

Co-teaching: Considerations for Implementation



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My background

- Served in education for 18 years
- Certification + M. Ed. From UW Tacoma
 - P-12 Special Education
 - K-8 General Education
 - Secondary English endorsement
- SET & Instructional Coach in Franklin Pierce
- Ph. D. at Utah State University
- Assistant Professor



Agenda

1. Define co-teaching
2. Review research on co-teaching
3. Share results of Utah's secondary mathematics co-teaching project
4. Recommendations for implementation



Co-teaching

- 2+ professionals delivering instruction to students in the same space
- Can happen at any grade
- Special Education Teacher (SET) + General Education Teacher (GET)

Cook & Friend, 1995



Co-teaching Research

- Most research focuses on teachers' perceptions of co-teaching and program descriptions
- Co-teachers report
 - It's challenging
 - Administrative support is necessary
 - PD and on-going support improved co-teaching experience
- Co-teaching may decrease stigma towards students with disabilities

Indrisano et al., 1999



Co-teaching Research

- May narrow achievement gap between students with and without disabilities

Walsh, 2012; Pearl et al., 2012

- May improve state test scores for students with disabilities

Walsh, 2012; Wischnowski et al., 2004

- May improve teachers' self-efficacy

Colson et al., 2021



Limitations of Co-teaching Research

- Little research investigating impacts on student achievement and most is subjective
 - Teacher perception
 - GPAs/Grades
- Relatively lower effect sizes associated with co-teaching
- Methodological concerns
- Too few studies to determine if co-teaching is an evidence-based practice



Utah's Co-teaching Project

Project Rationale

- Part of state's systematic improvement plan to increase mathematics achievement
- Focus on improving mathematics scores for secondary students with and without disabilities
- Increase access of students with disabilities to grade-level mathematics instruction



Co-teaching Project PD

- Created by Utah Dept. of Education
- Secondary co-teaching pairs
- Mathematics content and pedagogy/practices
- Mandatory and voluntary participation
- Administrators invited to participate



Co-teaching Project PD

- PD varied by year during study
- Years 1 & 2
 - 2 consecutive full-day sessions before school year
 - 8 full-day sessions throughout school year
- Year 3
 - 1 full-day session before school year
 - 4 full-day sessions throughout school year
- 3 observations + feedback from coach each year



Co-teaching Project PD

- Disability categories most frequently encountered in co-taught settings
- Strategies for fostering a co-teaching relationship
- Co-teaching models
- Growth mindset
- Reflective practices
- Differentiated instruction
- Specially designed instruction
- Tiered models
- Universal design for learning



Co-teaching Models

Shumway et al., 2011

- Teaming
 - Both teachers collaboratively leading instruction simultaneously
- 1 teach/1 assist
 - 1 teacher leads and 1 assists
- 1 teach/1 observe
 - 1 teaches and 1 collects data
- Station teaching
 - Each teacher leads a station related to the lesson
- Alternative teaching
 - 1 teacher provides core and 1 remediates or enriches
- Parallel teaching
 - Each teacher teaches a heterogenous group the same content



Mathematics Content PD

- CCSS – M
- Mathematics concepts v. skills
- Vertical alignment
- Foundational topics
 - E.g., fractions, ratios & proportions, solving equations, graphing



Research Questions

- Do students with and without disabilities in co-taught classes improve their scores from pre- to post-test?
- What teaching practices do co-teachers use?
- What are co-teachers' perspectives of co-teaching?

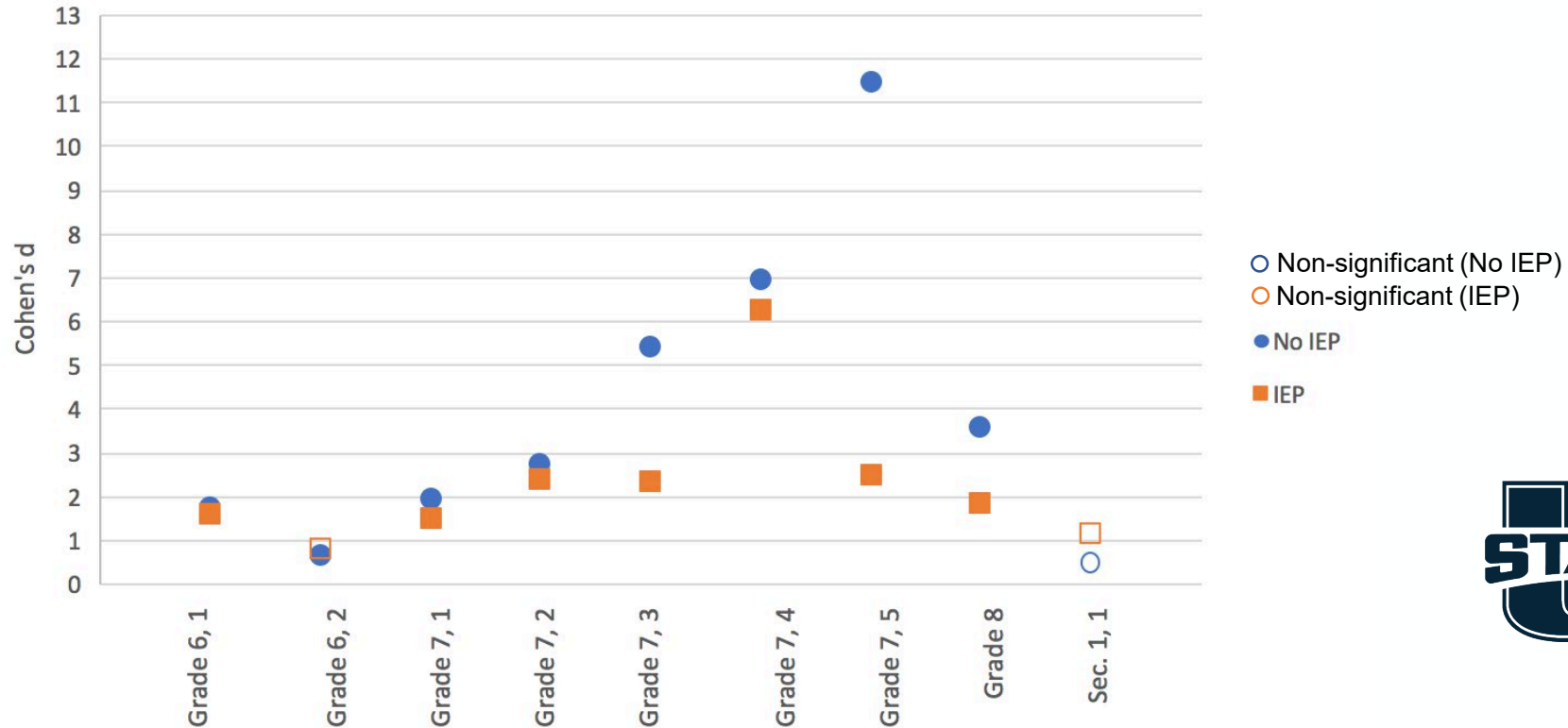


Participants

- Year 1
 - 25 teachers, 12 school districts
 - 281 students
- Year 2
 - 34 teachers, 10 school districts
- Year 3
 - 17 teachers, 9 school districts



Student Outcomes (Year 1)



Teaching Practices Used (Years 2 & 3)

- Observation data shows no remedial instruction provided in co-taught classrooms
- Co-teachers reported providing remedial instruction a mean of 26% of instructional time



Co-teaching Models Used (Years 2 & 3)

- Every model used except alternative teaching
- Teaming – 6 instances
- 1 teach/1 assist – 4 instances
- 1 teach/1 observe – 3 instances
- Station teaching – 2 instances
- Parallel teaching – 1 instance
- Co-teacher absent – 1 instance



Co-teachers Perspectives (Years 2 & 3)

- Learned from their co-teacher
- Improved understanding of how to support students
- Need for common planning time
- Need for common time to review student data
- Believe students with disabilities learned more and behaved better in co-taught classes



Key Takeaways

- Mathematics achievement of students in co-taught classrooms improved
 - Students with disabilities did not always improve as much as students without disabilities
- Teachers used a variety of co-teaching models
 - 1 teach/1 do something else most prevalent
- Teachers felt positively about co-teaching but need ongoing support



Considerations for Implementing Co-teaching

Establish the Purpose

- Why co-teach?
 - Determine what goal(s) you intend to address through co-teaching
 - Describe the outcomes you expect to produce with co-teaching
- Consider relative cost



Provide Support

- Define co-teaching
 - Which models are acceptable?
- Ongoing PD on implementing co-teaching
- Coaching with observations and feedback
- Common planning
- Time (and training) to review and use student data

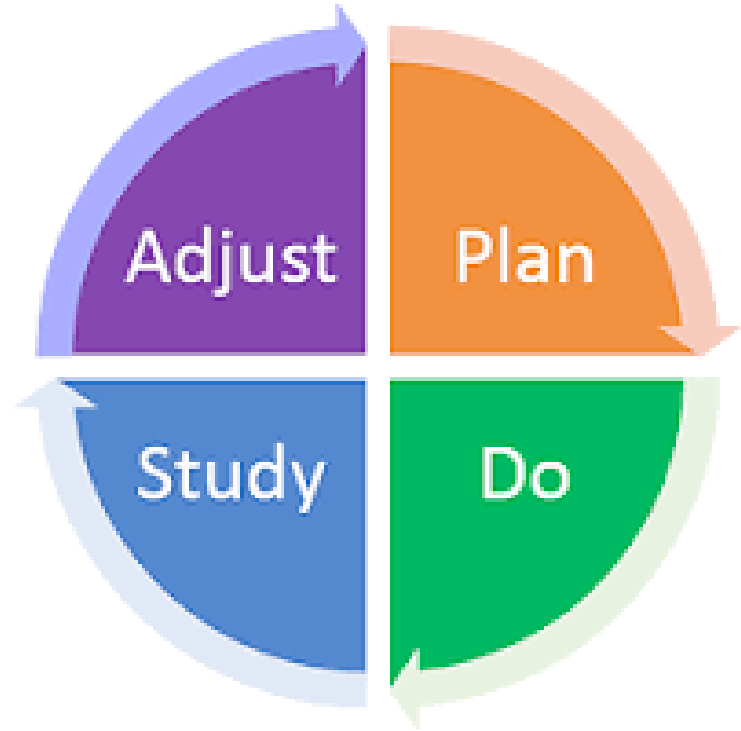


Data-based Decision Making

- What data will inform progress toward the goal to be met by co-teaching?
- Collect, review, use teacher data
 - Implementation fidelity
- Collect, review, use student data
 - Effectiveness of co-teaching



Continuous Improvement



Fixsen et al., 2019; Jacobson, 2024

Final Thoughts

- Co-teaching may be a means for improving student achievement while increasing access to general education classrooms
- Not enough empirical research to consider co-teaching an evidence-based practice
- Even with extensive support in Utah, SETs often fell into assisting roles and students with disabilities did not close the achievement gap



Questions?

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Feel free to reach out!



Thank You



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