlines upcoming curriculum and content for material that will be addressed within the context of the class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 minutes</td>
<td>2. Both teachers need to review student data. This will help them identify student learning status, gaps in student learning, and specialized student needs that may affect instructional decisions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 minutes</td>
<td>3. Both teachers discuss challenges in the upcoming instruction. What specialized instruction may be needed? What are other barriers to student learning? How could these challenges be lessened or overcome?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 minutes</td>
<td>4. Both teachers discuss patterns for their co-teaching. They should consider the six co-teaching approaches (and variations), identify instructional patterns in the class (e.g., introduction, review, practice), and decide when and where the six approaches fit the best.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 minutes</td>
<td>5. This time is reserved for partnership discussions, including concerns, communication, housekeeping items, and successes/issues related to the past four-week period that could affect the upcoming period.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

POST-MEETING

SE teacher or the other specialist prepares any specially designed instruction, accommodations or modifications that are student-specific as well as contributing to general strategies for differentiation.
Asynchronous Electronic Planning

The primary planning approach for co-teachers should rely on electronic collaboration. Widely use across other professions, this approach to co-planning solves several issues:

- It removes the problem of master scheduling frequent common planning time for co-teaching partners. This is especially important when a school has many teaching teams.
- It removes the problem of teachers trying to find co-planning time before or after school when one cannot come to school early and the other cannot stay late.
- It divides planning so that the general educator does the core lesson while the special educator plans for accommodations and specially designed instruction.
- It provides flexibility for teachers—they plan based on their own schedules and preferences.
- It keeps planning time available for other required professional tasks.

Basics of Electronic Co-Planning

- The purpose of this planning is to ensure that lessons are available, that they reflect students’ needs, and that service delivery is documented.
- Planning through e-mail is not considered adequate. It is too linear, it tends to get lost or mixed in with other messages, and it easily results in miscommunication.
- Text messaging might be acceptable for a quick question or comment, but it is too informal to be considered a vehicle for co-planning, especially when accountability is considered.
- Electronic planning should happen “in the cloud,” that is, through a collaborative workspace that both teachers can access at any time.
- Some districts already have such time available for teachers; if so, electronic planning should be straightforward.
- Some co-teachers will have to establish their own electronic shared workspace.
- General educators should upload lesson plans at least 5 days prior to their planned date so that special educators have adequate time to address specially designed instruction.
- Lesson plans are usually the first information shared, but many instructional resources can be shared in this manner.
On-the-Spot Planning

If co-teachers arrange for periodic, high quality common planning where they map out the upcoming curriculum, the challenges students may face, and ideas for addressing those challenges, they can ensure that they keep in touch by identifying strategies for planning on the fly between these more intense sessions. Here are three ways that co-teachers plan during the course of their typical days.

Instructional start-up strategy

Intended for all grade levels, this strategy is used for elementary teachers whenever the second teacher enters the room. For middle and high school teachers who co-teach for an entire class period, this strategy could be used at the beginning of class. If co-teaching occurs for half a block period, this strategy (like in elementary classes) is employed when the second teacher arrives. It works like this: Students are given an appropriate 4-5-minute assignment to complete individually or with a partner. Students are taught (and rewarded) that they should not interrupt the teachers except for an emergency. This tactic gives co-teachers several minutes of time to touch base, make a revision in the lesson plan, or discuss a student issue.

Review and predict

This strategy, primarily used in elementary and middle schools, occurs when the second teacher enters the classroom. One of the teachers asks students to review what they have been learning and doing. Answers to this question bring the teacher who just entered “up to speed.” The teachers then ask students about the instructional plans when both teachers are present. This prediction likewise informs the second teacher. Reviewing and predicting are considered effective instructional strategies, and they can be a means of ensuring both teachers know the plan for the day.

Fast talk

Especially in middle and high schools, co-teachers sometimes update their planning with a hurried conversation during a passing period. This strategy is appropriate if the more in-depth planning has occurred, but it should never constitute all the planning that occurs for co-teaching.
Co-Planning Resources

Many resources are available to facilitate electronic co-planning. The items listed below often are available for multiple platforms (e.g., Mac, Apple mobile devices, Android mobile devices, Windows devices). Many are free or have a basic free version; others may include a small charge. Such options also change rapidly, and so you may find options you prefer or that some of these are no longer available.

**Dropbox** ([dropbox.com](http://dropbox.com)). If your first goal is to simply share files, lesson plans, presentation slides, or other instructional resources, Dropbox might be the right choice. Once signed up for a free account, you can create a shared folder so that anything you place in it will trigger a notice to your teaching partner that new items have been added.

**Evernote** ([evernote.com](http://evernote.com)). Evernote is another option for simply sharing information such as lesson plans, web information, and so on; you also can label or tag your notes to make organizing them simple. With the free version, you can share any “notes” that you create but others cannot change them in a notebook. A premium version allows changes. This option is particularly attractive if you and your teaching partner are already Evernote users.

**On-line Planbook** ([https://planbook.com/](http://planbook.com/)). This versatile online lesson planning option enables co-teachers to share an account and create and annotate lesson plans. There is a section for adding notes, and you can upload attachments. Note that this option costs $12/year for the “bells and whistles” version.

**Google shared calendar.** If you already use Google options for e-mail and group collaboration, you also could create a Google calendar dedicated to co-teaching, inserting lesson plans into it. That calendar can then easily be shared with your co-teaching partner (specific directions are given on the site’s help page), who can then edit the calendar and share those results with you.

**Wikispaces Classroom** ([http://www.sikispaces.com/](http://www.sikispaces.com/)). This site allows teachers to easily set up free wikis that allow for any purpose, including co-teaching. This company sells wiki space to school districts and others, but on its home page you will see how to access a free wiki if you are a teacher.

**PBWorks** ([http://pbworks.com/content/edu-classroom-teachers](http://pbworks.com/content/edu-classroom-teachers)). PBWorks is a company that provides wikis to school districts and universities. Teachers can obtain basic free wiki space at this page of the company’s website.

**Google Groups/Google Drive** ([groups.google.com](http://groups.google.com) OR [drive.google.com](http://drive.google.com)). These options (the former is to be phased out) are Google’s wiki options. You can follow the simple directions to set up your shared space in just a few minutes. Note that for all Google options you must have a Gmail account. However, you also can use other Google tools within your wiki, including the word processing program, spreadsheet, and calendar.

**Edmodo** ([http://www.edmodo.com](http://www.edmodo.com)). Created in 2008, Edmodo boasts more than 15 million teacher and student users worldwide. In addition to carrying out their own planning, co-teachers can blog with educators from around the world.

**Schoology** ([https://www.schoology.com/home.php](https://www.schoology.com/home.php)). This SLP has many features similar to Edmodo. It also enables you to directly import items from Google docs, and it has a unique organizeable lesson plan feature.
References and Resources


