



SYNERGY AND ENVIRONMENT TO
EMPOWER DECENTRALISED SCHOOLS

TOOLKIT GREEN S.E.E.D.S.

MODULE 3 Seeds for Managing

UNIT 2 Classroom organization. Teachers' collaborative work



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RESPONSIBLE FOR IO1 “TOOLKIT GREEN S.E.E.D.S.”

Ángeles Parrilla Latas (University of Vigo)

AUTHORS

CIES-UVigo, ES

Ángeles Parrilla Latas | Manuela Raposo Rivas | Esther Martínez Figueira |
Silvia Sierra Martínez | Almudena Alonso Ferreiro | María Zabalza Cerdeiriña |
Isabel Fernández-Menor | Adoración de la Fuente Fernández

SYNTHESIS CENTER FOR RESEARCH AND EDUCATION LTD, CY

RESPONSIBLE FOR TRAINING ACTIVITIES AND THE “TOOLKIT GREEN S.E.E.D.S.” TESTING

Giulia Benvenuto (IC Bosco Chiesanuova, IT) | Alice Dalle (Région Vallée d'Aoste/Regione Valle
d'Aosta, IT) | Golfo Kateva (Synthesis Center, CY) | Noemi Nieto Blanco (University of Vigo) |
Miljenka Padovan Bogdanović (Srednja Skola Vela Luka, HR) | Eftychia Vlysidou (Dieftinski
Defterovathmias Ekpedefsisi Chiou, GR)

PROJECT

GREEN S.E.E.D.S. - Synergy and Environment to Empower Decentralised Schools,

www.greenseeds.eu

PROJECT COORDINATOR

Maria Carla Italia (Glocal Factory, Italy)

PROJECT PARTNERSHIP

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1. Training of the national responsible (5-6.03.2020)
2. Training of the teachers at local level (1.04.2020 – 31.06.2020)

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UNIT 3.2

CLASSROOM ORGANIZATION. TEACHERS' COLLABORATIVE WORK: CO-TEACHING

Cecilia is a veteran teacher at a rural school who has spent years training herself in co-teaching strategies in the classroom. Laura, a colleague at the same school who also has years of experience, is very interested in being able to begin to learn about co-teaching and to organize her classes differently. Cecilia has a very clear idea about how to co-teach and knows the different models which can be used well, whereas Laura is still exploring the possibilities offered by co-teaching.

Despite finding themselves in different situations and moments when it comes to co-teaching, both have decided to work together this year. As a teacher, what do you think about this situation:

- ◆ Do you think it will work?
- ◆ Why? Why not?
- ◆ What could be done to facilitate the process?

This case presents us with the opportunity of starting change processes, which can start in our classrooms and then be expanded throughout the school. These are changes which have an impact on educational quality, but which do not necessarily need the entire school to be implemented. Co-teaching makes these changes possible and can lead to innovations which are then implemented throughout the school, beginning from the specific, and then expanding to the rest of the school.

In this unit we will try to answer what we

understand to be co-teaching, what its principal models are, their advantages and difficulties, and how to put them into practice in rural schools and classrooms.

1. What is co-teaching?

Co-teaching is a useful tool for enriching classroom work within the context of rural schools and the great diversity of students, who have different needs and levels. Teachers, and co-teaching itself, can become protagonists in improving the educational quality of classrooms and schools.

This unit is focused on the different types of co-teaching; this can be defined in different ways, depending on the author or experience. For this unit, we have use one of the classic definitions of the

concept (Cook & Friend, 1995) which allows us to reach the key points which will be used to describe its different modalities later on in this unit. Thus, co-teaching may be defined as:

“two or more professionals delivering substantive instruction to a diverse, or blended, group of students in a single physical space” (Cook & Friend, 1995).

As it can be observed, there are four key elements without which co-teaching is not possible:

1. TWO OR MORE TEACHERS, GENERALISTS OR SPECIALISTS, ARE INVOLVED

The objective is to be able to *increase learning opportunities* arising from the different, but complementary, perspectives of the professionals acting collaboratively.

2. EVERY TEACHER IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE TEACHING-LEARNING PROCESS

This means *actively involving* both teachers in the teaching-learning process

3. DIVERSITY WITHIN THE GROUP

This refers to the presence in the group of diversity in terms of age, level, or any other factor.

4. IT PREFERABLY HAPPENS IN THE SAME CLASSROOM OR PHYSICAL SPACE

Special emphasis should be placed on the richness and complexity of co-teaching within the context of group-classrooms as a whole and in the same


physical space, although it is possible to make other types of groups within the classroom on specific occasions.


2. What co-teaching models can be implemented?

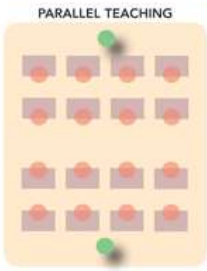
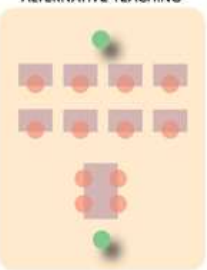
There are different models of collaborative teaching within co-teaching (Friend, 2006, Friend & Cook, 1996). These can be found under different names or as different variants in the literature, but the basic characteristics remain the same. Selecting a model depends on the makeup of the

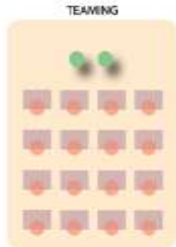

classroom, teaching styles, class-group characteristics and the amount of planning time available; one model is not per se better than another; it depends on the specific context in which it is to be implemented. Within the context of co-teaching, collaboration may be continuous or temporary.

Among the most-studied models, one can emphasize the following ones:

MODEL	DESCRIPTION	ADVANTAGES	DIFFICULTIES
<p>One teaches, One assists</p>  <p>ONE TEACH, ONE ASSIST</p>	<p>One teacher has the principal responsibility of planning and teaching</p> <p>The other one (support) can move around the classroom, helping students as needed and observing</p>	<p>Students receive individualized help</p> <p>Having a teacher nearby makes students focus more on the task at hand</p> <p>The support teacher can notice situations which may be difficult for only one teacher to notice</p> <p>The teacher with the most responsibility can act as a guide in terms of good practices for the support teacher</p>	<p>One teacher is more important than the other; one is the teacher and the other is the teacher's assistant</p> <p>A teacher walking around and observing throughout the class may distract some students</p> <p>Students expect immediate, personalized attention</p>

MODEL	DESCRIPTION	ADVANTAGES	DIFFICULTIES
<p>Station Teaching</p> 	<p>The classroom is divided into 'stations' or learning centers</p> <p>Each station is observed by a teacher or by students working autonomously</p> <p>One or more individuals may be included; i.e. a parent</p> <p>The teachers divide the students and contents into stations and assume the responsibility of planning and teaching these</p> <p>Each teacher works with a group, while other groups work on activities independently. The teachers repeat the lesson with the different groups. Students move through every station.</p>	<p>Students can benefit from working in small groups.</p> <p>Teachers can introduce more contents in a shorter period of time.</p> <p>Students learn in a more active and practical way</p> <p>Makes full use of volunteers or additional adults in the classroom</p>	<p>Requires a lot of prior planning</p> <p>All the material must be prepared and organized beforehand</p> <p>The classroom may be very noisy</p> <p>Every station must be very organized so that they all finish at more or less the same time</p> <p>One or more groups have to work independently</p>

MODEL	DESCRIPTION	ADVANTAGES	DIFFICULTIES
<p>Parallel Teaching</p>  <p>PARALLEL TEACHING</p>	<p>The teachers design the lesson together, but divide the class into two groups</p> <p>They work on the same content at the same time, but use different activities or tailor the contents to different difficulty levels</p>	<p>Students have more teacher supervision and more opportunities to respond</p> <p>Prior planning leads to a better teaching-learning process</p> <p>Allows teachers to work with smaller groups than normal.</p>	<p>Both teachers must be competent in terms of the content to be taught</p> <p>The rhythm of the class must be such that the teachers can finish at more or less the same time</p> <p>There must be enough space in the classroom</p> <p>It can get loud</p>
<p>Alternative Teaching</p>  <p>ALTERNATIVE TEACHING</p>	<p>One teacher is in charge of the large group</p> <p>The other one is in charge of a smaller group</p> <p>These small groups can be used for support, prior learning, helping students who have been absent to catch up, evaluation, etc.</p>	<p>Helps satisfy individual needs</p> <p>Both teachers can informally observe how the other implements best practices.</p>	<p>The groups must vary to avoid labeling (the 'smart' group, the 'slow' group, etc.)</p> <p>Students may view the teacher working with the largest group as the main one.</p> <p>It can get loud</p> <p>There needs to be enough room</p>

MODEL	DESCRIPTION	ADVANTAGES	DIFFICULTIES
<p>Team Teaching</p> 	<p>Both teachers share the entire teaching-learning process with the entire group of students</p> <p>Depends a lot on teaching styles</p> <p>It is the most complex, but the most satisfactory, form of shared teaching</p>	<p>Both teachers play an active role</p> <p>The students see both teachers at the same level</p> <p>Both teachers actively participate in classroom management and organization</p> <p>Encourages innovation and meeting challenges; things are tried which participants may not have attempted alone</p>	<p>Prior planning requires a lot of time</p> <p>Shared responsibility requires clearly defined roles</p>
<p>One Teaches, One Observes</p> 	<p>A teacher is in charge of the group and the other one observes one or more students or the entire class</p> <p>The teachers take turns being observers and leaders</p> <p>Together, they analyze the data, debate, and make decisions</p>	<p>A teacher makes a more detailed observation of the students</p> <p>What is to be observed, how to collect data, etc. is decided beforehand</p> <p>Promotes inquiry into improving teaching</p>	<p>Prior planning requires a lot of time</p> <p>Time is needed to analyze, share data, and make decisions</p>

Source: *Co-teaching: concepts, practices and logistics* (Friend, 2006).

4. How can we put it into practice?

Isolated practices of co-teaching in the classroom, with two highly motivated teachers, is of great interest and constitutes the start of the journey. It is, however, certain that in order for them to be sustainable and to be engines of

change and improvement, it is necessary for the school to put them into practice throughout (Huguet and Lázaro, 2018).

With this in mind, here are some actions which may help with the first stages of co-teaching in the classroom.

Accompany the start of the process with some specific type of co-teaching training.
-Find a colleague and select a model to work with together.
-Let the teaching staff know what you are going to do and why you want to do it, with the objective of creating a shared culture and guaranteeing some basic conditions so that the endeavor is successful.
Reserve and dedicate time to planning co-teaching sessions.
Agree on the different elements of the teaching-learning process (objectives, contents and competences, activities, distribution of roles and functions, evaluation, etc.).
If possible, commence simultaneously in different classes and create meeting groups to share doubts, proposals, and problems found along the way.
Start with a little amount of time dedicated to co-teaching, increasing this as you learn more and become more confident.
Plan and reserve time for sharing, reflecting, and making decisions with regards to what is happening.
Evaluate the process together.

Source: *modified from Huguet and Lázaro (2018).*

DO IT IN YOUR CLASSROOM

At your school, select a colleague with experience in co-teaching. meet to choose one of the models, design the experience, put into practice in the classroom, and reflect on the results.

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