

CHAPTER 13

Co-Teaching

Four years of attending classes and field experiences of working with students with varying abilities and teaching various subjects and grade levels...now I could finally see the light at the end of the tunnel. Student teaching! The first day of student teaching finally arrived as my body was overwhelmed with a variety of emotions. I was utterly excited to be teaching fourth-graders, nervous to enter an unfamiliar school in Las Vegas, Nevada, yet anxious to meet my host teacher and students. Monday morning, I ventured down to Room 19 to meet an upbeat, welcoming lady by the name of Mrs. Paxman. Not only does she teach more than 30 fourth-graders of varying abilities, but she also co-teaches with Mrs. Galvin, a special educator, for math and reading. I was extremely excited to have the opportunity to co-teach, because this practice has become an area of focus in the field of education. However, many questions filled my mind. "Will our personalities or teaching styles clash?" "Will I become comfortable in learning and teaching an unfamiliar curriculum?"

I finally met Mrs. Galvin, my co-teaching partner. We spent a great amount of time getting to know each other and discussing our teaching styles. Mrs. Galvin provided helpful insight about our roles, instructional strategies, and responsibilities in co-teaching. After a few days of observing Mrs. Paxman and Mrs. Galvin co-teaching, it was my turn to implement co-teaching. Although I felt nervous about co-teaching, I also felt at ease because I had two experienced teachers to provide guidance and support. As time went by, Mrs. Galvin and I become more solid and integrated as a team. As we all know, students do not learn the same way. Co-teaching allowed for skills to be presented and modeled in a variety of ways. Students had a choice of a variety of strategies that facilitated the understanding and application of specific skills. Co-teaching allowed Mrs. Galvin and me to share the responsibility of managing student behaviors, planning, providing enrichment and remediation, and facilitating small-group instruction.

Throughout the short 3-month student-teaching experience, I learned a tremendous amount about co-teaching and its effectiveness. I became a believer in the power of co-teaching in that it extends out to more students to ensure they are grasping the content or able to demonstrate the skills being taught. Personally, co-teaching has taught me the importance of collaboration and made it clear that two heads are better than one. I realize that one teacher does not always connect with every student and now appreciate that all teachers have different fortes and challenges.

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