Partnership for Public Education
A COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT INITIATIVE

Coteaching in Delaware

January 2018

The Partnership for Public Education supports collaborative development processes among all stakeholders in education. University of Delaware educational researchers and professors, field supervisors, clinical educators, and graduate and undergraduate students from teacher education programs share the common goal to advance the success of public school students. This brief provides a background of the coteaching method and the evidence-based value and benefits for educators and students.

Coteaching in action at Middletown High School

What Is Coteaching?

In order to promote high-quality instruction and successful outcomes for students, teachers ought to be equipped with adaptive and collaborative expertise through teaching practices in clinical field experiences. The traditional student-teaching experience has not evolved since the 1920s, student teachers observe the classroom and gradually gain more responsibility from the clinical educator (Guyton & McIntyre, 1990). Coteaching is defined as an arrangement of a teacher candidate and a clinical educator working together in sharing responsibility for the planning, organization, delivery, and assessment of instruction in one or more subject areas (Bacharach, et al 2010; Scantlebury, et.al. 2008).

The coteaching model promotes shared contribution and active participation from both the teacher candidate and clinical educator, where the teachers learn and build on each other's knowledge (Murphy, 2016). Starting on the first day, the teacher candidate is an active participant in every stage of instruction with the coteaching model. Coteaching results in mutual benefits for both teacher candidate and clinical educator while concentrating on successful student outcomes. (Gallo-Fox, Gleason, Kotch-Jester, S, & Peace, 2015).

The Value and Importance of Coteaching

Coteaching provides benefits to all stakeholders—teacher candidates, clinical educators, and students in the classroom. Coteaching focuses on the student outcomes and improving practice, in addition to what the teacher candidate learns from the experience.

Benefits to the Students

1. Focuses on the pupil learning process and outcomes
2. Increases individualized attention with another teacher in the room
3. Adapts to fit the real-time environment and context in the classroom

The pupils are the primary focus and beneficiaries of coteaching. With an additional teacher in the classroom, there is a lower student-teacher ratio and greater opportunity individualized support for pupil academic well-being (Roth & Tobin, 2005). Coteaching moves beyond the focus on what the teacher candidate is learning and focuses on the pupil's learning processes. Research shows pupils' increased participation, engagement, and positive attitudes toward learning in classrooms that utilize coteaching (Bacharach, et al, 2010; Murphy 2016; Soslau, Gallo-Fox and Scantlebury, 2018; Tobin & Roth 2005).

Benefits to Student Teacher and Clinical Educator

1. Articulates best practices
2. Fosters collaborative expertise
3. Modifies teaching practices based on classroom dynamics (Adaptive Teaching Expertise)
4. Emphasizes learning to learn (Growth Competence)
5. Builds confidence in ability to impact student learning and well-being
6. Develops stronger school-university partnerships

Coteaching provides the opportunity to enhance the collaborative expertise of the student teachers and clinical educators (Gallo-Fox & Stegeman, 2017; Soslau, et. al., 2018). Both stakeholders have a mutual respect and common goal to teach more effectively. Through coteaching, both teachers learn to effectively distribute and share expertise, problem solve as a team, and provide thoughtful feedback. Strong coteaching provides the other party with detailed descriptions, clearly explained thoughts, and strong rationales for feedback (Murphy, 2016).

The coteaching model grants teacher candidates enhanced experiences through real-time opportunities to develop adaptive expertise (Gallo-Fox & Stegeman, 2017; Soslau, et. al., 2018). Opportunities to develop adaptive expertise are afforded through collaborative conversations about how to tailor instruction to students' highly contextualized needs before, during, and after instruction (Hatano & Oura, 2003; Jordan, 2016; Parsons & Vaughn, 2016). Similarly, candidates and clinical educators can learn to balance experimentation with risks to pupil learning and well-being and make changes in the moment based on pupil cues. Coteaching offers the opportunity to break the cycle of mimicry-without-understanding, since the teacher candidate is directly involved in providing knowledge and feedback. This can be difficult for novice teacher candidates that may lack the ability to notice that students are struggling during a lesson or candidates might not know how to adapt the instruction since they often have a limited set of instructional approaches in their repertoire. The problem solving and flexibility in coteaching enriches and refines the teacher candidate experience, allowing candidates to be better equipped in novel or atypical situations.

Coteaching mitigates teacher candidate anxiety in teaching placements and increases a sense of efficacy in the classroom. Actively participating in the planning, instruction, and assessment increased the teacher candidate's agency and decision-making capabilities (Gallo-Fox, et. al., 2015). Having multiple teachers working together to develop instruction and support implementation provides support for both teacher candidates and clinical educators to integrate new pedagogical approaches and activities into their practice (Gallo-Fox, 2010). Such collaboration provides opportunities for cooperating teachers to improve both their classroom practice and expand their roles as educational leaders and school-based teacher educators (Gallo-Fox & Scantlebury, 2016). The coteaching model also has the potential to resolve challenges such as teach-

er turnover and retention, low job satisfaction, and mitigate teacher isolation (Tobin & Roth, 2005). Lastly, coteaching provides an opportunity to develop stronger school-university partnerships, which are necessary for effective student teaching experiences (Murphy, 2016; Scantlebury et. al, 2008).

University of Delaware: Promoting Coteaching

In 2003, the University of Delaware implemented coteaching in secondary science teacher education. In 2008, coteaching was introduced in elementary teacher education, with full implementation in 2014. Early childhood teacher education has utilized the coteaching method since 2013. The University of Delaware has paved the way in quantitative research to evaluate the coteaching model. This work includes teacher candidate, pupil, and clinical educator surveys, which have been analyzed to develop a validated scale using applied psychometrics (Drewes, Scantlebury, Soslau & Gallo-Fox, 2016).

The coteaching research collaborative, made up of teacher education researchers from across three teacher preparation programs, have engaged in systematic inquiry around the development and use of the model. Preliminary findings show "that programs implementing coteaching should focus on learning affordances within a coteaching model such as: (a) positioning, power, and agency building, (b) focus on pupil learning, and (c) embodiment of dual roles as teacher and learner of teaching. These conditions are not consistently understood or capitalized on by coteachers." (Soslau, et. al., 2018).

Policy Recommendation: What Should Be Done?

School leaders and administration should support and foster coteaching practices in their schools when hosting student teachers. To incentivize and motivate the coteaching model, compensate the teachers that host a candidate and grant more release time for coplanning and debriefing sessions.

Communicate the benefits of coteaching to both teachers and students, then phase in planning and implementation in small, incremental steps. Small-scale pilots, such as implementing coteaching in one or two classrooms at a time in a school would allow a gradual adaptation toward coteaching in classrooms. Teachers should have consistent opportunities for coteaching to become more comfortable in the new teaching dynamic. Increased professional development and ongoing training opportunities would enhance and support coteaching while providing strong, successful coteaching models. Coteachers need multiple levels of coteaching professional development. The first level focuses on foundational understandings of the model. A second level in the model is for coteachers who are ready for practices that promote deeper implementation such as more complex and sophisticated debriefing sessions and the use of huddles to facilitate lesson enactment. University-based field instructors can also serve as real-time, on-site professional developers, coteaching with student teachers and clinical educators to facilitate better understanding of the model, promote teachers' improved understanding of the different coteaching approaches in ways that provide optimum learning opportunities for pupils and coteachers.

Work Cited

Bacharach, N., Heck, T.W., Dahlberg, K. (2010). Changing the face of student teaching through co-teaching. *Action in Teacher Education*, 32(1), 3-14. DOI: 10.1080/01626620.2010.10463538.

Drewes, A. Scantlebury, K. Soslau, E. & Gallo Fox, J. (2016). *Evaluating coteaching as a model for pre-service teacher preparation: developing an instrument utilizing mixed methods*. Paper presented at American Education Research Association (AERA) Annual Meeting, Washington, D.C.

Guyton, E., & McIntyre, D. J. (1990). Student teaching and school experiences. In W. R. Houston (Ed.), *Handbook of Research on Teacher Education*. (pp. 514-534). New York, NY: Macmillan.

Gallo-Fox, J. (2010). Risk-taking as practice in a coteaching professional learning community. In Murphy, C. & K. Scantlebury (eds.) *Coteaching in international contexts: Research and practice*. New York, NY: Springer Publishing, 105-122. doi: 10.1007/978-90-481-3707-7_6.

Gallo-Fox, J., & Scantlebury, K. (2016). *Coteaching as professional development for cooperating teachers*. Teaching and Teacher Education. 60 (Nov), 191-202. dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2016.08.007.

Gallo-Fox, J., & Stegeman, L. (April, 2017). *Learning through coteaching in early childhood clinical field experiences: A cross-case study of learning affordances.* Paper presented at American Education Research Association (AERA) Annual Meeting, San Antonio, TX.

Gallo-Fox, J., Gleason, S, Kotch-Jester, S, & Peace, J. (2015). *The University of Delaware coteaching resource guide*, Second edition. Newark, DE: University of Delaware Office of Clinical Studies. Retrieved from http://www.ocs.udel.edu/wp-content/uploads/ocs/Coteaching-Resource-Guide-2nd-Ed.pdf

Hatano, G., & Oura, Y. (2003). Commentary: Reconceptualizing school learning using insight from expertise research. *Educational Researcher*, 32(8), 26-29. doi.org/10.3102/0013189X032008026.

Murphy, C., (2016). *Coteaching in teacher education: Innovative pedagogy for excellence.* St Albans, UK, Critical Publishing.

Parsons, S.A. & Vaughn, M. (2016). Toward adaptability: Where to from here? *Theory Into Practice*, 55(3), 267-274, doi: 10.1080/00405841.2016.1173998

Roth, W.-M., & Tobin, K. (Eds.). (2005). *Teaching together, learning together.* New York: NY: Peter Lang.

Scantlebury, K. Gallo-Fox, J. & Wassell, B. (2008). Coteaching as a model for preservice secondary science teacher education. *Teaching & Teacher Education.* 24, 967–981. doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2007.10.008

Soslau, E., Gallo-Fox, J., & Scantlebury, K. (2018). The promises and realities of implementing a coteaching model of student teaching. The Journal of Teacher Education. DOI 10.1177/0022487117750126.

The University of Delaware Coteaching Resource Guide. (2015). http://www.ocs.udel.edu/wp-content/uploads/ocs/060214-Coteaching-Resource-Guide-2.pdf.

Tobin, K. & Roth, W.M. (2005). Implementing coteaching and cogenerative dialoguing in urban science education. *School Science and Mathematics,* 105(6), 313-322.

Authors

Kathryn Scantlebury, PhD, Director, Center for Secondary Teacher Education; Professor, Department of Chemistry & Biochemistry, UD

Elizabeth Soslau, PhD, Associate Professor, School of Education, UD

Kelly Sherretz, Assistant Director, Partnership for Public Education; Policy Scientist, Institute for Public Administration, UD

Melissa Micek, Public Administration Fellow, Institute for Public Administration, UD

Partnership for Public Education
A COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT INITIATIVE

The **Partnership for Public Education** (PPE) is inspired by a vision of excellence and equity in public education for all Delaware children and families.

Our work is grounded in the belief that research, practice, family, and community are all needed in the systematic improvement of educational opportunities and outcomes. This goal can only be achieved through collaboration and cooperation.

The mission of PPE is to unite members of the University of Delaware and the broader education community, including schools, families, and community organizations, to identify and address shared needs and opportunities.

Together, we can strengthen public education for all Delaware children.

Learn more about PPE!

Ariana Minella
ppe-info@udel.edu | 302-831-0184

182 Graham Hall
University of Delaware
Newark, DE 19716

www.sites.udel.edu/ppe/