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Teacher Perspectives on Co-teaching in a Content Classroom with English Language Support

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TEACHER PERSPECTIVES ON CO-TEACHING IN A CONTENT CLASSROOM

WITH ENGLISH LANGUAGE SUPPORT

by

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&

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

As aspiring English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers, the co-teaching model was a central part of our teacher education. Co-teaching has also been a focus of our work experience as ESL teachers. Co-teaching refers to a special kind of teacher collaboration in which two teachers share in all of the responsibilities for all students in the classroom (Gately & Gately 2001). Although the co-teaching model has traditionally referred to the partnership of general educators and special education teachers, it is now also used to refer to the partnership between general educators and other specialists such as ESL teachers (Honigsfeld & Dove 2010). In the co-teaching model, each teacher uses their expertise to assist in the planning, assessment, and instruction of the designated classroom (Villa, Thousand & Nevin 2008).

Fundamentally, co-teaching involves the responsibility shared by general education teachers and specialists in their knowledge, planning time, and education of students (Honigsfeld 2010). In co-teaching, the ESL teacher serves as the expert for helping English Learners (ELs) to understand and modify classroom material, while also developing their listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills, while the classroom teacher serves as the content expert, making sure that the students are learning the appropriate mainstream course information. Therefore, co-teaching is a shift from the previous pull-out method of serving ELs in which they were pulled out of their regular

education classes for language development. However, the above definition of co-teaching is only the very basic description, and co-teaching can take on many forms and can occur in widely varying settings.

Basis for a Joint Project

We met as graduate school classmates working on our teaching licenses in ESL. We frequently shared ideas and experiences as we progressed through graduate school, student teaching, and the beginnings of our teaching careers. We both struggled as new teachers and were able to rely on each other for advice. We shared many of the same experiences, but we also had experiences that were unique to our own situations.

We both have many commonalities in terms of our job setting. We teach in large school districts in the Midwest that serve significant EL populations. Each of our districts has implemented a co-teaching model in recent years.

There are also some important differences in our job settings. Brad teaches in an elementary school in a large urban area with a history of ethnic and linguistic diversity, whereas Joe teaches in a high school in a smaller community with a recent influx of immigrants from a specific cultural background. This is a good example of the diversity in settings for EL teaching situations.

These unique perspectives each provide us with valuable insights into teaching English learners and led us to a decision to work on a joint capstone project. Though we work in very different settings, we found ourselves asking the same questions and dealing with the same issues in regards to co-teaching. Bringing our particular experiences as EL

teachers to a research project on co-teaching seemed very beneficial. Our decision to collaborate gives us a broader scope of teaching experiences and research interests.

Brad's Experience and Background as a Researcher

As an ESL teacher working in the co-teaching model for four years, I have yet to develop a true comfort in my role as an ESL co-teacher, despite my familiarity with this model through both study and work experience. I have been trained extensively in co-teaching in college and have received excellent support and training from the district in which I work. I believe that many of my struggles in grasping my role as an ESL co-teacher are a result of the nebulous nature of co-teaching, and that it can be experienced very differently based on various factors such as content area, personalities with whom one works, grade level, and administrative support. Thus far in my short career as a teacher, I have already co-taught in several grades and in social studies, science, math, and reading classes. As a result, I have had little opportunity to create lasting relationships with co-teachers and to work for extended periods of time supporting the same content area.

The school district in which I work is an urban school district in the Midwest, and is comprised of ELs from a variety of cultures and language backgrounds. I teach ESL in a K-5 elementary school and currently serve primarily as the ESL co-teacher servicing first grade ELs.

During my second year in this school district, the district mandated a district-wide change to co-teaching in ESL. Beginning that year, ESL was to be co-taught exclusively in social studies and science. Previous to this, ESL teachers and general educators who

chose to co-teach did so voluntarily. They collaborated to the degree which they felt comfortable and had the freedom to choose the subjects in which they wanted to co-teach. Some teachers were already choosing to collaborate, while other teachers were servicing the students in complete isolation from one another. With the move to mandated co-teaching, the district provided training for existing ESL teachers and hired a number of new ESL teachers who also received training to prepare them for the implementation of this new method of service. Although we also had three or so training sessions about co-teaching which we were able to attend with mainstream co-teaching partners, only ESL teachers were provided with more ongoing and regular training.

For many teachers this recent change to a co-teaching model, away from the previously common pull-out model, represented a significant change to their teaching. Therefore, many teachers have had to learn a completely unique skill set that has required training and the adoption of a new philosophy regarding the education of ELs. Through personal conversations with many ESL and mainstream teachers from both my building site and the district level, the change has been undertaken with varying degrees of success.

In many ways, the co-teaching model seems as though it should be intuitive, as students are taught English within the general education setting, with the benefit of not having to miss academic class time as they would in a pull-out service model. However, this is co-teaching at its theoretical level, and in practice it can be more difficult than theory suggests (Davison 2006; DelliCarpini 2009). Teaching ELs language in the context of mainstream content has the potential to more efficiently teach students the

needed vocabulary and academic language, without having to pull these students away from mainstream lessons to focus on language in isolation (Honigsfeld & Dove 2010). However, melding mainstream curriculum and meaningful language instruction into a coherent and dual-purposed method of instruction through co-teaching requires planning, patience, and a willingness on the part of each teammate to serve as both expert and student (Murawski and Dieker 2008; Gately and Gately 2001). It also requires a functional working relationship between the professionals involved (Gately & Gately 200; Arkoudis 2006).

My personal experiences with co-teaching have resulted in mixed success, despite my belief that co-teaching has the potential to be the best method of serving our EL students. Now, after my fourth year of teaching, there have already been changes made in the ages, teachers, and subjects in which I have done my co-teaching. This has made it somewhat difficult to establish a stable relationship with teachers and develop goals and expectations regarding co-teaching. Therefore, the difficulties I have faced have not been so much trouble with co-teaching itself, but with the practical difficulties involved in developing stable relationships and routines while experiencing year-to-year change in co-teaching partners, student ages, and subjects that I have experienced while trying to implement this model.

There are several varying situations in which co-teaching can occur, and co-teaching may look different depending upon the context. Co-teaching may take place in different grade levels or subject areas, and the model and methods used by teachers may vary. However, in my experience and upon having researched co-teaching, certain factors

such as planning time, experience, relationships with co-teachers, and administrative support are among the factors that seem to influence the effectiveness of co-teaching relationships regardless of the specific co-teaching contexts.

I work in an elementary school whose EL population makes up around half of the total student population. Within this population, around 75 percent of our students come from the same native language population. With such a large EL population, my elementary school is fortunate enough to have enough ESL teaching support that we are able to designate one ESL teacher per grade level, and our school has a separate ESL teacher who works primarily with new to country students from all grade levels. Therefore, my day consists of co-teaching in four mainstream classrooms as a social studies and science teacher and then having one pull-out group of ten students who are lower in their English language skills. These pull-out students are not necessarily new to country, but their reading, writing, speaking, and/or listening skills are such that they need additional support in language learning.

It is also worth mentioning that the students in my elementary school come from extremely diverse backgrounds within our EL population, and that these ELs may have very different needs depending on the individual. Some of our EL students are the children of second and third generation immigrants, while others are coming directly from refugee camps overseas. Some students from refugee camps overseas may have more formal education than many of our students who are native citizens of the United States, so the backgrounds are extremely different. Some students may need extensive support in each of the language modalities of reading, writing, speaking, and listening;

while other students may exhibit much higher proficiency in one or more areas, but need significant support in other language modalities. Many factors play a role in the students' language learning needs; a wide variety of factors such as time in country, home language, family background, reason for moving, student and parent educational background, and socioeconomic factors play a crucial role in the students' skill level. In summary, individual students have very different requirements in regard to language support and development and I, like most EL teachers, work with students that have extremely varied educational needs.

As I have settled into my current role as the ESL teacher for first grade in social studies and science for the second straight year, an increasing familiarity with my co-workers and this age group has improved both my confidence and efficacy as an ESL teacher. Despite this improvement, I still find three difficulties with my co-teaching situation. The first of these is common planning time. I teach the same lesson throughout the day to different groups of students. In theory, this should make things easier, but my co-teachers have to plan for reading, writing, and math in addition to our co-taught subjects. This makes it difficult to find common time to plan; I try to be respectful of not being a burden on their free time, as they often speak of the pressure and difficulty in finding time to do their own planning in these other areas. Secondly, as testing in math and reading plays a crucial role at the elementary level and is closely linked to teacher performance, I have noticed an atmosphere in my school district which forces teachers to spend more planning time on these subjects, instead of in social studies and science, where we collaborate as co-teachers. This leaves relatively little time and energy on the

part of teachers for planning in social studies and science. Finally, the teachers I work with are mostly veteran teachers and are rightfully proud of the social studies and science curriculum they've already created. Therefore, I feel a great deal of pressure to make a contribution, but to do so within the already established curriculum, all the while not being a burden on already busy teachers. These challenges persist, despite the important fact that I am lucky enough to work with teachers that I very much like and respect; unfortunately, many co-teachers must face these difficulties without the support of such positive relationships (Dieker & Murawski 2008).

As stated above, I have experienced the triumphs that come with effectively engaging in this kind of service, but I have also experienced a great deal of frustration and confusion that often accompanies beginning co-teaching experiences. As a co-teacher, one depends greatly on their colleagues, and one's colleagues also depend greatly on them, and the true success in developing the language and content needs of the student is impossible without success on the part of all professionals involved. Being a relatively young teacher surrounded by experienced and extremely capable co-teaching colleagues, I have felt the clumsiness of having to serve as an "expert" and come up with planning suggestions on the spot. While giving advice, I have also felt the self-awareness that I am providing these personally untested strategies to teachers who have the practical knowledge and sensibility of why my "suggestions" might completely fail; it is this distance in perspectives and standpoints that, despite a shared goal of educating the children, can be isolating. Over the past three years, I have been the support, I have been

the lead, I have been the red tape and roadblock to 'just getting things done,' and I have been the fresh idea; few times has it been comfortable or easy.

I have continually heard these same conflicting feelings from fellow ESL teachers and their co-teaching colleagues. As co-teachers, many have experienced both the good and the bad, and at no point have I heard anyone refer to the process as being easy. After having co-taught, one doesn't need to read the many articles, books, and research papers that focus on the difficulties of co-teaching to know that co-teaching and teacher collaboration can be complicated (Davison 2006; DelliCarpini 2009). However, this model also shows promise as being the most effective ESL model for helping ELs make up the ground necessary to close the gap with their peers (Pardini 2006).

Joe's Experience and Background as a Researcher

After several years of working as a substitute teacher in a variety of districts and settings, I found a permanent job as an ESL teacher at a large high school in Minnesota. The community has experienced a large influx of refugees from East Africa in the past decade. Many of these students have limited and interrupted formal education. In my current position at the high school, I work with students who are relative newcomers to the American school system.

My students are still learning classroom routines, along with developing their Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP). BICS involves the language of social interactions, whereas CALP involves the language skills needed to comprehend a textbook passage or participate in a classroom debate. Some of my students are strong on BICS, which can make one

perceive them to be rather proficient in English. However, their low CALP causes them to struggle in reading comprehension and other academic skills necessary to successfully complete language arts, social studies, science, and other content courses.

Despite their limited English proficiency, my students are still high school students who dream of graduation and college. They have to pass the same high school classes as their peers. As a support my school offers co-taught classes for science, social studies, and some other graduation requirements. These classes pair an ESL teacher (such as myself) with a content teacher to teach a classroom of English learners.

In my years as a substitute teacher, where I mostly covered for ESL teacher absences, I often found myself "co-teaching" in a content classroom with a small group of English learners and a large group of mainstream students. There was rarely a language instruction component to the class, and I was usually instructed by the content teacher to help *my* students while she or he taught the class as usual. There was no apparent differentiation or modification of instruction to support the English learners.

However, in my current position, my co-taught classes are composed entirely of EL students who have approximately the same English proficiency. I have worked with several content teachers across a variety of subjects. I have yet to have an unpleasant co-teaching experience. My co-teaching partners have always respected my role and input as a language teacher, and they have only expressed curiosity as to how to modify their instruction to meet the best needs of *our* students.

With the passage of the LEAPS (Learning English for Academic Proficiency and Success) Act in Minnesota in 2014, I hope that more ESL teachers - and more

importantly, their students - will experience appropriate accommodations and instruction. School is difficult when you don't have the language or academic skills of your peers. It is even more difficult when your "support" is a powerless ESL teacher who has no say in instruction or curriculum modifications.

I am not an expert teacher, nor am I a co-teaching expert. However, like all teachers, I seek to improve my practice. This is often through daily experiences and reflection, but it can also be through research. It is my hope that through our research, Brad and I will discover ways that ESL teachers can make the co-teaching model as efficient and successful as possible.

Preview of the Literature

The goal of our research project is to answer the following question: *What do co-teachers believe are the most important aspects of best-practice in co-teaching, and which of these areas of best-practice correspond with feelings of effectiveness in the classroom?* We researched this question through the use of a survey given to ESL or mainstream teachers who work in ESL co-teaching partnerships. Our findings will serve as a guide to help other co-teachers improve their effectiveness in the co-teaching model.

In this study, we will focus on best-practice in co-teaching, its use in the classroom, and its effectiveness as determined by teacher experience. This will serve as a guide to which aspects of best-practice teachers feel are most critical to success with an eye toward how to make it a more successful model for teachers, administrators, and students alike.

A more detailed analysis of teachers' adoption of best practice techniques and their perspectives of their effectiveness in their partnerships could provide insight into which aspects of best-practice correlate most with teachers' feelings of effectiveness in the co-teaching model. Our review of the literature on co-teaching will help us define best practice for instructing English learners in the co-teaching model. Our survey of practicing teachers (both mainstream/content teachers and ESL teachers) will identify which areas of best practice they find most important and how effective they feel in each area. These perspectives may provide more insight into what teachers can do to enhance their effectiveness as co-teachers. We hope to answer the following questions through our research: *What do co-teachers believe are the most important aspects of best-practice in co-teaching, and which of these areas of best-practice correspond with feelings of effectiveness in the classroom?*

This chapter has introduced the key concepts associated with co-teaching and teacher perspective regarding this type of ESL service.

Summary

In this study, we will focus on the experiences of teachers in the co-teaching model in hopes of better understanding how school systems can implement co-teaching most effectively based on the experiences of teachers who've adopted this model, in order to best serve our ELs. Their future success depends on the effective implementation of a co-teaching model, and hopefully, the knowledge and perspectives of those teachers who have undertaken this new initiative will serve as a basis for other professionals and districts in improving or implementing their own co-teaching service models.

Chapter Overviews

In Chapter One, we discussed the purpose of our research as well as the significance and implications of the study. Our personal roles, beliefs, and biases were discussed in order to provide a context for the research. In Chapter 2, we will be reviewing the literature related to the history of ESL instruction, including a look at some key court cases that have resulted in major changes to ESL instruction. We will explore how those judicial decisions have brought us to the place where we now realize that co-teaching English learners in the mainstream classroom represents best practice. We will review several researchers' recommendations for best practice in the co-teaching model, and identify four areas of best practice for co-teaching. A review of this research will provide a foundation for our study.

In Chapter 3, we will explain our research model and how we will gather information from practicing co-teachers. In Chapter 4, we will share the findings of our research. In Chapter 5, we will discuss the implications of our research.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

Our research question is: *What do co-teachers believe are the most important aspects of best-practice in co-teaching, and which of these areas of best-practice correspond with feelings of effectiveness in the classroom?* In this chapter, we will review the literature relevant to best-practice in co-teaching. We will begin with a review of the literature relating to the history and evolution of the co-teaching model in ESL. Next, we will review research on the benefits of the co-teaching model for ESL. Then, we will review studies about individual factors that contribute to successful co-teaching collaboration. Finally, we will review research on these individual factors.

The History and Evolution of Co-Teaching in ESL

The history of co-teaching in ESL begins with the advocacy for equitable education for language minority students. As a result of the *Lau v. Nichols* Supreme Court case in 1974, in which non-native language speaking students in San Francisco were not receiving language services, the Supreme Court ruled that not providing ELs with adequate assistance in language instruction equated to denying these non-native language speakers adequate access to curriculum (Lau v. Nichols 2004). The court decision found that this inadequate instruction of ELs resulted in a violation of section 601 of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which states that federally funded programs or

activities cannot discriminate against students "on the grounds of race, color, or national origin" (Lau v. Nichols; Civil Rights Act of 1964). *Lau v. Nichols* was a milestone court case in that it initiated a federal mandate that ESL students are to receive language support services that will allow them equal access to education in the United States regardless of their language background or skills.

Initially following *Lau vs. Nichols*, ELs were most commonly served using the pull-out method of ESL service. In the pull-out model, EL students received their ESL services in a separate classroom. In this context, ELs missed out on the content material that was being taught during their pull-out time. Therefore, EL students were gaining English skills, but were doing so while missing out on the curriculum in which they needed to be proficient enough to graduate high school (Collier & Thomas 2004; Honigsfeld & Dove 2010).

Collier and Thomas (2004) wrote of the disadvantages of serving ELs using the pull-out model in their research on dual language instruction programs:

> If students are isolated from the curricular mainstream for many years, they are likely to lose ground to those in the instructional mainstream, who are constantly pushing ahead. To catch up to their peers, students below grade level must make more than one year's progress every year to eventually close the gap. (p. 2)

They found that students who entered mainstream classes after leaving support programs, such as ESL pullout instruction, did not make any further gains than their native English-speaking counterparts. Thus, they were unable to close the

achievement gap. The rationale for co-teaching in a mainstream classroom is that ELs can learn academic language within the context of general education classes, therefore learning English and required content at the same time (DelliCarpini 2009; Gándara, Rumberger, Maxwell-Jolly & Callahan 2003).

Another factor in support of the co-teaching model over the pull-out model is the great length of time needed for ELs to become proficient in academic English. In their study of oral and academic English language proficiency, Hakuta, Butler, and Witt (2000) studied student language progress through individually administered tests in four different schools in Canada and the U.S. in order to determine the length of time it takes an EL to become proficient in a new language. They suggest that ELs require at least 4-7 years to become proficient in academic language (Hakuta, Butler & Witt 2000); this means that students need to spend significant classroom time outside of their content classes just to reach English language proficiency in the pull-out model.

Research suggests that another limiting factor to the pull-out model is that that ELs need exposure to the language and social networking that come with interacting with other linguistic, racial, and ethnic groups in a mainstream classroom, which also aids in academic language development (York-Barr, Ghere & Sommerness 2007; Gándara, Rumberger, Maxwell-Jolly & Callahan 2003). Native language speakers and speakers from other language groups provide ELs with more opportunities to use the target language in a contextualized manner. These issues of missed classroom time and the isolation of ELs from native language speakers in a contextualized setting are significant factors that contribute to the problems with pull-out service.

In their comparison of EL and mainstream students in California, Gándara, Rumberger, Maxwell-Jolly & Callahan (2003) found that the "segregation" of EL students is a contributing factor to unequal education opportunities. It limits the opportunities for EL students to be exposed to model English, results in substandard curriculum, and leaves ELs less prepared for post-secondary education.

The *Lau v. Nichols* Supreme Court case (Lau v. Nichols, 1974) designated that school districts are legally obligated to provide ELs with language instruction and materials that would provide ELs with access to school curriculum. However, there were no recommendations for what constituted effective programs or service models (Hendrickson, 2011). A later Supreme Court case, *Castañeda v. Pickard* (Castañeda v. Pickard, 1981), would serve as a guide to what comprises an effective program for servicing ELs through the establishment of the three following criteria: the program must be grounded in sound educational theory, the chosen program must be executed effectively, and the service must be proved to be effective in helping ELs overcome language barriers (Castañeda v. Pickard, 1981). Therefore, those districts not servicing ELs effectively according to these parameters are in violation of federal law.

Originally, co-teaching was most often used to service students in special education. However, in response to problems of isolation, lack of contextualized language learning, and missed classroom time that ELs experience in the pull-out model, schools have increasingly turned toward the use of the co-teaching model for ESL service (Zehler, Fleischman, Hopstock, Stephenson, Pendzick & Sapru 2003; Honigsfeld & Dove 2010).

Definition of Co-teaching

We will quickly differentiate the term co-teaching from the more traditionally

used and general term collaboration, which is sometimes mistakenly used

interchangeably with the word co-teaching. Teacher collaboration is a more general

reference toward any of the following exchanges by educators: a voluntary contribution

by each individual, a shared or common goal, sharing of specific skills or knowledge, and

finding numerous innovative solutions to aid in reaching the goal (Honigsfeld and Dove

2010).

Co-teaching falls under the general umbrella of teacher collaboration, but it has a

more precise meaning. While collaboration refers more generally to the sharing of

knowledge between teachers, co-teaching involves the more specific method in which the

collaboration occurs in and out of the classroom (Honigsfeld & Dove 2010). Co-teaching

is a specific form of collaboration in which educators share the responsibility toward all

of the students in a given classroom (Gately & Gately 2001). It implies an equal and

shared responsibility toward each of the students rather than a general collaboration

among professionals.

Co-teaching may be used to service students between a classroom teacher and a

specialist, such as a special education teacher, a reading teacher, ESL teacher, or other

education professional. While the general education teacher serves as the expert in regard

to the academic content or subject, the other co-teacher serves as the expert in their

specialty area such as special education or ESL. However, researchers agree that effective

co-teaching involves shared responsibility of each of the aspects of teaching, planning,

and assessing students in a classroom (Villa et al. 2008; Murawski and Dieker 2004). In an ESL classroom, this may involve a teacher serving as an expert on science or social studies content, while the ESL teacher would help to integrate language modifications that would help to teach ELs academic language and also make the content accessible to ELs at their language skill level.

Wendy Murawski defines co-teaching as "when two or more educators co-plan, co- instruct, and co-assess a group of students with diverse needs in the same general education classroom" (2003). There is no single correct way to co-teach; teachers may use a variety of models based on the given student needs or classroom content for a particular lesson. Andrea Honigsfeld and Maria Dove listed the following seven models for co-teaching, any of which may be most effective depending on the lesson or goal of the teachers (2010):

1. <u>One student group: One lead teacher and another teacher teaching on purpose</u>. In this model, the mainstream and ESL teachers take turns assuming the lead role. One leads while the other provides mini-lessons to individuals or small groups in order to pre-teach or clarify a concept or skill (Honigsfeld and Dove 2010).

2. <u>One student group: Two teachers teach the same content</u>. Both teachers direct a whole-class lesson and work cooperatively to teach the same lesson at the same time (Honigsfeld and Dove 2010).

3. <u>One student group: One teacher teaches, one assesses</u>. Two teachers are engaged in conducting the same lesson; one teacher takes the lead, and the other circulates

throughout the room and assesses targeted students through observations, checklists, and anecdotal records (Honigsfeld and Dove 2010).

4. <u>Two student groups: Two teachers teach the same content</u>. Students are divided into two learning groups; the teachers engage in parallel teaching, presenting the same content using differentiated learning strategies (Honigsfeld and Dove 2010).

5. <u>Two student groups: One teacher pre-teaches, one teaches alternative information</u>. Teachers assign students to one of two groups based on their readiness levels related to a designated topic or skill. Students who have limited prior knowledge of the target content or skill are grouped together to receive instruction to bridge the gap in their background knowledge (Honigsfeld and Dove 2010).

6. <u>Two student groups: One teacher reteaches, one teaches alternative information</u>. Flexible grouping provides students at various proficiency levels with the support they need for specific content; student group composition changes as needed (Honigsfeld and Dove 2010).

7. <u>Multiple student groups: Two teachers monitor and teach</u>. Multiple grouping allows both teachers to monitor and facilitate student work while targeting selected students with assistance for their particular learning needs (Honigsfeld and Dove 2010).

These methods are the ones most commonly used in situations in which ESL teachers work with mainstream classes. Their utility may be different based on each situation, and co-teachers often use these models flexibly and shift between these models depending on the day or the lesson.

Benefits of Co-teaching

Co-teaching is a significant departure from the pull-out model, in which ELs receive their instruction in a separate classroom isolated from the mainstream content areas. In this sense, co-teaching has the potential alleviate the difficulties of student isolation, lack of context, and missed academics caused by the use of the pull-out model.

Some feel as though co-teaching is a more promising means for providing ESL service and is a more intuitive model for serving ELs (Honigsfeld & Dove 2010). The rationale for co-teaching in a mainstream classroom is that ELs can learn academic language through the context of general education classes, therefore learning English and required content at the same time (DelliCarpini 2009; Gándara, Rumberger, Maxwell-Jolly & Callahan 2003). Abstractly, this makes much more sense than a pull-out model, but teachers have made this change with varying degrees of success, and despite agreement among many experts that this is the best service model, additional evidence is needed to determine factors that result in relatively successful ESL and mainstream co-teaching outcomes.

As Honigsfeld and Dove suggest: "effective collaboration benefits students (and teachers alike)." (Honigsfeld and Dove 2010, p. 8) For ESL students, a population who already face an achievement gap, the move toward co-teaching is based on inherent social and academic advantages; the students aren't pulled out from their content classes, and they are exposed to authentic academic language within the content classroom. In terms of the goal of helping students to succeed academically, co-teaching has the potential for increased efficiency in comparison to traditional pull-out models. The goal of co-teaching

is to have students learn academic language needed for success while learning needed content at the same time. The use of cognitively demanding classroom material as a vehicle through which language can be taught provides useful context keeping students from falling behind as a result of missing content instruction. This efficiency in teaching language is key, as many ELs are already more likely to be struggling in keeping up in mainstream courses (DelliCarpini 2009; Gándara, Rumberger, Maxwell-Jolly & Callahan 2003).

Cook and Friend (1995), in their article about the benefits of co-teaching in special education, outlined several considerations as to the benefits of co-teaching. Their purpose in writing the article was to consult prior studies and research about co-teaching and the implications this research had on those professionals beginning co-teaching partnerships; they cited the following advantages of co-teaching for students:

(a) "Increase instructional options for all students. (b) Improve program intensity and continuity. (c) Reduce stigma for students with special needs. (d) Increase support for teachers and related service specialists. (e) Increasing instructional options" (1995). Noticeable in these advantages is the inclusion of social benefits that students experience including reduced stigma and a sense of continuity in their educational experience.

Walter-Thomas' three-year study of 23 Virginia schools used interviews and observations to study co-teaching pairs. Their research found that teachers believed they saw the following increased benefits for the students as a result of professional collaboration: (a) increased self-confidence and self-esteem, (b) improved academic

performance, (c) improved social skills, (d) improvements for general education students and their academic and social skills (Walther-Thomas 1997).

Teachers may also experience increased professional satisfaction and professional development as a result if the co-teaching relationship is successful. Gately and Gately's 2001 article states, "Teachers involved in collaborative partnerships often report increased feelings of worth, renewal, partnership, and creativity (2001, pp.40)." Honigsfeld and Dove also suggested that teachers might feel a decrease in their sense of isolation (2010). A study by York-Barr, Ghere and Sommerness focuses on a collaborative project between an elementary school and a university with a focus on co-teaching. This project, that included special education teachers and ESL teachers in addition to mainstream content teachers, found the following benefits from collaboration and co-teaching: (a) More flexible and creative use of instructional time that advantaged students, (b) More knowledge about all the students and seeing different student strengths given the opportunity to view them in varied learning contexts, (c) Greater shared ownership of students and student learning, (d) Increased reflection on individual and collective teaching practices, (e) More learning from and with colleagues about students and about teaching and learning, (f) Increased collective expertise resulting in greater effectiveness with a variety of students, (g) Decreased teacher isolation, increased support and feeling valued by colleagues, (f) Itinerant teachers experiencing varied collaborative designs and strategies then being able to share those experiences and ideas across classrooms, and (g) Having more energy and greater enjoyment from teaching (2007, p. 317).

Co-teaching in ESL has the potential to be an effective and efficient model that will benefit teachers and students alike, and research suggests that in certain situations there can be great benefits as a result of co-teaching.

Factors that Influence Co-teaching Relationships

Although there is a shortage of definitive research attesting to the effectiveness of co-teaching as a means of providing ESL service, some studies do show that the model has the potential to be an effective tool when implemented successfully (Pardini 2006). According to Murawski and Dieker, in order to engage in effective co-teaching, two professionals must share in the planning, delivery, and assessment of instruction (2004). Originally, co-teaching was most-often used to service students in special education. Increasingly, schools are changing to a co-teaching model in order to serve their ESL students in content area settings (Zehler, Fleischman, Hopstock, Stephenson, Pendzick & Sapru 2003). Co-teaching in ESL represents a significant change for teachers who are untrained or inexperienced in co-teaching in regard to the previously more common pull-out method, in which ELs were isolated, in terms of both classroom setting and learning objectives, from the mainstream classes. Mainstream teachers are often unaware and untrained as to the unique needs of ELs in content subjects. Therefore, oftentimes the necessary language supports (visual supports, vocabulary definitions, language modifications, and building background knowledge) and attention to language development are not addressed in mainstream content classrooms.

Co-teaching in ESL represents a significant change for teachers, and many teachers have greatly varying perspectives on their feelings about co-teaching. Research

suggests several factors seem to have been the primary influence on teachers' attitudes about co-teaching in regard to the effectiveness of co-teaching pairs and individuals' attitudes about what it is like to teach in this model. Previous research suggests that the following factors influence teacher perspectives on co-teaching: each co-teacher's personality, district support, the level of training that each co-teacher receives, and the way in which the co-teaching was implemented by individuals or administration (Norton 2013; York-Barr 2003).

Jennifer Norton writes about several of these influential factors on co-teaching relationships. In her study of co-teachers' perceptions of each others' roles in kindergarten through fifth grade, Norton (2013) found that most co-teachers had a relatively similar viewpoint of each others' positions, but differed somewhat in regard to who was the primary instructor and the idea of sharing responsibilities. She also found that teachers desired to improve their planning in terms of the length of time and quality of time spent planning (Norton 2013). Teachers also felt as though this additional planning time would help to improve their instruction and reflection on students' needs (Norton 2013). Norton's (2013) study also studied the traits that co-teachers found desirable in their partners, and these included openness, flexibility, and the ability to differentiate material effectively. Both ESL and general education teachers found that additional training on the others' role would benefit the co-teaching teams.

Gately and Gately (2001) also wrote about important components of co-teaching that, when present, indicate a more successful co-teaching relationship. After having worked with co-teachers for more than a decade, Gately and Gately (2001) developed this list of

important components of co-teaching. They included the following eight components: (a) interpersonal communication, (b) physical arrangement, (c) familiarity with the curriculum, (d) curriculum goals and modifications, (e) instructional planning, (f) instructional presentation, (g) classroom management, and (h) assessment.

In York-Barr et al.'s (2007) previously mentioned three-year case study, the successes between ESL and general education co-teaching pairs were attributed to the following teacher characteristics: (a) being student-centered (e.g., "more focused on students than on territory"), genuinely caring about students, and taking a holistic view of student growth and life experience; (b) being competent and knowledgeable about students, curriculum, instruction, and assessment; (c) understanding classroom etiquette; (d) feeling secure and open, willingness to share ideas and perspectives and to change; (e) sharing commitment, responsibility, and accountability for student learning; (f) being flexible (e.g., "Everyone has to give up some of their freedom"); (g) demonstrating a high level of professionalism, respect, and trust; and (f) being a nice person with a passion for learning. (York-Barr, et al., 2007, pp. 319)

Jennifer Norton's (2013) study used interviews, as well as qualitative and quantitative surveys of elementary ESL and mainstream teachers, to examine co-teachers' perceptions of each other. Her research illuminated desired qualities of both ESL and mainstream teachers. Her findings suggested that ESL teachers could do the following to be effective co-teachers: (a) be respectful of the need to understand the content area curriculum in addition to language development, (b) be aware of the need to be tactful in helping general education teachers in their understanding of ELs' needs, (c) need(ing) to accept

that they must at times be the one to initiate the co-teaching development, and (d)

find(ing) ways to assess EL's language and content skills within the general education

setting (Norton 2013). Norton (2013) also discussed ways that general education teachers

can be more effective co-teachers including the following suggestions: (a) acknowledging

the need to learn about the development and needs of ELs, (b) helping ESL teachers to

assist ELs in accessing content material, (c) considering ideas in making a successful

shift to co-teaching, and (d) helping to come up with ideas to assess content and language

development of ELs within the general education setting.

Academic and Linguistic Factors Affecting Co-teaching Relationships

BICS and CALP

Teachers who have not received a great deal of training in working with English

learners might neglect the important distinction between BICS and CALP. Some students

might appear to have a high degree of English fluency because of their language skills in

context-heavy social situations. However, success in the classroom often requires a

different set of language skills that are necessary for academic situations. This language

proficiency is called CALP. These are the language skills needed to interpret,

comprehend, and produce language necessary for the mainstream content classroom. It is

not solely vocabulary but an entire set of language skills that are fundamental to

academic success (Zwiers 2007).

World-class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA)

A student's level of CALP can be difficult to determine. A standard for measuring

a student's academic language skills has been produced by WIDA, an organization that

provides standards and assessments of language proficiency for English language learners.

WIDA has a six-tier system. The lowest tier is *Entering*. At this stage, students can understand and produce only graphical representations of the content area language. Students progress to the next tier, *Beginning*, when they are able to comprehend and use general language related to the content area. In the third tier, *Developing*, students are able to use some specific language of the content area. In the fourth tier, *Expanding*, students use specific and some technical language of the content area. In the fifth tier, *Bridging*, students use specialized and technical language of the content area. In the final tier, *Reaching*, students have achieved grade-level academic language proficiency.

Individual Factors Affecting Co-teaching Relationships

The Teacher Relationship

The relationship and nature of collaboration between the co-teachers is often a major factor in the success or failure of a co-teaching (Murawski & Dieker 2008). Murawski and Dieker say the following about co-teaching relationships:

> Although co-teaching may be here to stay, co-teachers themselves do not always stick around. As researchers, teacher educators, and co-teachers ourselves, we are keenly aware of the issues related to obtaining—and more importantly, keeping—good co-teaching teams. In fact, educators frequently relate co-teaching to a marriage; unfortunately, research clearly indicates that many co-teaching marriages result in struggle, separation, or even divorce. (Dieker and Murawski 2008, pp. 40).

The relationship problems can be the result of many issues including the perceived power differential and communication patterns based on the role of specialist or mainstream/subject teacher (Arkoudis 2008; Davison 2006) relationships. Other aspects that could result in difficulties between co-teachers include: differing perspectives on education in regard to classroom management (Mastropieri 2005) and whether the co-teaching partnership was self-chosen or mandated by administration. Though there seems to be little research regarding this topic on co-teaching for ESL, Ruvalcaba's (2013) study of co-teaching partnerships between secondary school content teachers and special education teachers found that forced-pairing often creates obstacles to successful collaboration. Numerous researchers have written about the difficulties associated with co-teaching, as there are various potential sources that can contribute to unsuccessful outcomes (Arkoudis, 2003; Dieker & Murawksi, 2008; Davison 2006).

Research on co-teaching suggests that co-teachers don't always get along, and this alone can be a disadvantage of co-teaching (Dieker and Murawski 2008). Arkoudis writes that:

> Studies have highlighted that collaboration between ESL and mainstream teachers is a complex and complicated process, where the two teachers try to negotiate the mainstream curriculum through their epistemological understandings and through the power relationships that exist within the microsocial world of their school context. Yet educational policy on collaboration between ESL and mainstream teachers has assumed that the professional relationship is unproblematic and uncomplicated (Arkoudis 2006, pp. 416).

Teachers may also receive little direction or input as to job roles, responsibilities, or expectations on how to co-teach (Arkoudis 2006). Jennifer Norton suggests,

As a result, ESL teachers and general education (GE) teachers may have a range of attitudes and perceptions of what co-teaching is, what it is for, and how they should do it. Ideally, co-teachers jointly make curricular decisions and are partners in planning, teaching, and assessing, but co-teaching can take a variety of forms, and can even devolve to the ESL teacher acting as little more than an instructional aide for the GE teacher (2013, pp. 6).

This perceived power differential is another aspect of co-teaching that can make for difficulty in maintaining a co-teaching relationship.

Frank and Susan Gately suggest that co-teachers must move through a series of developmental stages in which they grow as a functioning team (Gately & Gately 2001). They suggest that there are several aspects through which co-teachers develop, and that they may develop each of these aspects unevenly, and may progress through stages at different rates depending on the degree to which they work together and foster this relationship. The following three stages are part of this development: The Beginning Stage, which is characterized by "Guarded, careful communication"; the Compromising Stage, which consists of "Give and take communication, with a sense of having to "give up" to "get"; and finally the Collaborating Stage, in which "Open communication and interaction, and mutual admiration take place (Gately and Gately 2001). Co-teaching requires time and training for both teachers to understand their roles and settle into a rhythm.

Administrators, when considering the merits of co-teaching, have assumed that ESL teachers would have the power to influence the mainstream educators in developing curriculum, but this influence is not always present (Arkoudis 2008). Arkoudis (2008) states that,

ESL teachers have felt uneasy about working with mainstream teachers as the professional relationship is fraught with misunderstandings and misconceptions, where the subject specialist has the power to accept or reject suggestions and where ESL teachers feel increasingly frustrated in their work (Arkoudis, 2006, pp. 428).

In her research on the conversational styles of mainstream and ESL teachers, she suggests that this assumption doesn't always prove true,

The conversations demonstrate the skill and perseverance necessary for the ESL teacher to establish some epistemological authority within science education. Yet the policy directions on mainstreaming ESL have assumed that any ESL and mainstream teacher can engage in cross-disciplinary planning. This assumption is problematic. It can be argued that cross- disciplinary conversations are a specialized skill and one that may not be suited to every ESL teacher, or every mainstream teacher (Arkoudis, 2006, pp. 429).

Training for Co-teaching

Another difficulty facing co-teaching relationships is a clarification of the roles of each teacher and a clear conceptualization of task between both co-teachers (2006). Davison (2006) suggests that this also means a clarification on the part of experts on what

each teacher's responsibility is in the classroom, so that ESL teachers don't just double the number of teachers in the classroom, but instead make a contribution as an expert that helps to differentiate the class material and guide curriculum. Furthermore, finding a way to objectively describe what a quality co-teaching relationship consists of is difficult, as one can look at various aspects including planning, student success, teacher perspectives, and feelings of efficacy (Davison 2006). This means that more research is necessary to provide co-teachers with a clear blue-print for what constitutes good teaching.

The lack of training for content teachers in instructing ELs can also be an issue. Teacher education programs often dedicate minimal training for teaching methods for English learners (Gándara, Rumberger, Maxwell-Jolly & Callahan 2003) despite their increasing demographic size. Professional development on this topic is also lacking, with the average teacher receiving less than 10% of professional development time devoted to accommodating the needs of ELs (Gándara, Rumberger, Maxwell-Jolly & Callahan 2003).

Planning Time and Preparation

Research suggests that one important factor in successful co-teaching is the co-teaching relationship, including how co-teachers plan. Davison (2006) suggested that more research is needed on the process of co-planning and co-teaching and how to better facilitate the development of co-teaching partnerships. She suggests that much of the prior research had been focusing upon the methods and techniques of co-teaching rather than the relationship (Davison 2006). In order to learn more about the relationships of successful co-teachers, she used discourse analysis among ESL and general education

teachers in a Taiwanese school, in which English was the language of instruction. Her study showed a pattern in the way successful teachers communicated. Davison found more successful collaborators doing the following: (a) using more specific technical language; (b) having more to say about specific students; (c) discussing activities and students in more specific and complex ways with more of a sense of agency in regard to classroom happenings; (d) more intensity when discussing classroom events; (e) more extended language or quotes; (f) in general, had more to say and were happier speaking with each other (2006).

As a result of these communicative characteristics, Davison developed a five-stage framework through which co-teaching relationships develop and increase in effectiveness. In the beginning stage, *passive resistance,* there is a desire to return to the old model. The next stages - *compliance, accommodation,* and *convergence* exhibit increasingly positive attitudes and greater implementation. In the final stage, *creative co-construction*, the collaboration is creative and intuitive.

Administrative Support in Co-teaching

As previously discussed, the change to a co-teaching format is a difficult process for some, and success with it takes time and energy. However, an examination of factors linked to the successful implementation of a co-teaching classroom may provide a basis for understanding how to ease the transition to a co-teaching model. There are several aspects of a change to co-teaching that can be considered, including the individuals involved, the teams, and administrative policy surrounding co-teaching in ESL.

Researchers have suggested that certain factors are necessary in implementing effective change from an administrative standpoint. Fullan (1996) wrote about change forces, which provide insight into administrative change. Fullan suggests that, "Policies are essential catalysts. However, if you try to mandate certain things--such as skills, attitudes, behaviors, and beliefs--your attempts to achieve change start to break down." (pp. 496). Another of Fullan's (1996) tenets for change is that "Problems are our friends" (pp. 496). In respect to co-teaching, as research that was earlier visited indicated, administrators must be prepared for problems and make sure to prepare teachers for setbacks associated with co-teaching. Davison found that there are stages of progression in a co-teaching relationship and that patience is required to find stability (2006). Fullan also suggests that a combination of centralization and decentralization of decision making is necessary, "If you leave it too much to the fate of decentralization, or try to control it from the center, it does not work. It is the interaction that really counts." (pp. 496). This suggests that both the power and vision for change must come from the district, the school, and the individual in order to be effective.

Administrators can assist in the change to a co-teaching model at both the district and site level. A well-implemented co-teaching program requires a great deal of training, resources, and support in order to succeed. Several studies have looked at the key factors in successful co-teaching model implementation in terms of a top-down, administration to classroom context.

Norton (2013), whose research study focused on teacher perspectives of co-teaching, suggests several methods in which school administrators can help teachers

become effective co-teachers. In terms of program implementation, Norton (2013) emphasizes built-in planning time as one very important factor in a successful co-teaching relationship, which is an idea that is consistently supported by many researchers. Along with this, Norton (2013) suggests that administrators can assist in the development of successful teaching pairs by limiting the number of partners with whom the ESL teacher works, so that teachers involved in co-teaching have adequate time to plan and reflect. Norton suggests that both limiting the number of co-teachers with whom a teacher works and examining the possibility of clustering ELs in a classrooms as means of creating efficiency and decreasing stress associated with beginning co-teaching. York-Barr et al. (2005) echo Norton's ideas of building in time for collaboration and allocating personnel efficiently. Additionally, they provide suggestions on developing co-teaching relationships. York-Barr et al. also suggest that the administration must make a commitment to professional development for individuals and teams through ongoing training and learning about successful collaboration. This includes having teaching pairs attend training on both ESL and general education curriculum for each to understand the others' roles (Norton, 2013).

Norton (2013) makes the following suggestions about implementation of co-teaching programs at the district level:

At the district level, policies regarding co-teaching need to be established and disseminated in a coherent and strategic manner. District level administrators need to coordinate across departments in order to ensure that messages about the establishment and implementation of co-teaching are consistent. If ESL teachers

are charged with initiating co-teaching and GE teachers are not apprised of the

roles that each teacher must play, successful co-teaching may be difficult to

achieve. However, district level administrators may consider managing a co-

teaching program in such a manner that includes stakeholders from both GE and

ESL areas at the district, school, and teacher levels (Norton 2013, p. 169).

Davison (2006) also suggests that a clear "conceptualization of task (p. 456)" is one of

the most important factors of success, and one in which the administration plays a crucial

role in addressing through district training:

> The first of these elements -- a clear conceptualization of the task -- is the most
>
> fundamental. Experience demonstrates that all too often collaborative teaching is
>
> seen as simply a case of another pair of hands; an attitude that 'two teachers are
>
> better than one.' In such theorizations of collaboration, teachers are simply
>
> doubled rather than differentiated. (Davison 2006, pp. 456)

It is clear that administration has an important part in supplying co-teachers with the

skills and knowledge that is the foundation for successful collaboration.

The implementation of co-teaching as a whole can be problematic in itself, in that

research suggests that in some cases it is not beneficial for administration to mandate co-

teaching, but to instead promote its use voluntarily. Hargreaves (as cited in Davison,

2006, p. 458) suggested that forced collaboration and co-teaching, which he refers to as

"contrived collegiality" can have negative consequences (as cited in Davison, 2006, pp.

458).

Given that successful co-teaching is difficult to achieve and sustain (Davison 2006), as other researchers have noted imposition of co-teaching may lead to increasingly negative views of co-teaching (Hargreaves 1994). Hargreaves and McMillan suggest that, "collaboration can connect, but it can just as easily divide (as cited in Davison, 2006, pp. 459)". In cases where co-teaching is mandated, Davison (2006) suggests that proper administration of co-teaching implementation is critical, and that it is essential that the districts and schools provide the necessary training and support to make co-teaching successful.

The Gap

Although there is available research on co-teaching in general and additional research on co-teaching involving ESL teachers, there are still many areas that require further investigation. Additional research is needed in regard to teachers' perceptions of co-teaching overall, as well as their valuation of specific areas of co-teaching, and how this valuation is linked to feelings of effectiveness in co-teaching partnerships. Given the shortage of research in these areas, additional understanding of these aspects of co-teaching will hopefully provide more insight into program effectiveness, improving teacher relationships, progression through stages of co-teaching, and ways to make the practice more sustainable.

Although co-teaching is increasingly being used as a teaching method in serving ELs, a scarcity of research exists on co-teaching as a method of teaching ELs (Dove & Honigsfeld 2010; Norton, 2013; Davison 2006). In addition to a lack of research on co-teaching in ESL, there is also a deficit in common criteria that define "successful" co-

teaching (Norton, 2013; Davison 2006). However, several research studies have concentrated upon teachers' perceived notions of the advantages and disadvantages and best practice based on anecdotal co-teaching reports on the part of teachers. Given the difficulty in coordinating a study on the effectiveness of co-teaching as a teaching model in ESL, it may instead be useful to focus on the research on teachers' views of the effectiveness of themselves and their partners in their co-teaching partnerships in regards to best practice to establish potential areas in which common themes might emerge.

Research Question

In the next chapter, we will discuss our methodology in answering our research question: *What do co-teachers believe are the most important aspects of best-practice in co-teaching, and which areas of best-practice areas correspond most closely with feelings of efficacy in the classroom?* We will be looking at both mainstream and ESL teachers' perspectives on these co-teaching partnerships. The research will utilize a survey given to teachers in co-teaching relationships.

Summary

In this chapter we reviewed research on co-teaching in ESL. We discussed the research on the history and evolution of co-teaching in regards to ESL instruction. We also discussed the literature on the benefits of the co-teaching model and the important factors that influence perceptions of teachers' effectiveness in a co-teaching partnership. Finally, we reviewed research on the following four important factors in an effective co-teaching partnership: relationship, training, planning and preparation, and administrative support.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

The focus of this paper is to explore our research question: *What do co-teachers believe are the most important aspects of best-practice in co-teaching, and which of these areas of best-practice correspond with feelings of efficacy in the classroom?* We hope to gain an understanding of what practicing teachers feel are the most important aspects in their success, as they are the ones who have direct insight into their practice.

The focus of this chapter is on the methodology used in this study. For this research project, we will be using surveys of both mainstream and ESL teachers' perspectives on their co-teaching partnerships. First, we will present a description of the research model. Next, we will present a rationale for our choice of the research model. Finally, the remainder of the chapter will provide the steps that will be taken to conduct research and gather data.

Rationale and Description of Data Collection Tools

Little research has been done exploring teachers' perspectives of what works for them in a co-teaching setting. We hope to gain an understanding of what practicing teachers feel are the most important aspects in their success, as they are the ones who have direct insight into their practice. There is also a shortage of information regarding the relative importance of the various best-practice suggestions proposed by researchers,

as some studies simply dictate the most important aspects without input from teachers. When soliciting teacher opinions, many studies look at individual aspects associated with co-teaching success. Our study will look at what aspects of co-teaching teachers find most important, as well as how well they rate their effectiveness in each aspect.

The data collection tool used for this study is a survey of co-teachers to be conducted through an online survey using Survey Monkey. Participants will be both mainstream and ESL teachers who work in co-teaching partnerships. The survey will utilize Likert scale questions. The participants will rate their effectiveness in different areas of best-practice and also to rate the perceived importance of each area in their practice.

Quantitative Research

Given our goal of collecting information from 20 co-teachers, a quantitative research paradigm was the best fit for our study. Mackey and Gass suggest that the goal of a quantitative study is to "determine a relationship between or within variables" (Mackey & Gass 2005, pp. 137). Within the quantitative research paradigm, there is a further division into two types of research, which are referred to as associational and experimental research (Mackey & Gass 2005). For the purpose of our project, we will be using associational research, about which Mackey & Gass suggested the following:

> The goal of associational research is to determine whether a relationship exists between variables and, if so, the strength of that relationship. This is often tested statistically through correlations, which allow a researcher to determine how closely two variables (e.g., motivation and language ability) are related in a given

population. Associational research is not concerned with causation, only co-occurance (Mackey & Gass 2005, pp. 137).

Within the quantitative and associational research paradigm, the more specific form of our research is a correlative study. A correlative study may be used to determine if or how strong the relationship is between or among variables, and can also be used to make predictions if the relationship between variables is strong enough (Mackey & Gass 2005). Correlation fits our project nicely, as we hope to determine if there are aspects of best-practice that teachers value more highly than others. Additionally, we hope to find out how teachers' valuations of certain areas of best-practice seem to relate to their overall feelings of efficacy in a co-teaching model. For instance, a teacher may feel that a positive relationship is a critical factor in a co-teaching relationship in order to benefit ELs, but they may actually rate their relationship with their co-teacher very negatively. Secondly, we can take the co-teachers' rating of their own relationship and see how that relates to their overall rating of their success as co-teachers in serving ELs. We will have teachers rate themselves in various areas of best practice and see how these link to their overall score of the success of their co-teaching relationship.

The variables that will serve as the basis for our study are that we are investigating four best practice areas of teaching including administration in co-teaching, planning and preparation, training for co-teaching, and co-teacher relationship. The goal is to examine the relationship between these best-practice factors, to research teacher's perspectives on their importance, and link their overall feelings of effectiveness or competency in serving ELs.

One possible difficulty associated with quantitative research are the data elicitation tools themselves and whether these tools interfere with the respondents' ability to address the research questions (Mackey & Gass 2005). Mackey and Gass (2005) suggest that all materials must be piloted in order to ensure that each data elicitation is indeed gathering the intended information. In order to ensure that our survey is indeed gathering the intended information, we will be piloting our survey with a group of five volunteers and asking for their feedback on the survey. Pilot participants will be asked to evaluate the survey in regard to directions and clarity, in order to ensure that the results are not effected by either of these factors.

Data Collection

Participants

The participants that will be surveyed in this research study will be ESL and mainstream teachers from grades K-12. Each of the participants will have taught in an ESL/content area co-teaching partnership. Survey requests will be distributed to teachers that are enrolled in or have graduated from Hamline University's ESL licensure or Master's in ESL program via the Hamline University's Listserv, which is an email list of students or graduates from those university programs. All of the respondents will be asked to complete the questionnaire on the Internet survey site called Survey Monkey. The goal of the research project is to survey 20 teachers, with approximately equal numbers of ESL and content teachers.

Location/Setting

Surveys will be sent to teachers in elementary and high school programs throughout the country. Given that co-teachers will be asked to participate in a survey through Survey Monkey and Hamline University's email Listserv, it is possible participants are geographically located throughout the United States and possibly internationally, the only restriction being that they are co-teaching in an ESL setting.

Data Collection Technique #1

We will use questionnaires, a sub-category of survey research, in order to gather data. A questionnaire can be defined as "any written instruments that present respondents with a series of questions or statements to which they are to react either by writing out their answers or selecting them among existing answers" (Brown 2001, pp. 6).

Questionnaires are commonly used when gathering information on attitudes and opinions from a large group of people and have been used extensively in second language research (Mackey & Gass 2005). Researchers can use questionnaires to gather information like beliefs and motives that respondents are able to report themselves (Mackey & Gass 2005). The use of questionnaires is a more realistic way of gathering thoughts and opinions than face-to-face interviews, in which many teachers do not have the time to participate (Munn & Drever 1990). Munn and Drever (1990) also suggest the following four advantages of questionnaires: they are a more efficient use of time; they allow anonymity in responses for participants, which may lead to more honest answers; there is a high return rate; and they allow for standardization of questions (Munn and Drever 1990). Therefore, this method seems to lend itself to a research study that is

designed to, not only gather information from a large number of respondents, but also specifically focus on the beliefs and motives of teachers.

Questionnaires can be made up of closed-ended and open-ended questions. Close-ended questions are questions where possible answers are decided upon by the researcher, whereas open-ended questions allow respondents freedom in how they answer the question. Our survey will contain closed-ended questions. Macky & Gass (2005) suggest that "closed-item questions typically involve a greater uniformity of measurement and therefore greater reliability. They also lead to answers that can be easily quantified and analyzed" (pp. 93). Given the fact that we want our informants to comment on specific aspects of best practice and want uniform responses to these questions in order to quantify and analyze the answers, the questionnaire is best suited to gather data in this way.

Our questionnaire (See Appendix A: *Survey of Co-teachers in ESL*) will first identify a co-teacher's role in the co-teaching model. The following questions on the questionnaire will ask participants to rate their feelings about the overall effectiveness of their co-teaching partnerships, as well as identify their feelings of effectiveness in four different key aspects (the co-teaching relationship, training in co-teaching, planning time and preparation, and administrative support) of the co-teaching model.

Likert scale questions, which serve to solicit information on attitudes and behaviors, will serve as the question type most commonly used in the study. Likert scale questions are designed to ask participants to rate their attitudes or behaviors according to degree of agreement. This is the question-type most commonly used to directly measure

the respondents' attitudes (McLeod 2008). Likert scale questions make the assumption that attitudes can be measured, and that attitudes or beliefs are linear in intensity, and traditionally involved a five, seven, or nine point scale in which the middle choice is a neutral belief or attitude (McLeod 2008). One advantage of the Likert scale is that it allows respondents to express the degree of value they wish to express, as opposed to simply answering yes or no to a question, and therefore garners data that can be easily analyzed by researchers (McCleod 2008). Our study will use Likert questions that ask participants to rate their level of effectiveness and valuation in four aspects of best-practice for co-teaching.

Procedure

Materials

The materials needed for the study will include only the survey questions administered through the online survey site Survey Monkey. They will consist of Likert scale questions and closed-ended questions on best practice and descriptions of collaborative experiences in co-teaching.

Data Analysis

This study will use mean scores and data correlation as a means of analysis. The mean scores will be used to find information about the value of importance that each teacher places on the various best practice areas of relationship, training, administration, and planning. The data correlation analysis will be used to examine the self-rated scores that each teacher gives to themselves in separate best-practice areas and how these scores relate to their overall score of effectiveness in co-teaching.

Measures of central tendency such as mode, median, and mean are commonly used by second language researchers to provide precise quantitative information about typical behavior (Mackey & Gass 2005). For our study we will use mean scores for our analysis. Although mean score can skew results of smaller-scale studies if extreme results are recorded by respondents (Mackey & Gass 2005), the five point Likert Scale of our study limits the variability of scores, and it is possible that percentages of points may provide more accuracy in our analysis of ratings, given the small scoring number. For instance, respondents' aggregate scoring may suggest a median score of teachers' self-ratings of both planning/preparation and relationship, but a mean score may indicate an average of a 2.75 score on planning/preparation and a score of 3.45 rating on the scoring of their co-teaching relationship. Therefore, we will use mean scores, which may provide more accuracy in a study with whole point scoring on a five point scale.

We will use correlative analysis to examine the scores teachers provide for their overall effectiveness in co-teaching, and the effectiveness ratings they provide for each individual area of best-practice. Correlation research is used in quantitative studies in which no variables are manipulated, and seeks to explain the relationship between variables, but does not determine causation of any links in variables (Mackey & Gass 2005). Correlation studies provide information on the strength of the relationship between two variables. If there is a strong relationship (a higher positive or negative number), a change in one variable will be closely tied to the change in another, whereas if the correlation coefficient is closer to zero, there is no real relation between a change in the variables (Mackey & Gass 2005).

Verification of Data

Mackey & Gass (2005) also provide advice for maximizing the effectiveness of a questionnaire by doing the following four things: using a simple and uncluttered format; developing unambiguous and answerable questions, review by several researchers, and piloting among a representative sample of respondents (pp. 96). Our piloting will help to gather a representative sample and will also be used to garner advice as a review of the complexity and clarity of questions.

The questionnaire will be administered using the online tool called Survey Monkey. The use of a survey will help to address specific questions regarding attitudes, preferences, training, and other specific co-teaching themes from a greater number of respondents than would be possible from other means.

Surveys will be conducted online through the site Survey Monkey. We will also seek to analyze the results to consider whether the survey of mainstream teacher versus ESL teacher has an impact on the results, as responses between the two may vary.

One concern about the use of questionnaires is that the validity of results will be called into question as a result of the social desirability of certain answers (Paulhus 1984). For example, one might not want to publicly admit that they don't feel effective as a teacher, so they may feel the need to rate their effectiveness more highly than they actually believe is true. Studies have found that respondents are more likely to provide desirable characteristics when asked to provide personal information such as names, telephone numbers, or addresses (Paulhus 1984). Therefore, allowing respondents to answer questions anonymously will increase the likelihood of more natural responses,

instead of rating themselves higher or providing answers that they might consider more desirable.

Ethics

The following precautions will be undertaken during this study to assure that participant's rights are protected during research and publication:

1. Anonymity of participants will be protected.

2. Data will be secured through the use of a password-protected computer or Google Drive account in which research information and data is kept secure. The data will then be destroyed one month after the completion of the study.

4. Participants will receive an email that informs them that clicking on the button at the bottom of the first page to continue the survey will serve as informed consent of the participants.

5. Participants will also provide informed consent (Appendix B: *Informed Consent Letter*) before taking the survey. In order to start the survey, participants will read the informed consent message and by clicking the *next page* button, are informed that they are providing their consent to participate in the survey.

<div align="center">

Conclusion

</div>

In this chapter, we have discussed our research methods, including the administration of our survey, the selection of our participants, and the type of questions used in our survey. We have discussed the reasons for using the quantitative research paradigm in our project, as well as the advantages and disadvantages of this paradigm. We have attempted to address possible concerns in gathering qualitative data, as well as

concerns unique to our study. In our next chapter we will display the results from the

survey in our research project.

CHAPTER FOUR

Results

Introduction

This study was intended to research co-teaching in ESL and four different areas of best practice (administration, planning and preparation, training for co-teaching, and co-teaching relationship). The research project took place through the use of an online survey through the website Survey Monkey. We chose to use a quantitative research paradigm, because we wanted to increase the number of respondents and to code and easily compare their responses. Within this paradigm, we chose to use correlative analysis to examine if respondents' self-ratings of individual effectiveness and partnership effectiveness correlated with ratings of effectiveness in each of the four areas of best practice for co-teaching. The goal of our research was to examine the relationship between these variables.

Respondents were invited to take the survey through an email invite distributed through Hamline University's Listserv email list, which is a way of distributing emails to current and former students of Hamline University's ESL Licensure and Master's in English as a Second Language programs. The responses were collected between the dates of March 23rd, 2016 and April 22nd, 2016. The survey remained open until April 14th, 2016, and requests through the Hamline Listserv email had failed to produce additional respondents during the last week.

Through the collection of this data, we hoped to answer the question: *What do co-teachers believe are the most important aspects of best-practice in co-teaching, and which of these areas of best-practice correspond with feelings of efficacy in the classroom?* Twenty-eight people responded to the invitation to participate in the survey, though four of those respondents were disqualified from the survey because they did not meet the qualifications of currently serving as an ESL or mainstream teacher currently co-teaching in a classroom for the purpose of servicing ELs.

This chapter will provide a detailed overview of the results from the survey. We will begin by providing results of questions that related to teachers' overall feelings about co-teaching, and then move on to a presentation of the results of questions from each of the four categories of best practice, one at a time.

Results of Teachers' Overall Feelings on Co-teaching

In question two, teachers were asked to rank which area of best practice they felt was most important from the following four categories of co-teaching: relationship with co-teacher, training for co-teaching, planning time and preparation, and administrative support in co-teaching. The results were rated on a four-point scale, which indicates higher rankings of each best-practice area through a higher score. Teachers felt that the most important aspect of co-teaching was the relationship between co-teachers with a score of 3.13; planning time and preparation were rated as the second most important aspect with a score of 2.75; training for co-teaching was rated as the third most important aspect with a score of 2.25; lastly, administrative support in co-teaching was rated as the least important of the four areas of best practice with a score of 1.88.

Figure 1. *Summary of Respondents' Rankings.*

Respondents Ranking for Each Best Practice Category. (1 = most important, 4= least important)				
Answer Options	1- Most Important	2	3	4- Least Important
Co-teaching Relationship	14	4	1	5
Training for Co-teaching	3	6	9	6
Planning Time and Preparation	4	11	8	1
Administrative Support in Co-teaching	3	3	6	12

Question three asked respondents whether they were serving in the role of mainstream or ESL teacher in the co-teaching relationship. Twenty-one of the respondents were ESL teachers, while three of the respondents were mainstream teachers.

Figure 2. *Graph of Respondents' Teaching Fields.*
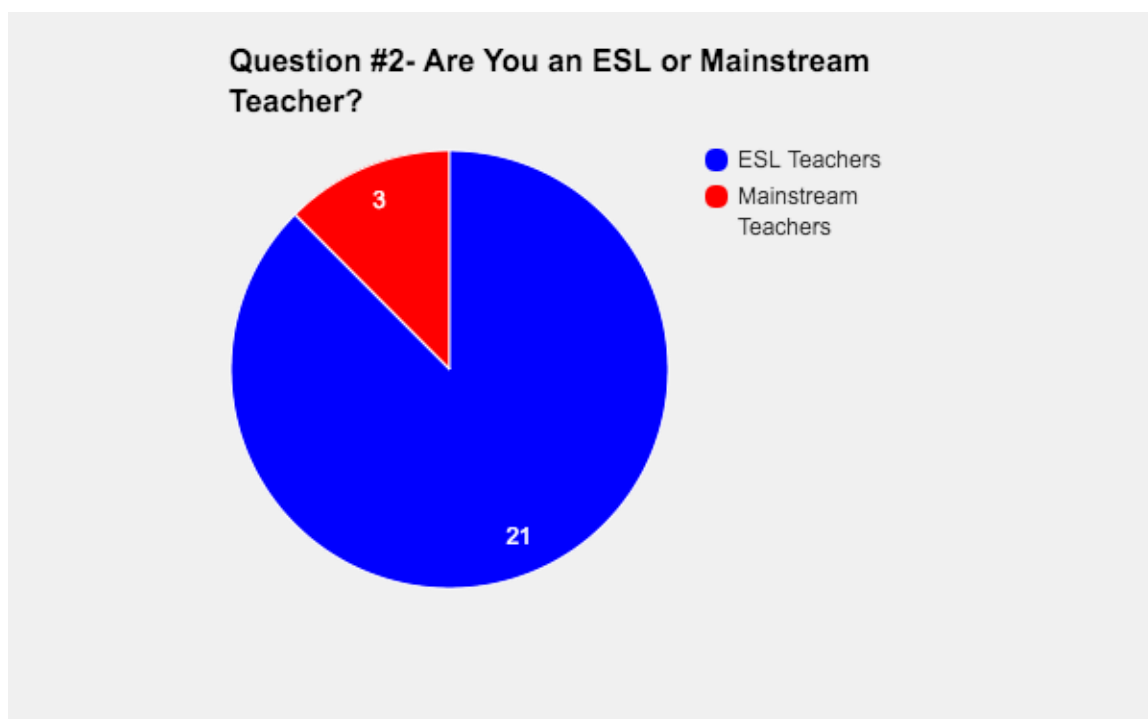
Question four requested that teachers rate their individual effectiveness as a co-teacher on a Likert Scale from 1-5, with one being *ineffective*, two being *mostly ineffective*, three being *somewhat effective,* four being *mostly effective,* and five being

completely effective. The average score was 3.5 with zero teachers rating themselves as *ineffective*, two teachers rating themselves as *mostly ineffective*, ten teachers rating themselves as *somewhat effective*, ten teachers rating themselves as *mostly effective*, and two teachers rating themselves as *completely effective*.

Figure 3. *Individual Effectiveness as a Co-teacher.*
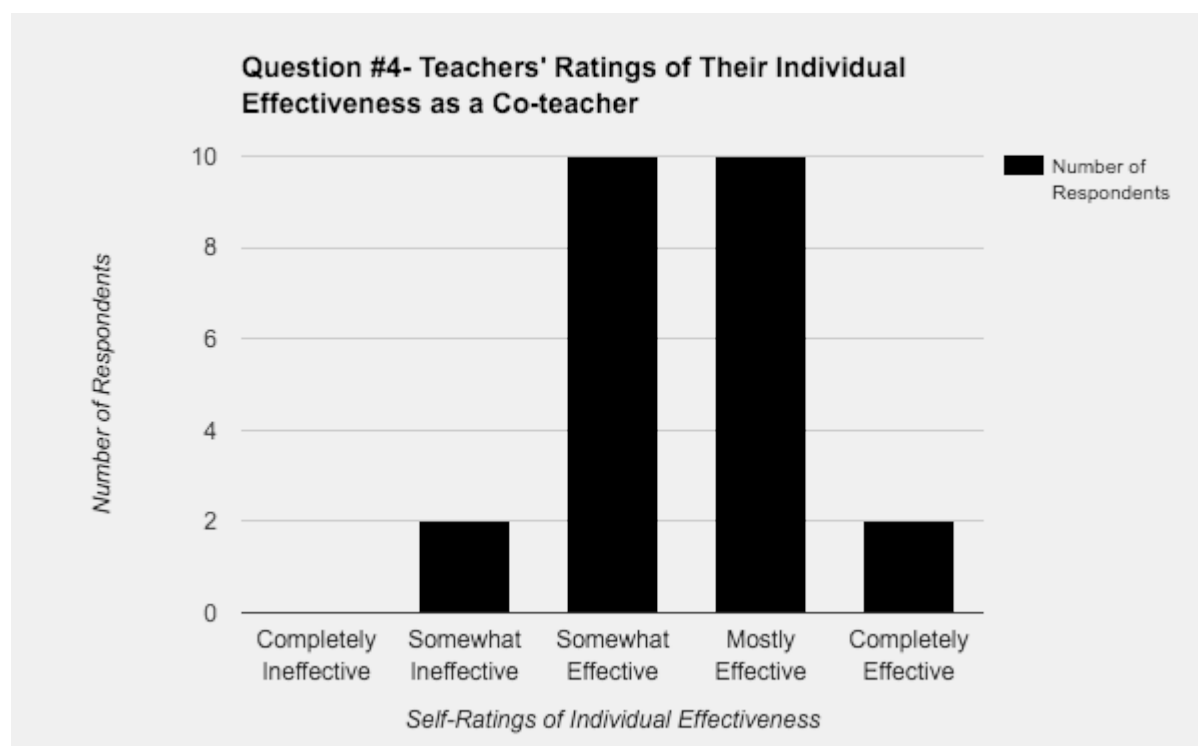
When asked to rate the effectiveness of their co-teaching partnerships at large, the respondents' average weighted response was 3.79. This was a higher rating than the 3.5 that teachers gave when asked to rate their individual effectiveness within that same partnership.

Figure 4. *Co-teaching Partnership(s).*

Questions #14, 27, 40- Teachers Ratings of Their Co-teaching Partnership(s)
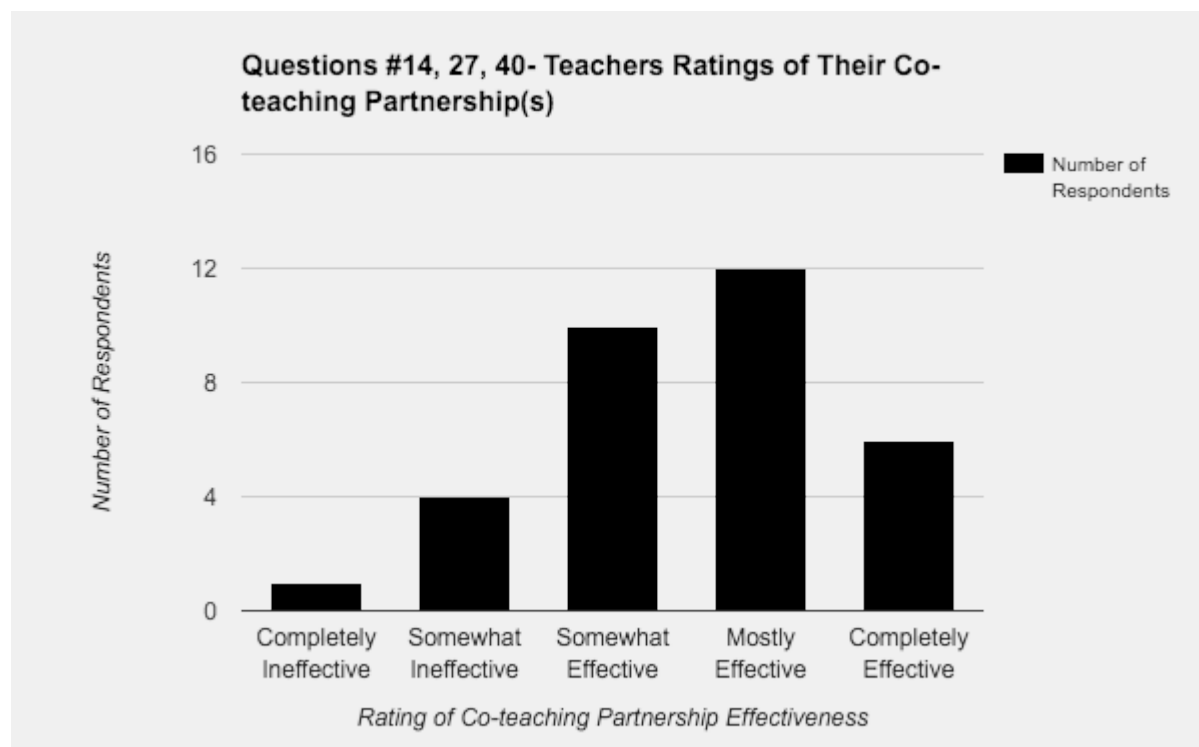
Administration in Co-teaching

Respondents were asked to answer survey questions related to their feelings about

how school administration and district-wide administration affects their co-teaching. In

doing so, one question they were asked was to rate the effectiveness of their

administrations' support for co-teaching. The weighted average of the score that

respondents provided was 3.04. Three respondents rated their administrators as

completely ineffective, four rated administrators as *mostly ineffective*, seven rated them as

somewhat effective, nine rated them as *mostly effective*, and one rated their administrator

as *completely effective*.

Figure 5. *Administrative Effectiveness.*
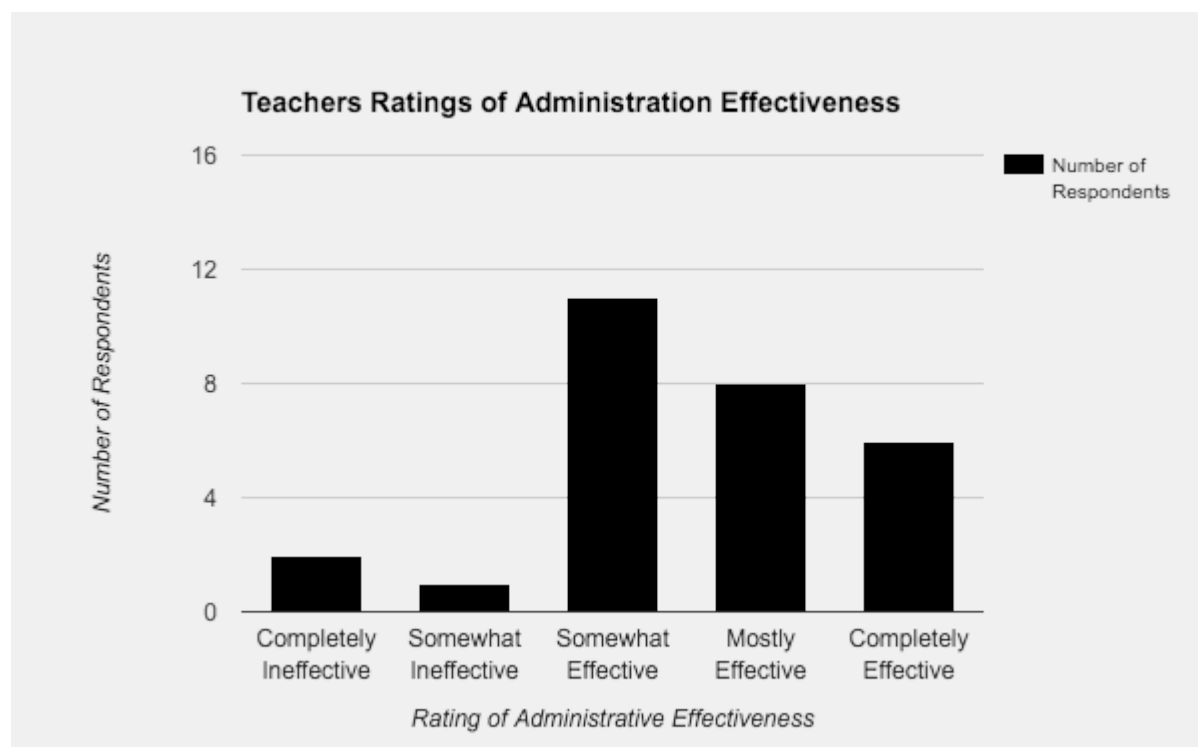
Teachers were also asked additional questions regarding their ratings of administration and administrative decisions including whether or not they were mandated to co-teach or whether they decided to do so freely, whether they had freedom in choosing co-teaching partners, how quickly and effectively administrators have assisted in addressing issues, administrators' allowance and encouragement of co-teaching training for the partners, if administrators have readily provided extra planning time for co-teachers, and whether or not administrators have provided appropriate leadership. The results of these areas of inquiry regarding administrative practices are contained in the following charts:

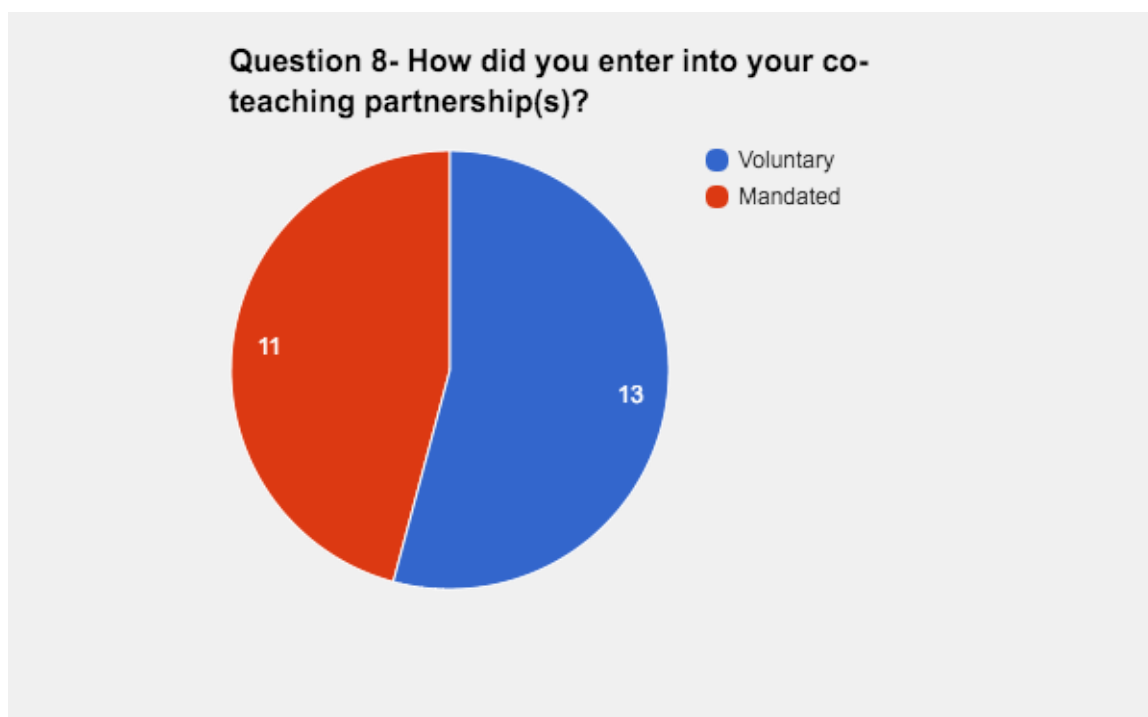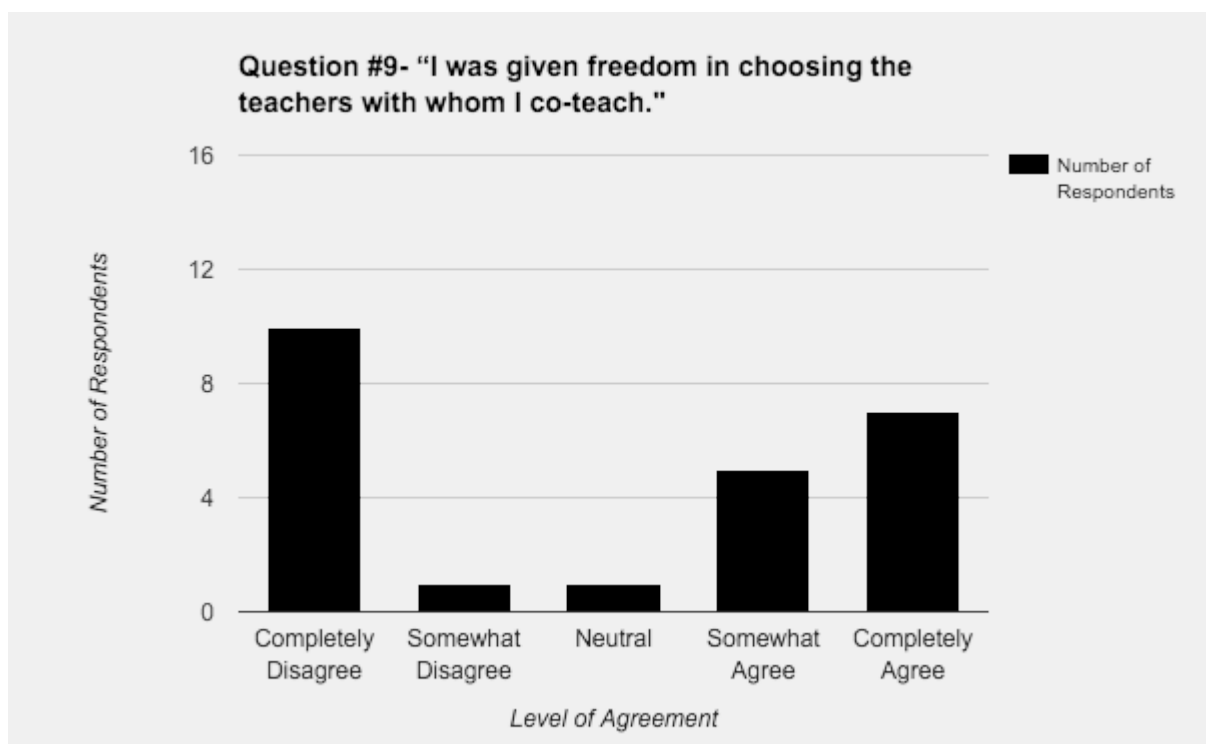Figure 6. *Graph of Co-teaching Partnership(s) Origins.*

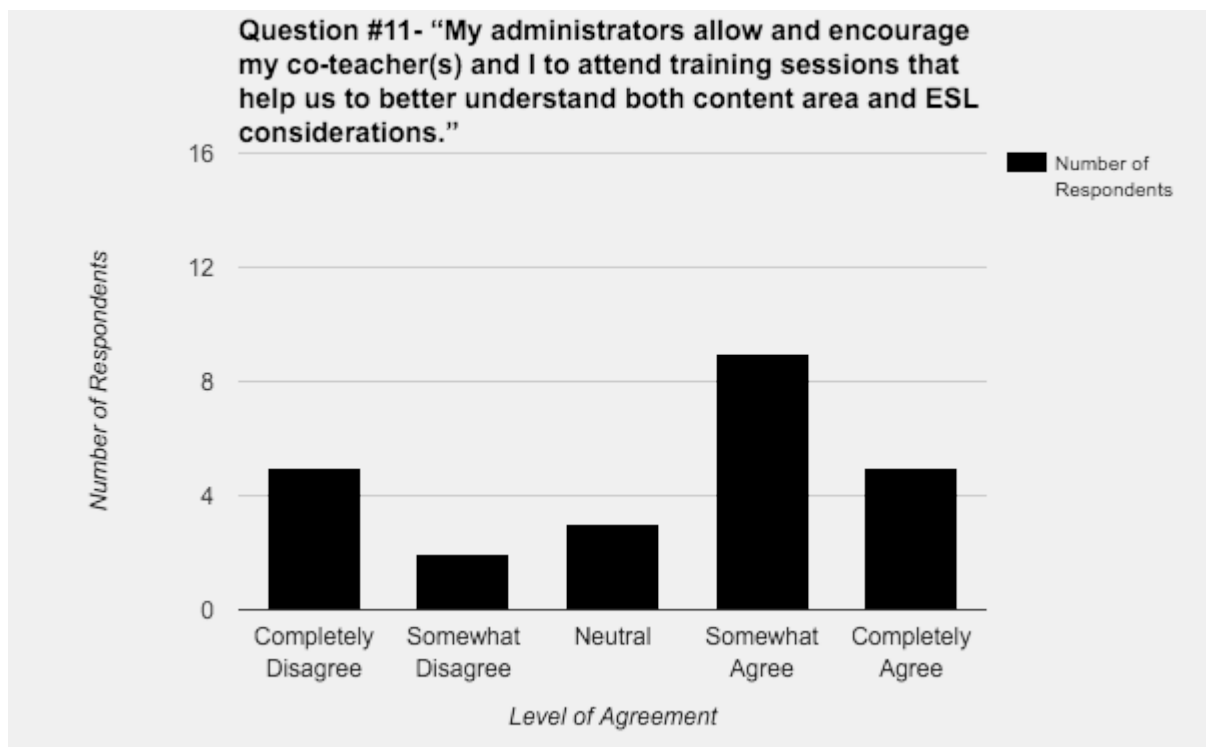Figure 7. *Choice in Co-teaching Partnership.*

For figures eight and nine, the following trends emerged. More respondents reported voluntarily entering their co-teaching partnership than being mandated. Nearly half of the respondents reported not having freedom in choosing their co-teaching partner. However, half of the respondents indicated that they had at least some freedom in choosing their co-teaching partner.

Figure 8. *Administrative Effectiveness in Resolving Problems.*
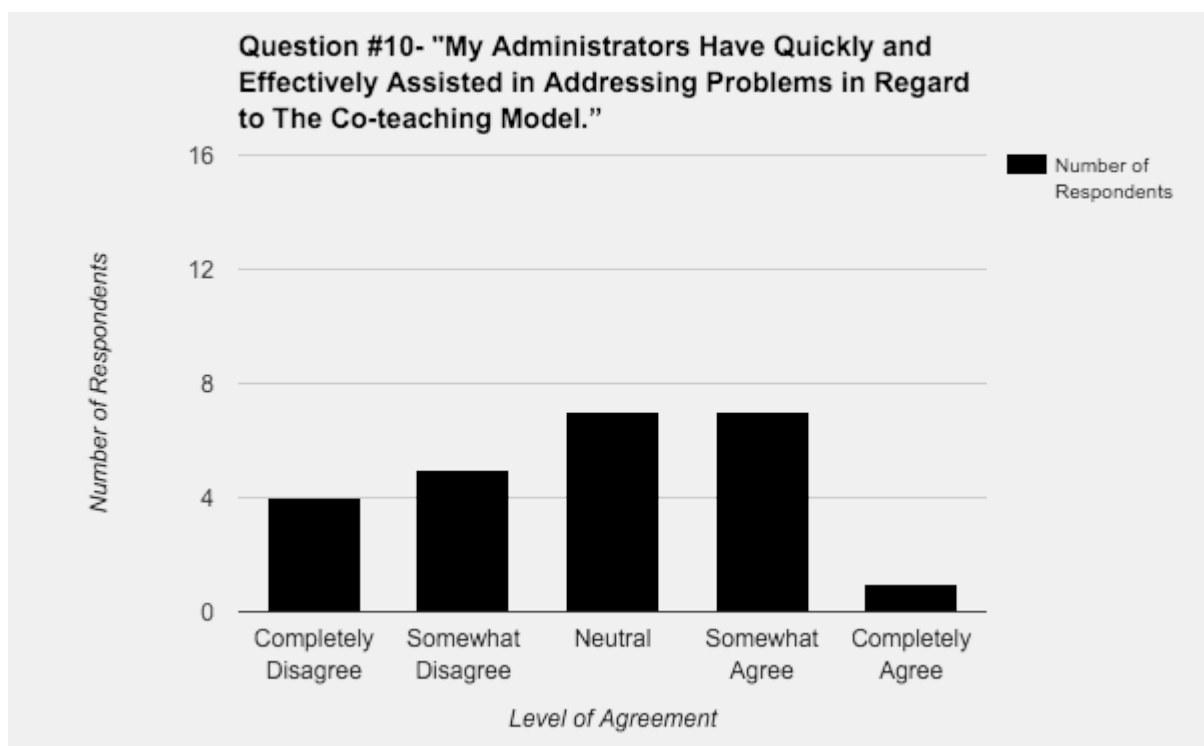
Only one person rated their administration highly in regards to addressing in the co-teaching model. Two-thirds (16 out of 24) of respondents were either neutral or disagreed that their administrators quickly and effectively assisted in addressing problems in regard to co-teaching.

Figure 9. *Administrators Support for Co-teacher Training.*

Question #11- "My administrators allow and encourage my co-teacher(s) and I to attend training sessions that help us to better understand both content area and ESL considerations."

More than half of the respondents (14 out of 24) reported that their administrators allowed and encouraged co-teaching partners to attend training.

Figure 10. *Administrators Provision of Co-teacher Planning Time.*
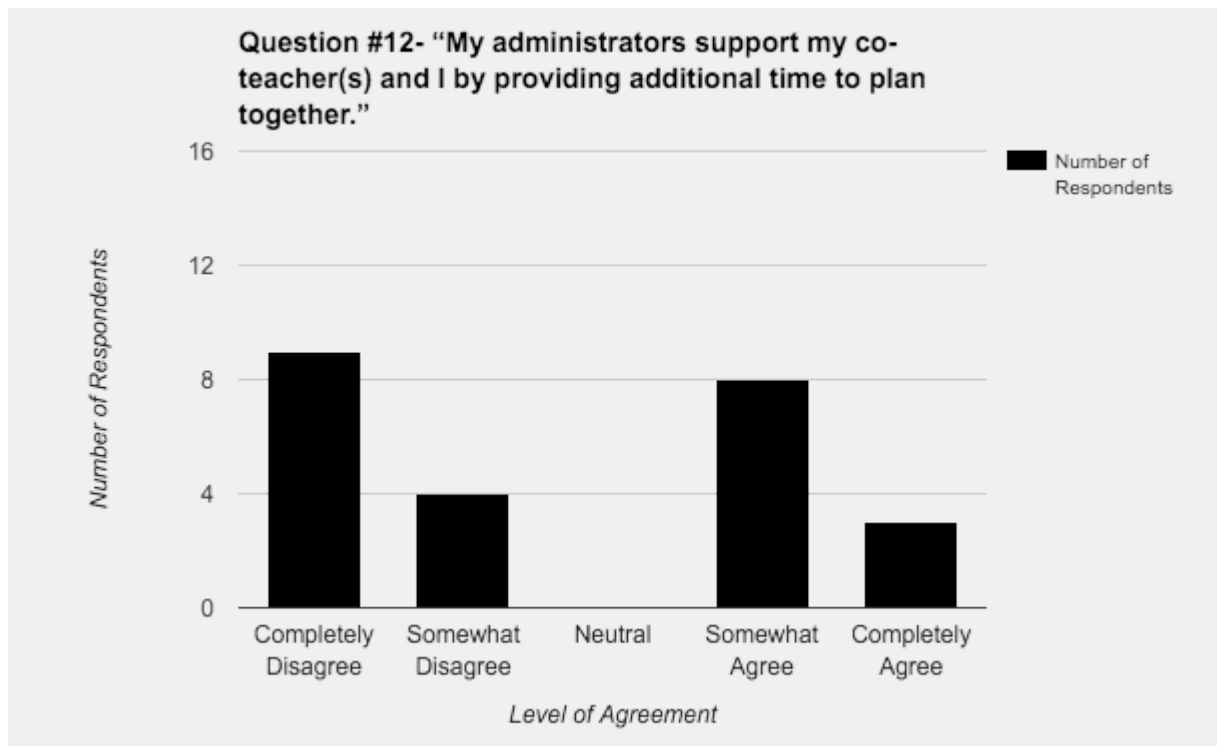
Respondents were split on agreement on whether their administrators gave them additional time to plan. Over a third (9 of 24) of the respondents completely disagreed with the statement that their administrators provided additional time to plan together.

Figure 11. *Administrators Provision of Co-teaching Leadership.*
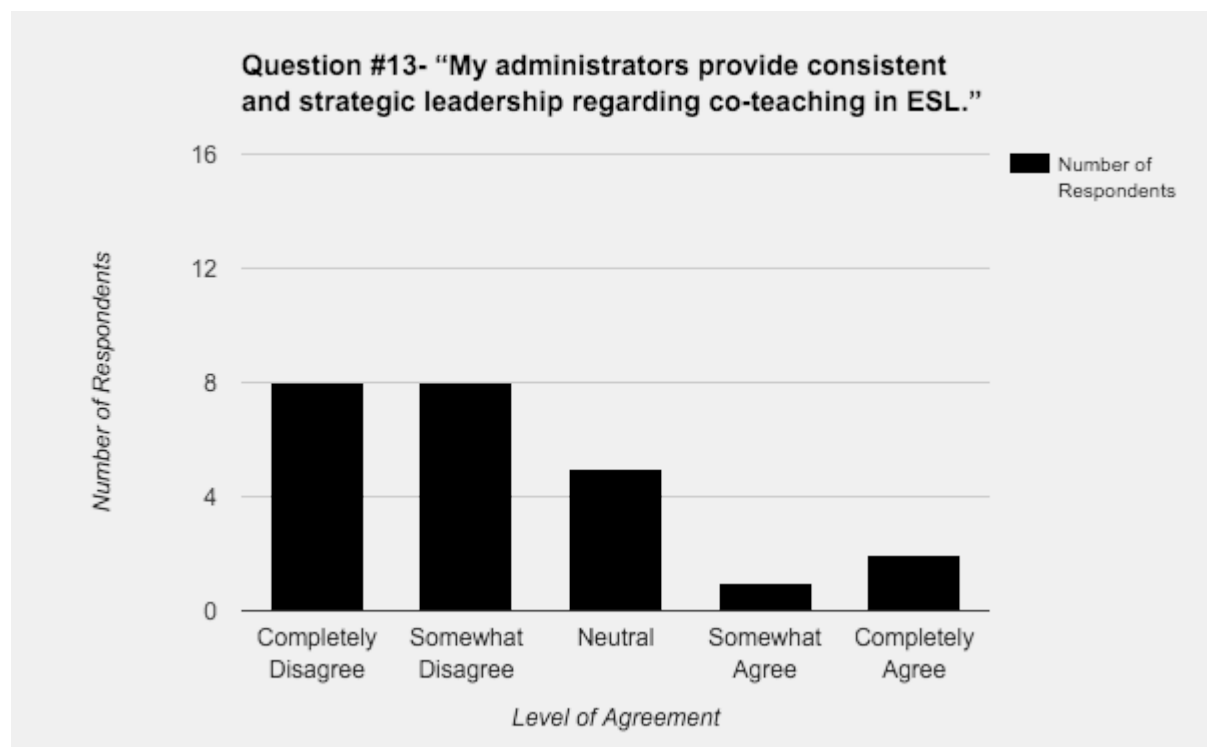
Two-thirds (16 out of 24) of respondents disagreed with the statement that their administrators provided consistent and strategic leadership regarding co-teaching in ESL. Only three agreed.

The results of the responses about administration varied, with some supporting administrators efforts and others feeling as though administrators' leadership was inadequate. However, as whole, respondents perceived that administrators could do more to support co-teachers.

Planning and Preparation

Teachers also responded to survey questions about their planning and preparation practices, as well as the perceived importance of this aspect of co-teaching. Respondents

were asked to rate the effectiveness of their planning and preparation in their co-teaching

partnership. The weighted average of the responses was 3.18, with the highest number of

respondents suggesting that their planning and preparation were *somewhat effective*.

Figure 12. Effectiveness of Planning and Preparation.
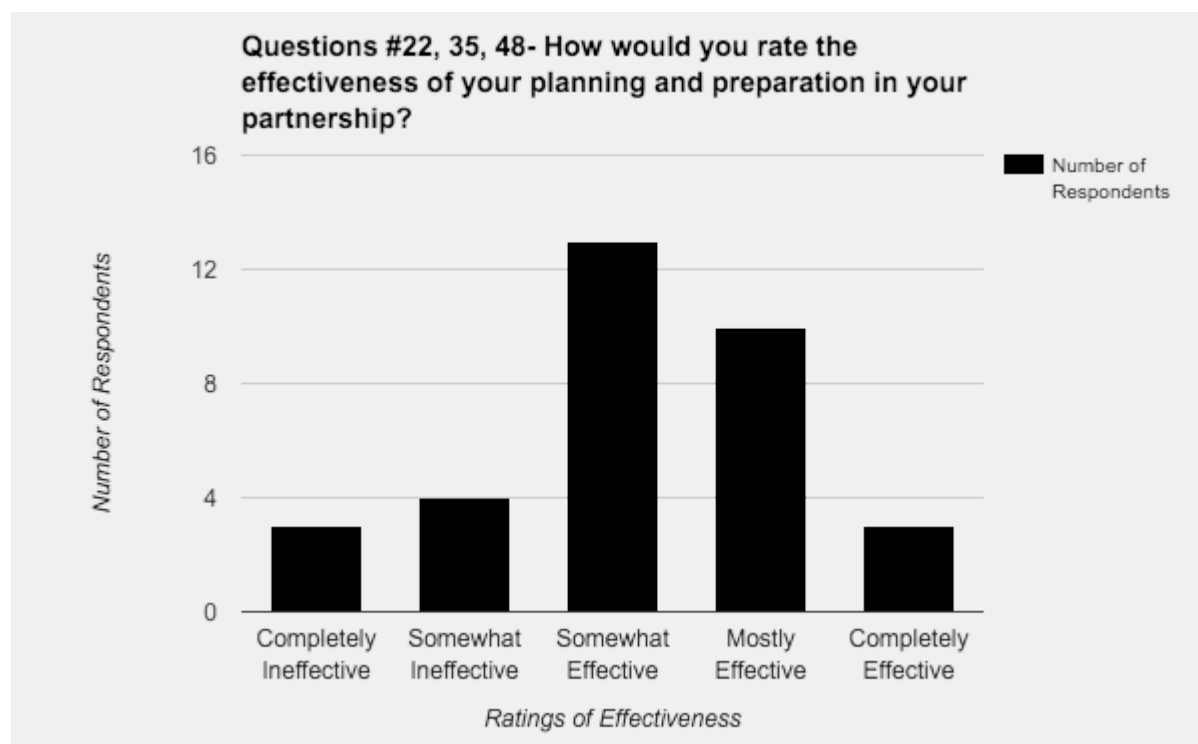
Teachers were also asked additional questions regarding their planning and

preparation focused upon discussion of lesson plans, sharing of planning responsibilities,

and frequency of discussions regarding specific students education. The results of those

questions are contained in the following charts.

Figure 13. Meeting Regularity with Co-teaching Partner.
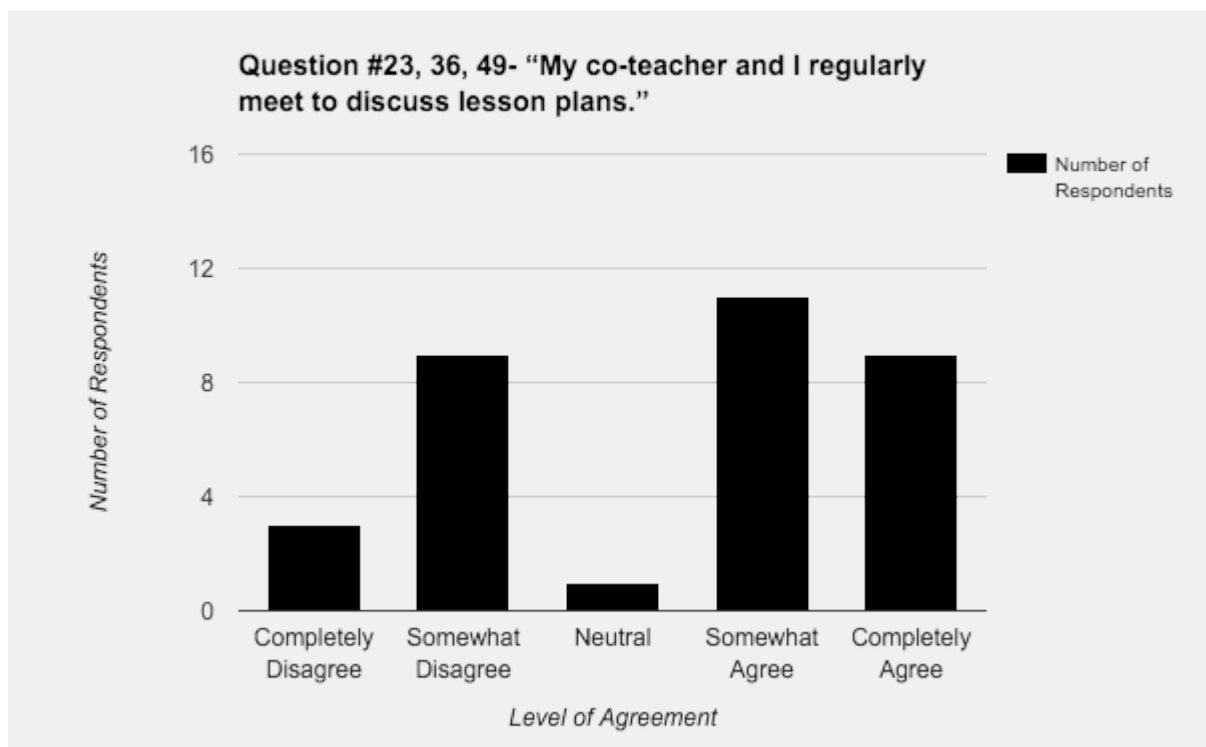
Respondents were split on whether they met regularly with their co-teaching partner to discuss lesson plans, with only one neutral response. However, less than 10% of the respondents completely disagreed with the statement that they met regularly with their co-teaching partner.

Figure 14. *Sharing Lesson Plan Responsibilities.*
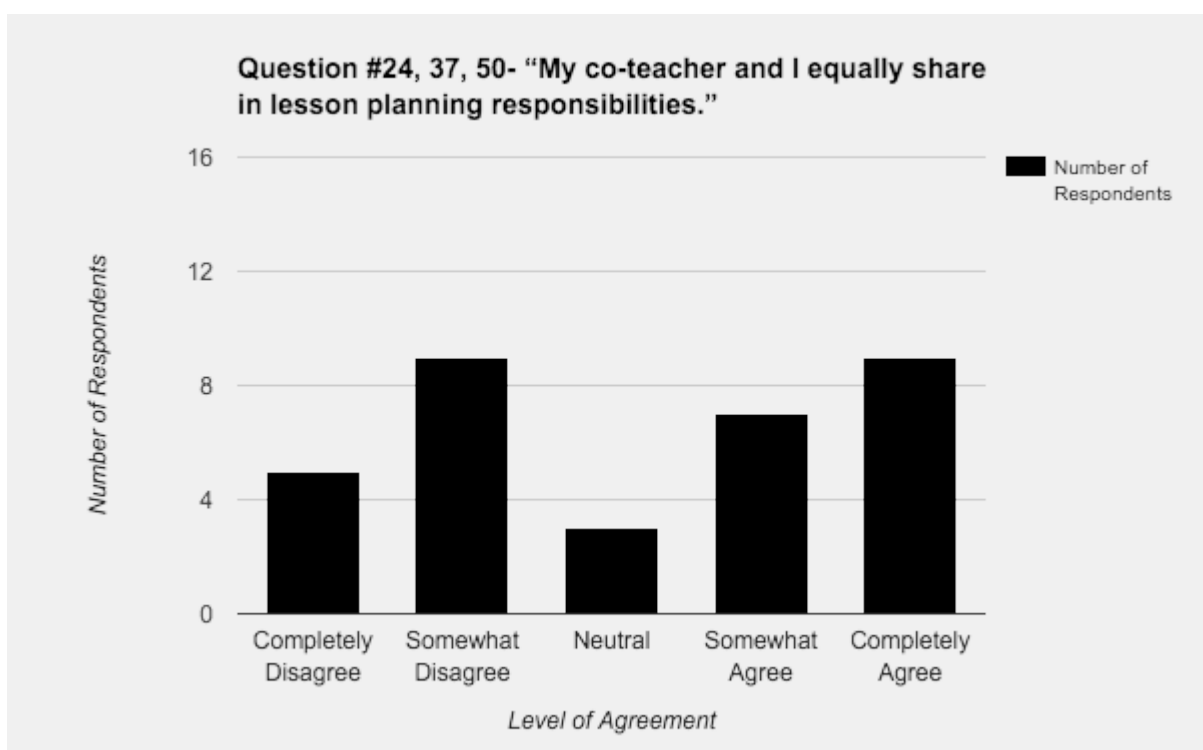
Respondents were also split on whether they equally shared lesson planning

duties, with only three of the thirty-three partnerships being rated as neutral. An equal

number of respondents somewhat disagreed (9) as completely agreed to the statement.

Respondents' ratings of effectiveness of planning and preparation exhibited

greater central tendency, with most rating their partnership as *somewhat effective or*

mostly effective. However, their ratings of frequency of planning and sharing of

responsibilities were more diverse, with answers tending toward more complete

agreement or disagreement.

Training for Co-teaching

Teachers also responded to survey questions about the training they had received

in co-teaching, as well as the perceived importance of this aspect of co-teaching.

Respondents were asked to rate the level of training they have received in their co-

teaching partnership. The results of those questions are contained in the following charts.
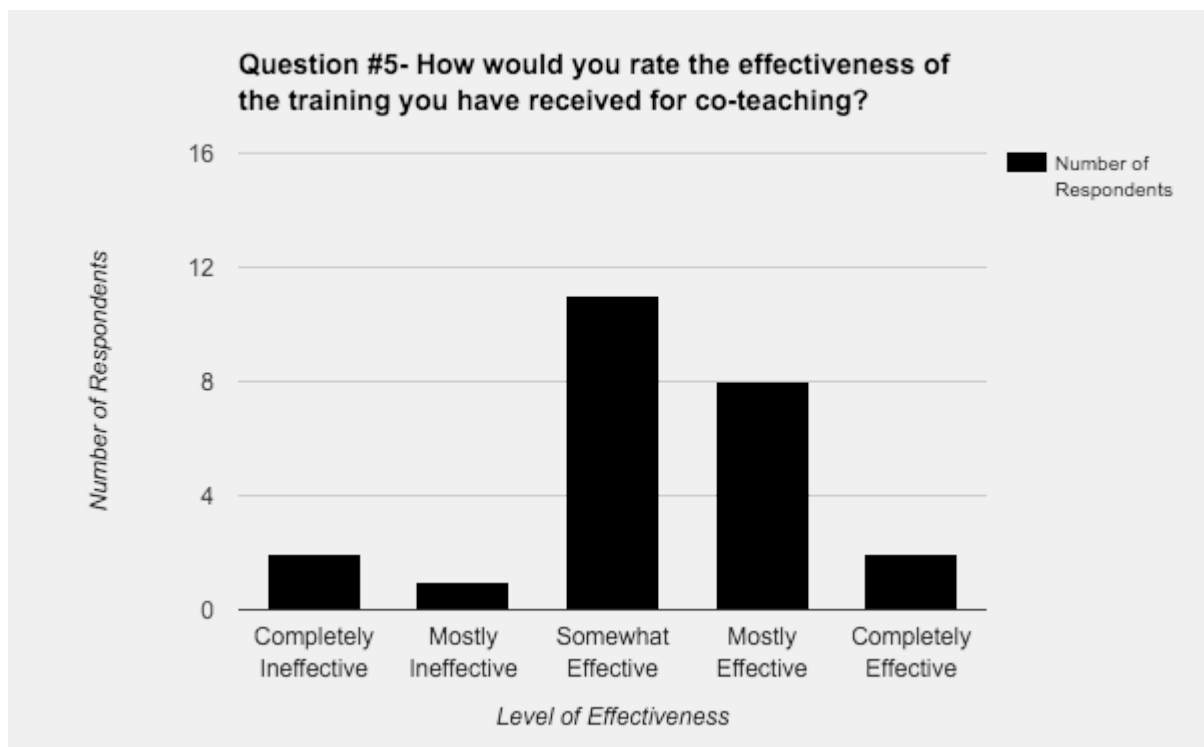
Figure 15. *Training in Serving ELs.*
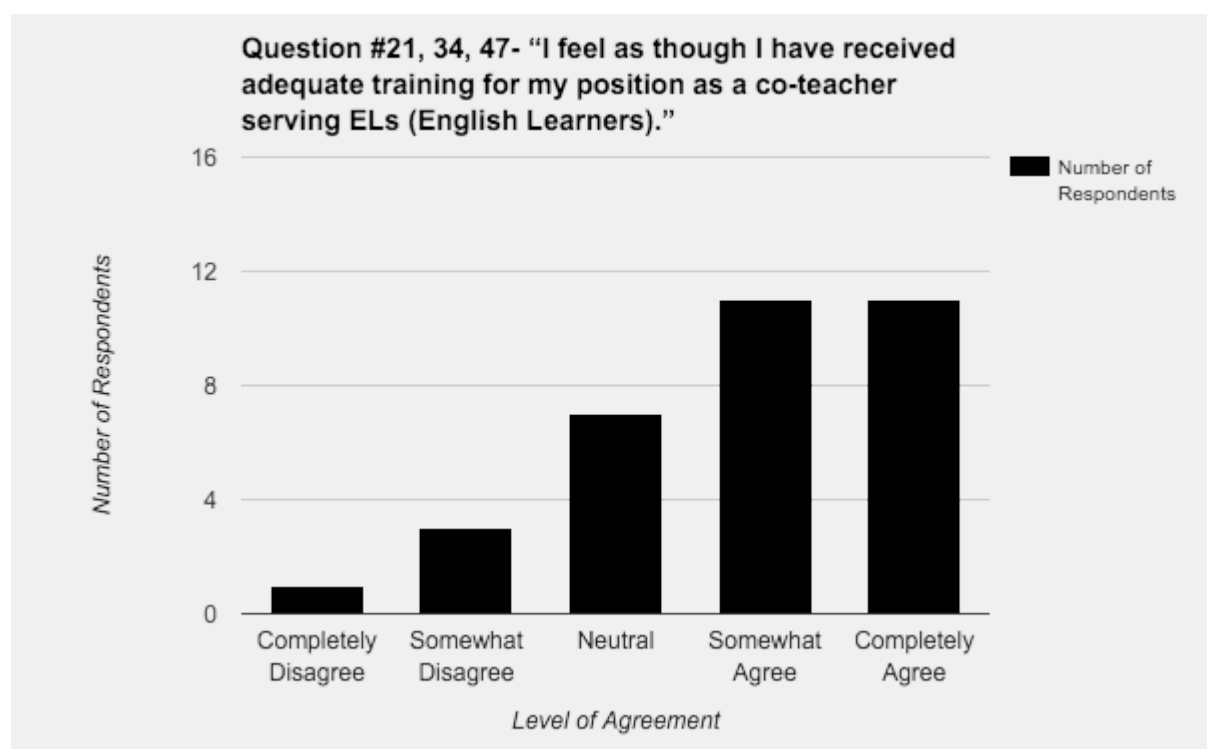
The weighted average of the responses was 3.84, with two-thirds (22/33) of the

responses by the 24 teachers suggesting that they either somewhat agreed or completely

agreed that they were properly trained as co-teachers.

Figure 16. *Effectiveness of Training for Co-teaching.*

Most respondents rated their training as *somewhat effective* or *mostly effective* (19 out of 24). Only three respondents suggested that their training was *ineffective*.

Teachers also answered questions regarding their level of training, the effectiveness of their training, the degree to which they understood their job responsibilities, and their partner's job responsibilities within the co-teaching relationship.

Figure 17. *Respondents' Ratings of Attending Training with Co-teaching Partner.*
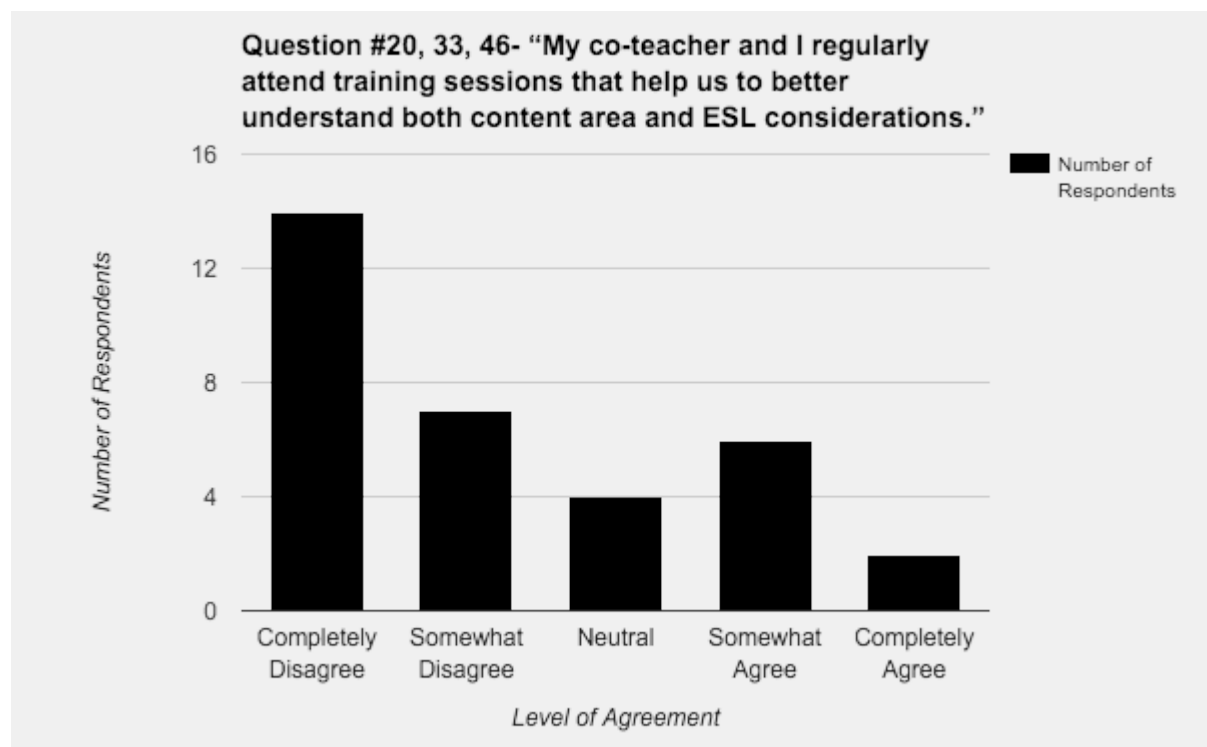
On about two thirds (21 of the 33) of co-teaching partnerships, respondents

somewhat or completely disagreed with the statement of regularly attending training.

While the majority of respondents rated their training at least *somewhat effective*,

most did not regularly attend training sessions with their co-teaching partner.

Co-teacher Relationship

Teachers also responded to survey questions about their co-teaching relationships,

as well as the perceived importance of this aspect of co-teaching. Respondents rated three

general aspects that were associated with their co-teaching relationship. These included

the perceived importance of the overall relationship and how they rated their own

relationship(s) with co-teachers, the social and interpersonal aspects of their co-teaching

relationships, the perceived importance of time in developing a successful co-teaching relationship, and the length of time they had spent working with their co-teaching partners.

Overall, teachers' were very positive in rating their social relationships with their co-teaching partners. Respondents somewhat or completely agreed with the statement that they had friendly social relationships in over two thirds (25 out of 33) of the co-teaching partnerships. The weighted average of responses for the level of agreement that teachers had with the statement "My co-teacher and I get along well socially and have a friendly relationship" was 4.3 on a scale of 1-5, with five being a rating of completely agreeing with the statement.

The following charts display information regarding various aspects of additional factors in co-teaching relationships.

Figure 18. *Importance in Understanding Co-teacher Roles.*
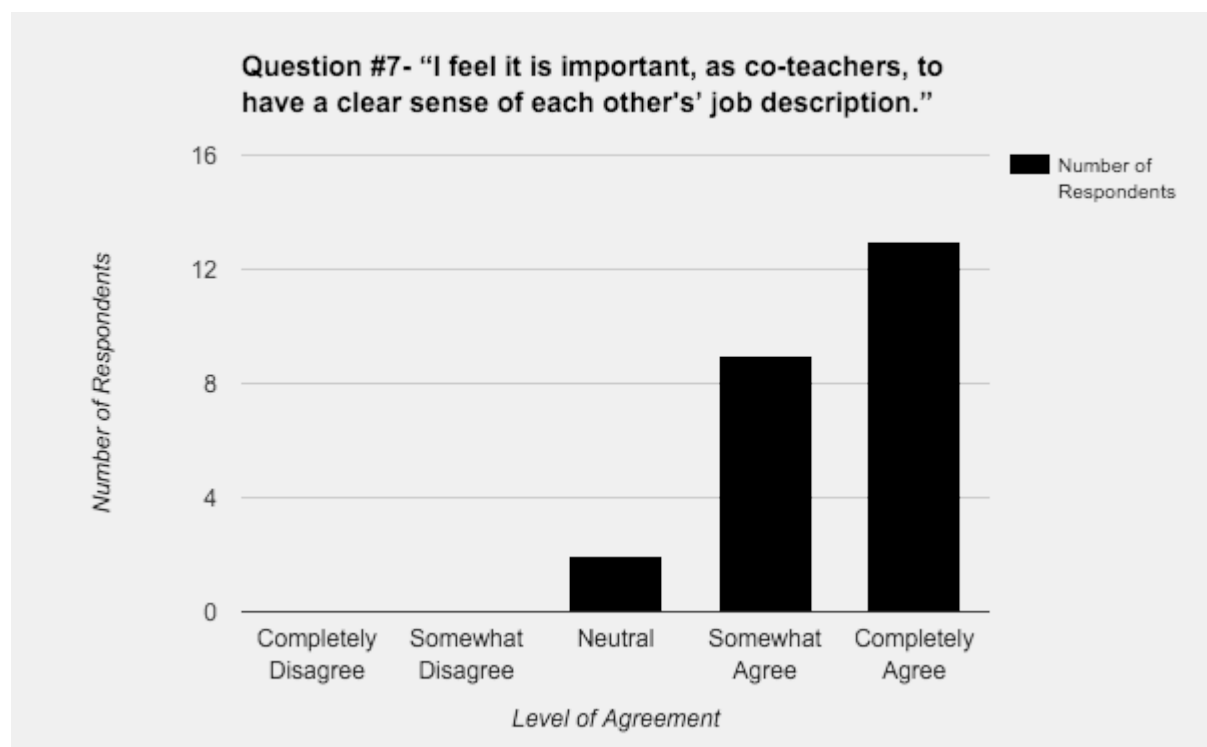
Respondents rated the importance of having a clear sense of their co-teacher and their job descriptions. Following this, they were asked to rate their own understanding of their job descriptions and responsibilities in regard to their positions. Twenty-two out of twenty-four teachers suggested that they *somewhat agree* or *completely agree* with the statement that it was important to understand each other's roles and responsibilities, while the same respondents suggested that they *somewhat agree* or *completely agree* in twenty-two out of the thirty-three co-teaching relationships total (some respondents were rating more than one co-teaching relationship, which is why the number of respondents is different than the number of co-teaching relationships that were rated).

Figure 19. *Understanding of Co-teacher Roles.*
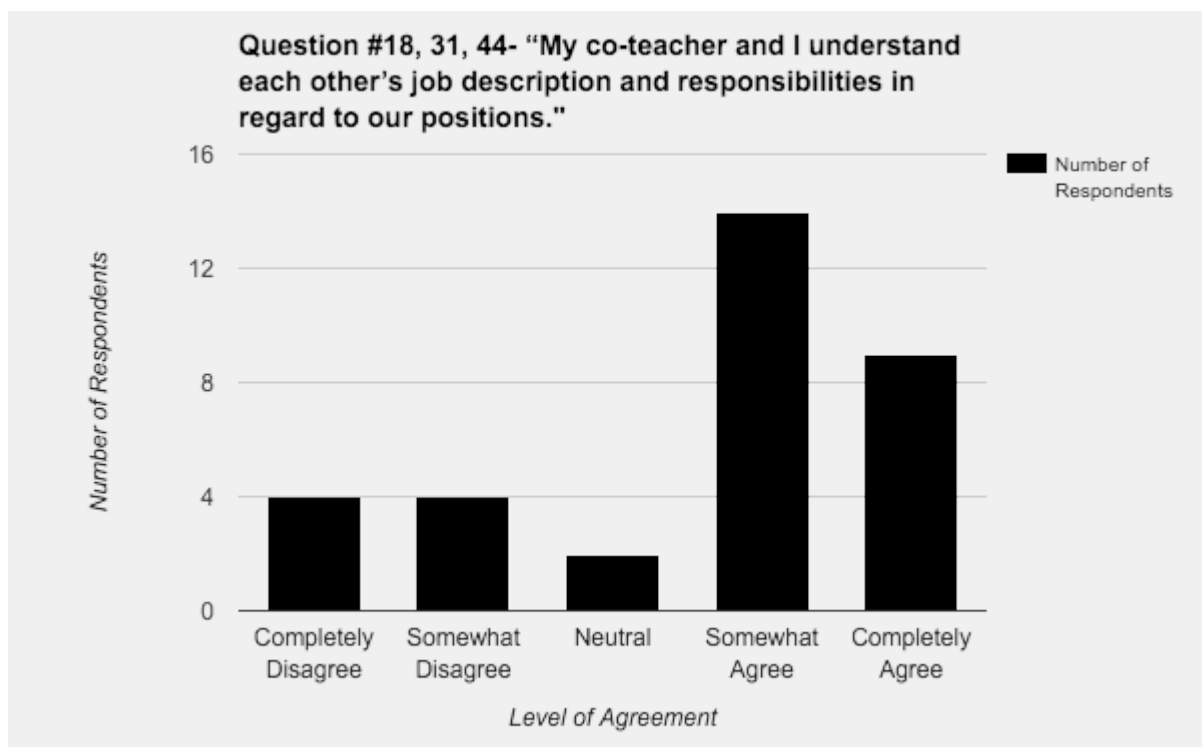
Most of the respondents believed they and their co-teaching partner understood their co-teaching responsibilities. 23 out of 33 teachers agreed with the statement that they and their partners understood their job description and responsibilities as co-teachers.

In regard to the more social and interpersonal aspects of co-teaching, respondents answered questions about how well they get along socially and whether they consider their relationship to be a friendly one and whether they felt they respect and treat each other as equal partners in the co-teaching model. The following charts show the ratings of respondents.

Figure 20. *Social Relationship with Co-teaching Partner.*
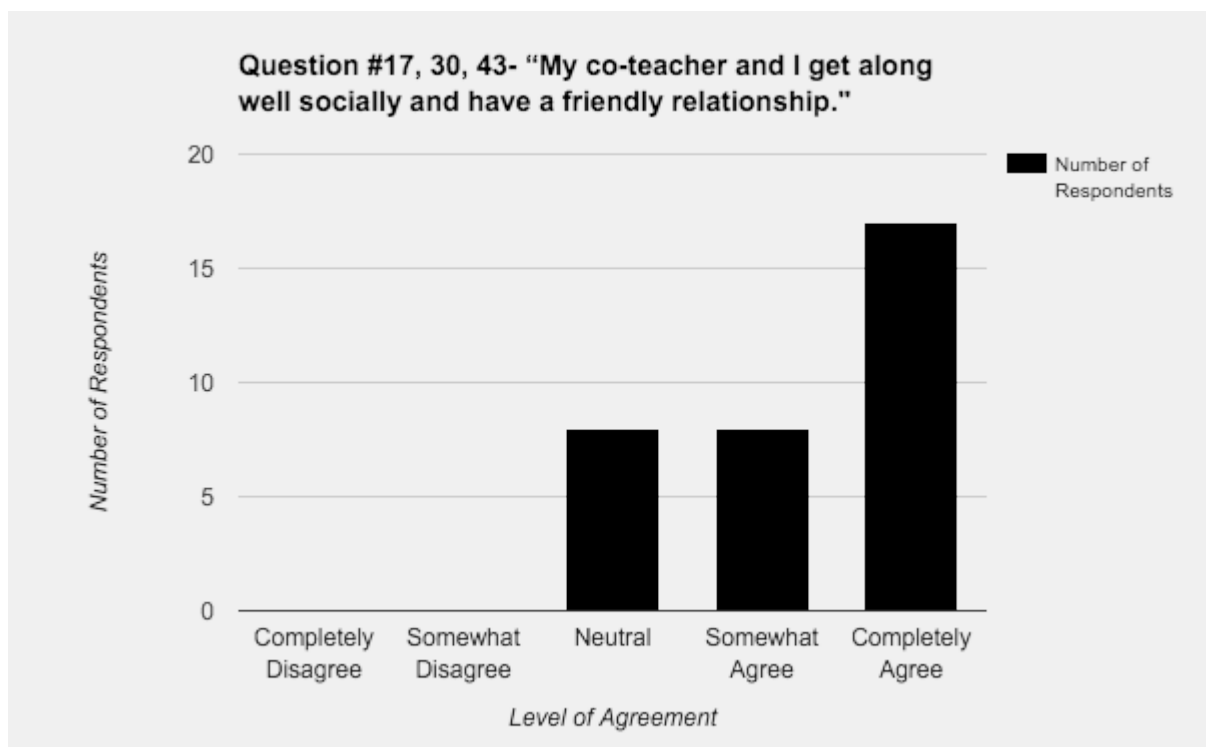
The overall responses were mostly positive about the social aspect of their co-teaching relationships. No teachers reported not having a friendly relationship with their co-teaching partners.

Figure 21. *Respect within Their Co-teaching Partnership.*

Question #Q19, 32, 45- "My co-teacher and I respect
each other as equal partners in the co-teaching model."
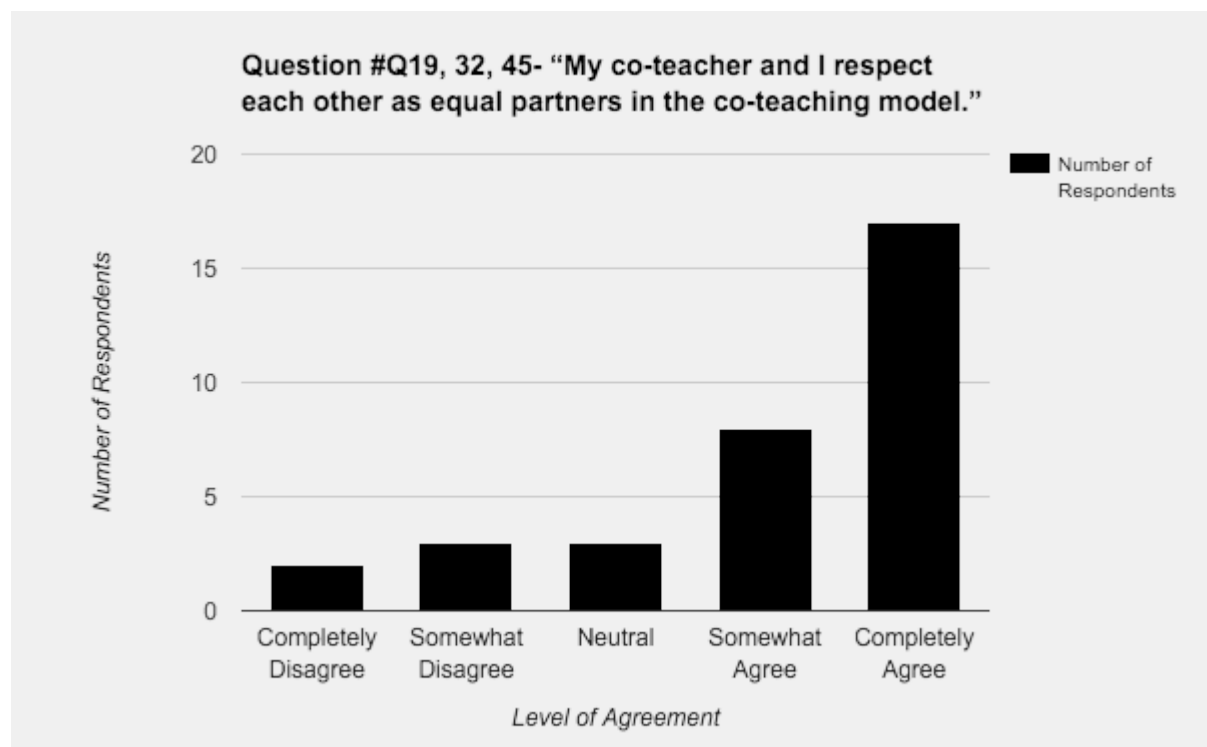
Over three-fourths (25 of 33) of respondents agreed with the statement that they
and their partner respect each other as equal partners in the co-teaching model. More than
half of the respondents (17 of 33) completely agreed.

Teachers were also asked how long they had been working with their co-teaching
partner. They were also asked how long they felt is was necessary to work with a co-
teaching partner in order to build an effective co-teaching relationship. The following
chart shows the respondents' responses.

Figure 22. *Time in Current Co-teaching Partnership.*
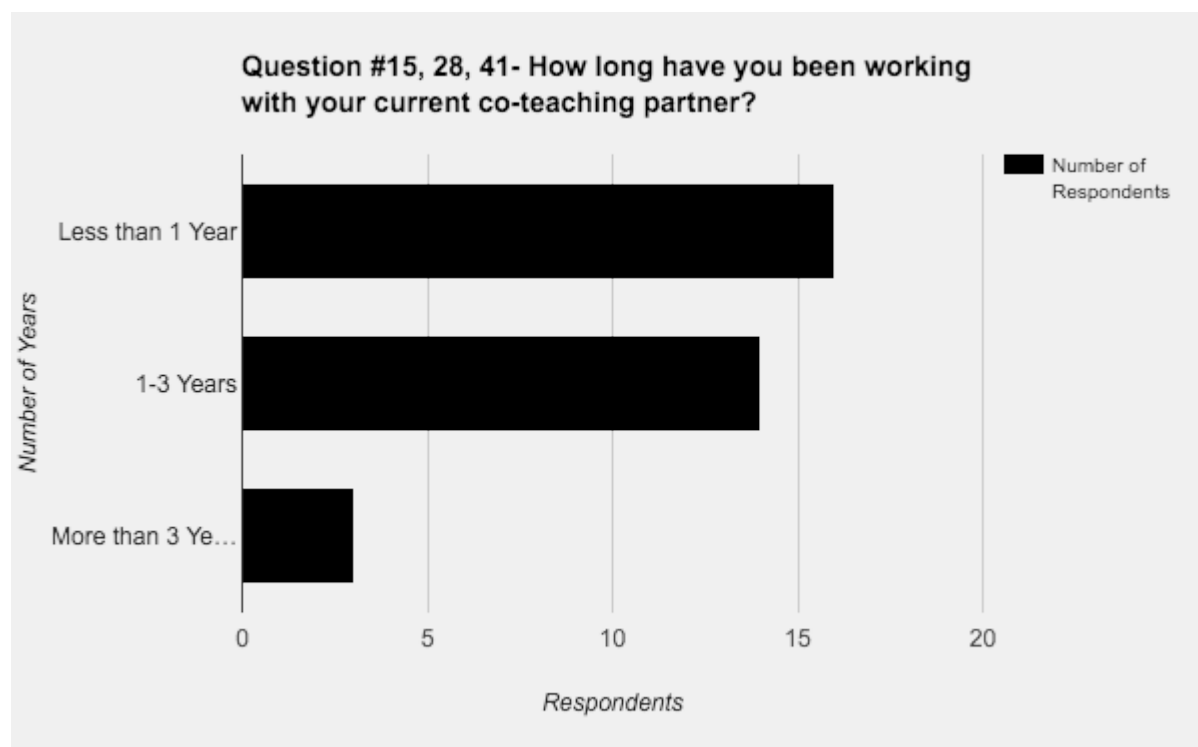
Nearly half of all respondents reported having worked with their current co-teaching partner less than a year. Only three respondents had worked with their co-teaching partner for more than three years.

Figure 23. Ti*me to Build an Effective Co-teaching Partnership.*
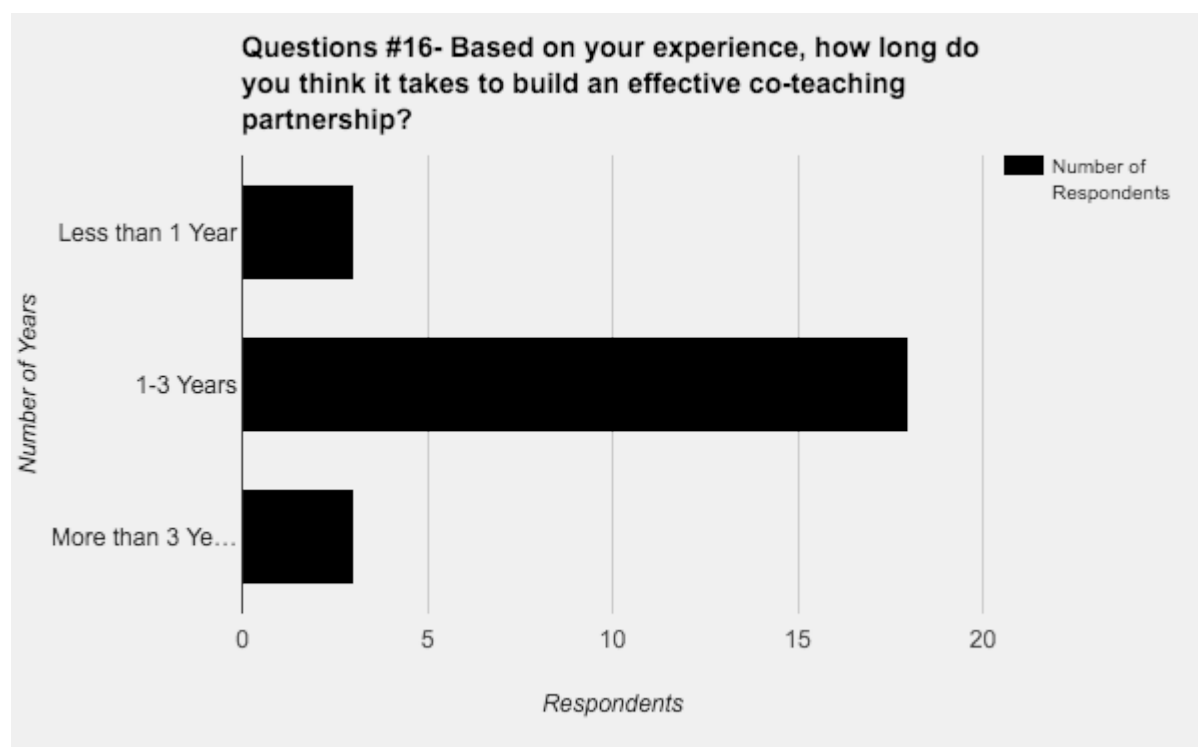
A three-quarters majority reported that they thought it would take one to three years to build an effective co-teaching partnership.

Respondents recognized the importance of understanding the different roles in a co-teaching partnership. While most reported having a friendly relationship with their co-teaching partner, almost half of all respondents had been with their co-teaching partner less than a year.

Conclusion

In this chapter we presented the results of research into the question of *What do co-teachers believe are the most important aspects of best-practice in co-teaching, and which of these areas of best-practice correspond with feelings of efficacy in the*

classroom? We collected data on self-reported perceptions of effectiveness as an individual co-teacher and as a co-teaching partnership. We collected data on co-teachers perceptions on importance of four aspects of best practice for co-teaching (administration, preparation and planning, training, and co-teaching relationship(s)), as well as perceived effectiveness in each of those areas. In the collection of data, we found that teachers rated the co-teaching relationship, planning time and preparation, training for co-teaching, and administration in co-teaching in order of importance. In this chapter, we presented the results of our data. In the next chapter, we will discuss our major findings, their implications, and suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER FIVE

Conclusion

In this research project, we attempted to answer the following research question: *What do co-teachers believe are the most important aspects of best-practice in co-teaching, and which of these areas of best-practice correspond with feelings of effectiveness in the classroom?* In this chapter, we will first discuss our major findings, and then later discuss the following: limitations of our survey; implications for teachers, administrators, and other stakeholders to whom co-teaching plays an important role; as well as suggestions for further research.

Major Findings

We will first discuss the overall research findings. In doing this, we will attempt to explore some correlations between respondents' survey responses and their links to the teachers' overall feelings of effectiveness as co-teachers and co-teaching teams. We will then look at trends that emerged and discuss the four areas of best practice (administration, preparation and planning, training, and the co-teaching relationship) about which we asked respondents.

Correlation scores indicate the degree to which two variables are linked. Correlation scores can range from 1.0 to -1.0. A positive correlation score indicates a relationship in which one variable's increase is linked to an increase in a second variable.

A negative correlation score indicates that when one variable increases, the other corresponding variable decreases in relation to the first variable. The closer a score is to 0, the weaker the correlation. For this study, we considered a score less than +/- .3 to be a weak correlation, while a score above +/- .6 to be a strong correlation. Values between +/- .3 and +/-.6 were considered a moderate correlation.

Self-ratings of Individual Effectiveness

Administration in Co-teaching

One surprising finding in our study was the strong positive correlation (.6208) between self-ratings of individual effectiveness and ratings of administrative support, indicating ratings of administration seemed to be closely linked to the co-teachers own feelings of personal effectiveness as a co-teacher. This was particularly interesting because respondents in the survey rated administrative support least important in the initial perceptions rating at the beginning of the survey. However, one can conclude that administration is a large factor in ensuring the other factors are met. Administration can encourage partners to attend training, provide planning time, manage co-teacher relationship, and help select co-teaching partners.

Planning and Preparation

Our study found a moderate positive correlation (.4761) between respondents' self-ratings of their individual effectiveness and ratings of planning and preparation. Respondents had a variety of responses when asked about meeting regularly and sharing lesson-planning responsibilities. However, our research also found a strong correlation between those who rated their planning time effective and their co-teaching effectiveness,

with a correlation score of .5507. Planning time can be an issue in co-teaching, and not all schools put aside separate time for co-teachers to collaborate. As most ESL teachers find themselves working in another teacher's mainstream classroom during co-teaching, and most respondents in our survey were ESL teachers, it can often be the ESL teacher who is on the short end of being prepared for the lesson. If time is not made for collaboration, it can often be the ESL teacher who feels unprepared for class. Meeting regularly can help both teachers be prepared for class, increasing the feeling of effectiveness for both teachers.

Training for Co-teaching

There was also a moderate positive correlation (.4507) between self-ratings of effectiveness and ratings of training received. While most respondents reported receiving adequate training and at least somewhat effective training, most respondents reported not regularly attending training with their partners. This could be attributed to the fact that nearly half the participants reported being in their co-teaching partnership less than a year. However, like planning and preparation, it could also be an issue of administrator-mandated time.

Another interesting possibility in regards to this data is that nearly all of the respondents in the survey were ESL teachers. As ESL teachers ourselves, we feel pretty confident in servicing the needs of EL students. However, the average mainstream teacher does not receive as much training in meeting the needs of ELs as an ESL teacher receives. In fact Gándara, Rumberger, Maxwell-Jolly & Callahan (2003) reported that despite increasing demographic size, teacher training programs dedicate surprisingly little

time to instructing ELs. Perhaps a question on the survey about being prepared to teach the content material might have brought different results about having adequate training.

Co-teaching Relationship

To our surprise, respondents' initial perceptions of factors that influence the co-teaching relationship turned out to be very different than actual correlation analysis between their overall ratings of personal ratings of effectiveness and scores of effectiveness in each area. For instance, despite teachers' perceptions and ranking of the co-teaching relationship as the most important area, our research yielded one of the weakest correlations (.2246) between co-teachers' self-ratings of effectiveness and the quality of the social relationship they had with their co-teaching partner. This is also surprising given research by Dieker & Murawski (2008) that suggests the importance of the co-teachers building a positive relationship. Frank and Susan Gately (2001) also suggest that effective co-teaching partnerships need building. The fact that nearly half our respondents reported being in their co-teaching partnerships less than a year suggests that there might be a need to do some more relationship building. Since none of the participants disagreed with the statement that they got along well socially with their co-teaching partner might also suggest that the relationship hasn't developed enough to be less than "getting along." Perhaps they are in what Gately and Gately (2001) refer to as The Beginning Stage, which is characterized by "guarded, careful communication." Most respondents reported that they thought it took one to three years to develop an effective co-teaching partnership, so it seems that most of them are still in the developing process.

Self-ratings of Co-teaching Partnerships

Administration in Co-teaching

Our research found a low positive correlation (.345) between self-ratings of co-teaching partnerships and effectiveness of administrative support. This was very surprising, because it had a much lower correlation than that between self-ratings of individual effectiveness and effectiveness of administrative support (.6208). This suggests that administrative support has a greater effect on teachers' personal beliefs in their effectiveness than on their beliefs in the effectiveness of their co-teaching partnership. Perhaps co-teachers feel more secure in their own abilities when working as a team. However, it does not diminish the important role that administrators can play in supporting ESL teachers and co-teaching partnerships.

Planning and Preparation

One of strongest positive correlations (.5507) in our study was between ratings of co-teaching partnerships and ratings in co-teachers meeting regularly. While respondents did not rate planning and preparation as the most important factor, they did rate it higher than training and administrative support. A slight majority of participants also rated their administrators poorly when it came to giving them time to plan. This was also the second- highest rated correlation between individual effectiveness, reinforcing the idea that planning and preparation is an important aspect of feeling effective as an individual and partner.

We can conclude from this data that planning time is important in effective co-teaching. Participants' ratings were mixed in regards to effectiveness of planning,

meeting regularly, and sharing planning responsibilities. Administrators can help support co-teaching by adding adequate time for co-teachers to collaborate and plan.

Training for Co-teaching

Our research found a very low positive correlation of only .1714 between the ratings of co-teaching partnerships and the effectiveness of their training. This was surprisingly low, but responses in our survey give us some insight into why this might be. Most respondents rated their training as either somewhat effective or mostly effective. The majority of respondents also disagreed with the statement that they regularly attended co-teacher training. While most of the participants were ESL teachers who seemed quite confident in their role helping EL students, it seems that they are less confident when it comes to collaborating with their co-teaching partners. Perhaps schools need to provide more training opportunities for co-teaching partners to learn how to work together. On the other hand, perhaps the training the individuals have received may also benefit the co-teaching partnerships as much as attending jointly, given that individuals responded that they felt adequately trained.

Co-teaching Relationships

Interestingly, there was a low positive correlation (.2685) between ratings of co-teaching partnerships and the freedom in choosing co-teaching partners. This was in spite of the fact that respondents rated the co-teaching relationship as the most important factor. Though, as any teacher who allows students choose a partner in class knows, individuals do not always choose the best partner to achieve the best results, it was still surprising. It is also worth noting that teachers who mandated to work with their partner

had only a slightly lower rating (3.4) for the effectiveness of their partnership than those who chose their partner voluntarily (3.6). This closeness in ratings between partnerships that materialized voluntarily or were mandated seems to contradict the notion that voluntarily co-teaching will result in greater feelings of effectiveness in co-teaching partnerships. Fullan (1996) suggested that both centralized and decentralized decision-making is important in fostering positive change. Responses indicated that centralized and decentralized decision-making resulted in approximately the same ratings of partnership effectiveness in our study.

While the data seems to suggest that a friendship is not necessary for a successful co-teaching partnership, one cannot ignore some additional data from the survey. None of the participants disagreed with the statement that they got along well socially with their co-teaching partner. However, a significant number responded with neutrality. Respondents also nearly unanimously agreed that co-teachers should have a clear sense of each other's job responsibilities. This seems to fit well with Murawski and Dieker's (2004) assertion that co-teachers need to share responsibilities in order to have an effective co-teaching relationship.

While friendship might not be a requirement, professional respect and the ability to work together seem to be very important. Whether this comes about through administration-mandated assignments or free-will volunteering doesn't seem to necessarily be important.

Limitations

Our study was not without limitations. We invited our respondents from a single university listserv. Our efforts to broaden our pool of respondents were limited by roadblocks in our attempts to get district approval. We were also at the mercy of our respondents. They were surveyed for a brief period of time in the spring. While we received a number of responses in the first week, the number of surveys we received began to slow to a trickle and eventually stopped. In the end, only three mainstreams teachers (as opposed to ESL teachers) in co-teaching partnerships were respondents to our survey. A larger sample size or broader pool might have resulted in more equal numbers of mainstream and ESL teachers.

Implications

There are a couple of implications that come from the results of our research. The greatest implication of our study is that administrative support might be the most important contributor to perceived effectiveness for individual co-teachers, despite teachers' ranking this as an area of low importance. Administrative support had the strongest positive correlation to feelings of effectiveness for co-teachers. It suggests that for schools to truly support effective co-teaching, administrators need to actively play their part.

Another implication from our research is that there is very little correlation between co-teachers' feelings of effectiveness and a friendly social relationship between co-teaching partners, despite respondents' perceptions that this was the most important factor in co-teaching. This, combined with the relatively similar feelings of effectiveness

for co-teachers who worked in voluntary and mandated partnerships, demonstrates that friendly co-teaching relationships do not necessarily create effective ones. However, this does not discount the importance of the co-teachers working as partners. In fact, responses on the survey show that co-teachers understand the importance of working together as professionals, as evidenced by the high response rate that they understand their and their co-teacher's roles and respected each other as equals.

Another implication is that these relationships need time and training to develop. 21 out of 24 respondents responded that it would take at least one year to bring about a strong co-teaching partnership. Most of the respondents in our study recognized that they needed more than their school year to build an effective co-teaching partnership. While many co-teachers reported receiving adequate training to service EL students, few reported regularly attending training to better understand content and ESL considerations.

Our research indicates that administrators play an important role in supporting co-teaching. Administrative support seems to correlate to individual co-teachers' feelings of effectiveness, and other factors such as specific co-teacher planning time and collaborative training, that need administration support proved more important than factors, such as freedom in choosing partners, that require less administration support.

Further Research

Like all good scientific research, we are left with questions as well as answers. Our collected data left us with some important questions. For example, is there any difference in the responses between mainstream teachers and ESL teachers? Our small

pool of mainstream teachers (3) makes it difficult for us to conclude this through our current research.

We also wonder if the data would be different if we surveyed co-teachers who had been working more than one year with the partner. Many of our respondents are in their first year of their co-teaching partnerships. Would their responses differ two years from now? As Gately and Gately (2001) point out, effecting co-teaching partnerships need time to develop. Could it be that the importance of these factors (administrative support, training, planning, social relationship) change with time?

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Appendix A

Survey of Co-teachers in ESL

Welcome to Our Survey

Dear Interviewee,

We are graduate students in Master of Arts in ESL program at Hamline University in Saint Paul, MN. As a part of our graduate work, we will be conducting research with mainstream (content and classroom teachers) and ESL teachers who are involved in Co-teaching partnerships that serve English Language Learners (ELLs). The research will take place during the time period of February-April, 2016. The purpose of this letter is to request your participation and input for the completion of our research. The research is available to the public and the final work will be catalogued in Hamline University's Bush Library Digital Commons, a searchable electronic repository, and the research may also be published or used in other ways.

The research will take the form of this approximately 15 minute online survey on the website Survey Monkey. The goal of the project is to discover the components of best-practice areas that ESL and mainstream teachers feel are most important. The project is also designed to research teachers' experience in each area of best practice and their opinions as to how effective they are in each area. Additionally, we hope to discover which best-practice factors are rated most highly among teachers and also to see if there is a correlation between feelings of effectiveness in each

There is little to no risk involved in completing the survey. Results will be kept confidential and anonymous, as only aggregate data will be used for analysis. The survey will be completed online at a time of the choosing of the interviewee, so long as it is completed prior to the survey deadline. No identifying information of any kind will be used in the data, as aggregation of data will protect those who participate. The survey and its data will be deleted following the completion of the study.

Participation in the survey is voluntary. At any time, contact us to have your survey information deleted from our capstone without consequences. We have received approval for this study project from Hamline University's School of Education. The finished product will be catalogued in Hamline University's Bush Library Digital Commons, a searchable electronic database. If our works were to be included in an article in a professional journal or at a professional conference, all identities and participation of those who have participated in the study will be kept confidential. By clicking next on the first page of this informed consent of the electronic survey, you are agreeing to provide your consent for the terms of the survey. If you have further questions, please contact us via email.

Sincerely,

Bradley A. Thompson
bthompson08@hamline.edu

Donald J. Chapman
dchapman01@hamline.edu

Background and Best Practice

* 1. Do you currently teach in a co-teaching model as either a mainstream/content teacher or ESL support?

○ Yes

○ No

THE FOUR AREAS OF BEST PRACTICES FOR CO-TEACHING- Please read the following definitions of each best-practice area to answer survey questions.

Co-Teaching Relationship: Do you and your co-teaching partner work well together? Do you get along professionally and socially? Does your co-teaching partner respect your role?

Training for Co-Teaching: Do you have a clear understanding of both your role and your partner's role? Have you had adequate training for co-teaching?

Planning Time and Preparation: Do you and your partner meet regularly to plan for your co-taught classes? Is there a clear division of labor in lesson planning? Do you feel prepared for each class?

Administrative Support in Co-Teaching: Are you and your partner held accountable for your roles? Does your administration appreciate the importance of your co-teaching? Does your administration understand the needs of English language learners? Does your administration give you the necessary resources to do your job well?

* 2. Please rank the following aspects of co-teaching in order of importance. (1 = most important, 4= least important)

	Co-teaching Relationship
	Training for Co-teaching
	Planning Time and Preparation
	Administrative Support in Co-teaching

* 3. What is your current role in the ESL co-teaching model?

If you are an ESL teacher with more than one co-teaching partner, you will have the option of filling out portions of the survey regarding each of your co-teaching relationships.

○ Mainstream Teacher (content or classroom teacher)

○ ESL Teacher

Best Practices for Co-teaching

* 4. How would you rate your individual effectiveness as a co-teacher (taking into account all co-teaching partnerships if you are a teacher that has more than one co-teaching partner)?

Completely Ineffective	Mostly Ineffective	Somewhat Effective	Mostly Effective	Completely Effective
○	○	○	○	○

* 5. How would you rate the effectiveness of the training you have received for co-teaching?

Completely Ineffective	Mostly Ineffective	Somewhat Effective	Mostly Effective	Completely Effective
○	○	○	○	○

* 6. How would you rate the effectiveness of your administration's support for co-teaching?

Completely Ineffective	Mostly Ineffective	Somewhat Effective	Mostly Effective	Completely Effective
○	○	○	○	○

* 7. "I feel it is important, as co-teachers, to have a clear sense of each other's' job description."

Completely disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neutral	Somewhat agree	Completely agree
○	○	○	○	○

Administrative Support in Co-teaching

Please rate how you feel about the following statements.

* 8. How did you enter into your co-teaching partnership(s)?

   ◯ Voluntarily

   ◯ Mandated

* 9. "I was given freedom in choosing the teachers with whom I co-teach."

Completely disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neutral	Somewhat agree	Completely agree
◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

* 10. "My administrators have quickly and effectively assisted in addressing problems in regard to the co-teaching model."

Completely disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neutral	Somewhat agree	Completely agree
◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

* 11. "My administrators allow and encourage my co-teacher(s) and I to attend training sessions that help us to better understand both content area and ESL considerations."

Completely disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neutral	Somewhat agree	Completely agree
◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

* 12. "My administrators support my co-teacher(s) and I by providing additional time to plan together."

Completely disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neutral	Somewhat agree	Completely agree
◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

* 13. "My administrators provide consistent and strategic leadership regarding co-teaching in ESL."

Completely disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neutral	Somewhat agree	Completely agree
◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

Co-teaching Relationship

Please fill out the following questions with one co-teaching partner in mind. You will have an opportunity to fill out the survey multiple times for each co-teaching partner.

* 14. How would you rate the effectiveness of your co-teaching partnership?

Completely Ineffective	Mostly Ineffective	Somewhat Effective	Mostly Effective	Completely Effective
○	○	○	○	○

15. How long have you been working with your current co-teaching partner?

[   ]

16. Based on your experience, how long do you think it takes to build an effective co-teaching partnership?

[   ]

Co-teaching Relationship

Please rate how you feel about the following statements.

* 17. "My co-teacher and I get along well socially and have a friendly relationship."

Completely disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neutral	Somewhat agree	Completely agree
○	○	○	○	○

* 18. "My co-teacher and I understand each other's job description and responsibilities in regard to your positions."

Completely disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neutral	Somewhat agree	Completely agree
○	○	○	○	○

* 19. "My co-teacher and I respect each other as equal partners in the co-teaching model."

Completely disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neutral	Somewhat agree	Completely agree
○	○	○	○	○

Training for Co-teaching

Please rate how you feel about the following statements.

* 20. "My co-teacher and I regularly attend training sessions that help us to better understand both content area and ESL considerations."

Completely disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neutral	Somewhat agree	Completely agree
○	○	○	○	○

* 21. "I feel as though I have received adequate training for my position as a co-teacher serving ELs (English Learners)."

Completely disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neutral	Somewhat agree	Completely agree
○	○	○	○	○

Planning Time and Preparation

Please rate how you feel about the following statements.

* 22. How would you rate the effectiveness of your planning and preparation in your partnership?

Completely Ineffective	Mostly Ineffective	Somewhat Effective	Mostly Effective	Completely Effective
○	○	○	○	○

* 23. "My co-teacher and I regularly meet to discuss lesson plans."

Completely disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neutral	Somewhat agree	Completely agree
○	○	○	○	○

* 24. "My co-teacher and I equally share in lesson planning responsibilities."

Completely disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neutral	Somewhat agree	Completely agree
○	○	○	○	○

* 25. "My co-teacher and I have frequent conversations regarding specific students."

Completely disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neutral	Somewhat agree	Completely agree
○	○	○	○	○

* 26. Do you have additional co-teaching partnerships in ESL for which you would be willing to answer questions (if yes, you'll be asked additional questions for up to three individual co-teaching partners, and if no, your survey will end)?

○ Yes

○ No

Appendix B

Informed Consent Letter

Welcome to Our Survey

Dear Interviewee,

We are graduate students in Master of Arts in ESL program at Hamline University in Saint Paul, MN. As a part of our graduate work, we will be conducting research with mainstream (content and classroom teachers) and ESL teachers who are involved in Co-teaching partnerships that serve English Language Learners (ELLs). The research will take place during the time period of February-April, 2016. The purpose of this letter is to request your participation and input for the completion of our research. The research is available to the public and the final work will be catalogued in Hamline University's Bush Library Digital Commons, a searchable electronic repository, and the research may also be published or used in other ways.

The research will take the form of this approximately 15 minute online survey on the website Survey Monkey. The goal of the project is to discover the components of best-practice areas that ESL and mainstream teachers feel are most important. The project is also designed to research teachers' experience in each area of best practice and their opinions as to how effective they are in each area. Additionally, we hope to discover which best-practice factors are rated most highly among teachers and also to see if there is a correlation between feelings of effectiveness in each

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Participation in the survey is voluntary. At any time, contact us to have your survey information deleted from our capstone without consequences. We have received approval for this study project from Hamline University's School of Education. The finished product will be catalogued in Hamline University's Bush Library Digital Commons, a searchable electronic database. If our works were to be included in an article in a professional journal or at a professional conference, all identities and participation of those who have participated in the study will be kept confidential. By clicking next on the first page of this informed consent of the electronic survey, you are agreeing to provide your consent for the terms of the survey. If you have further questions, please contact us via email.

Sincerely,
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