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# Overcoming Challenges with Mainstream and TESOL Teacher Collaboration

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**Overcoming Challenges with Mainstream and TESOL Teacher Collaboration**

by

Danielle M. Grunert

August 2020

A capstone project submitted to the Department of Education and Human Development of  
The College at Brockport, State University of New York in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of Master of Science in TESOL Education

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### **Abstract**

Research shows a fundamental transformation is needed in the way education is provided to students. The increase in ELL student population creates new challenges and responsibilities for teachers and administrators. Through the theory of cooperative learning, the overarching issue of how to establish successful collaboration between mainstream and TESOL teachers is examined. Studies show that when co-teaching partners have different pedagogical beliefs, successful collaboration can prove difficult to achieve. Moreover, mainstream teachers are unaware of best strategies to incorporate with ELL students. Furthermore, studies inform teachers face difficulty getting vital support from administration to support ELL students. When administrators are uncertain how to effectively support ELLs, responsibility is left solely to the TESOL teacher. In order to address the overarching issue, a full day of professional development is created to support mainstream and TESOL teachers in successful collaboration. Teachers will develop skills and strategies to support mainstream and ELL students. Furthermore, teachers will utilize varied models of successful co-teaching in the classroom. By supporting teachers to create successful co-teaching partnerships, ELL students achieve higher academic success. Studies show ELLs have higher graduation rates and develop advanced English language proficiency when teachers successfully collaborate. Based on results of the study, continuing professional development is vital for all school personnel, including teachers and administrators.

*Keywords:* English language learner (ELL), co-teaching, mainstream, TESOL, collaboration, co-planning

## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

Lardjane et al. (2017) argue that a “fundamental change is needed in the way we think about role of education in global development because it has a catalytic impact on the well-being of individuals and the future of our planet” (p. 1). The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 2019) supports this statement by reporting on the statistical increment of English language learners (ELLs) in the United States. The NCES indicates “the percentage of public-school students in the United States who were English language learners was higher in fall 2017, 10.1%, or 5.0 million students, than in fall 2000, 8.1%, or 3.8 million students” (para. 1). The increase in ELL population has brought new challenges that teachers, administrators, and other school support staff will encounter routinely.

### **Problem Statement**

This Capstone Project addresses the overarching issue of how to establish successful collaboration between mainstream and TESOL teachers. Chitiyo’s (2017) research explicitly shows that the majority of teachers lack the skills needed to effectively collaborate and co-teach. Chitiyo provides evidence that a voluminous number of teachers have adapted to working independently. Moreover, teachers are accustomed to evaluating and cultivating their teaching practices within the classroom on their own. Opening doors to co-teach forces teachers to feel as though their methods and strategies are at risk of being evaluated and critiqued (Bovill et al., 2015). Teachers face additional challenges in effective co-teaching. The challenges include becoming familiar with each student’s achievement, insufficiencies, learning abilities, and learning tools needed by individual students for the purpose of managing themselves (Hussin et al., 2016). According to Chitiyo (2017), despite negative assertions, teachers indicated even

without co-teaching skills, they still felt that co-teaching would be an effective tool for success of students.

### ***Definition of Terms***

Terms necessary to grasp in order to comprehend the background context of the English language learner student within the mainstream classroom and the school community.

English language learner (ELL) is an active learner of the English language who may benefit from various types of language support programs. This term is used mainly in the United States to describe K–12 students (NCLB, 2008).

Co-teaching is the practice of partnering teachers together in the classroom to share the responsibilities of planning, instructing, and assessing students. In a co-teaching setting, the teachers are considered equally responsible and accountable for the classroom (Trites, 2017).

Mainstream is a general education classroom where students with no disabilities and ELL students can be combined. The class is characteristically taught by a general education teacher. Students that are required to receive services can obtain this instruction with push in or pull out methods of individualized and group instruction (NCLB, 2008).

### **Significance of the Problem**

#### ***Increase in ELL Population in School Districts***

Jimenez-Castellanos and Garcia (2017) found that on account of the growing ELL population within United States schools, mainstream teachers have an increased ELL student population in their classroom. Lucas et al. (2008) state that mainstream teachers have infinitesimal preparation to provide the type of academic, emotional, and social support ELLs need to successfully learn academic content. Furthermore, Lucas et al. provided evidence that

mainstream teachers lack knowledge required to cultivate skills ELLs need to acquire English proficiency.

According to the National Clearing House for English Language Acquisition (NCELA, 2006) schools are obligated under civil rights laws to ensure ELLs have equal access to education. Notwithstanding these laws, the Education Commission of the States (ECS, 2014) indicated that over 30 states do not require TESOL training for mainstream teachers beyond federal requirements. To further support ELLs, Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA, 2015) was signed into law December 10, 2015 by President Obama. ESSA requires states to set homogeneous ELL classification and benchmarks that must be met in order for ELLs to exit. Furthermore, ESSA compels states to set a timeline for ELLs to achieve English proficiency. According to the New York State Education Department (2019) ESSA essentially holds teachers and administrators more accountable for success of students, when compared to No Child Left Behind Act. Scruggs et al. (2016) affirm the influx of ELL population has proven problematic for mainstream and TESOL teachers to acquire time necessary to effectively co-plan and co-teach a classroom that contains ELLs.

### ***Mainstream and TESOL Teachers Roles***

Trickett et al. (2012) examined how TESOL and mainstream teachers play vastly different roles within the school community. The TESOL teacher's role is generally to focus on preparing ELLs to be successful in content area classes through English language proficiency. Furthermore, the TESOL teacher takes on advocacy roles outside the classroom for ELLs.

On the contrary, the role of mainstream teachers is to primarily focus on teaching explicit content within the mainstream classroom. Mainstream teachers manage as many as 28 students

simultaneously. Consequently, this includes ELLs within the mainstream classroom in need of additional support in English proficiency. With lack of knowledge for working with ELL students, the complexity of English in the content area may hinder academic achievement. Ultimately, it becomes the mainstream teacher's responsibility to deliver the best practices for mainstream and ELL students to be academically successful (Trickett et al., 2012).

### ***ELLs Instructional Needs***

Reeves (2006) indicates that mainstream teachers emphasize the lack of time and resources available to address ELLs specific needs. Additionally, teachers reported they are professionally inadequate to support ELLs. Moreover, teachers were concerned that ELLs within the classroom will slow down the class progression. Depending on how proficient individual ELLs are in English, minimal to extensive support from teachers is required for ELLs to achieve academic success. Ultimately, this proves difficult for the mainstream teacher, primarily because approximately 28 other students need simultaneous support (Reeves, 2006).

### ***Challenges in Support from Administration***

Brooks et al. (2010) found that when faced with lack of knowledge, many administrators solely left the responsibility of ELLs academic success on the TESOL teacher. "This expert–novice relationship can undermine school change initiatives that target the integration and achievement of ELL students by releasing other teachers and administrators from the responsibility for building their own capacity to support and teach ELL students" (Brooks et al., 2010, p. 2). Administrators need to be aware of the best policies and practices to utilize with ELLs. This knowledge will ensure that administration will implement policies to support ELLs in the mainstream classroom. Additionally, with this knowledge, administration can ensure staff

is aware that ELL students are a priority to the school community. Furthermore, administration needs to warrant that staff works in collaboration to support this increasing student population. The results of successful co-teaching collaboration that is supported by administration will ensure that ELLs are achieving English language proficiency (Brooks et al., 2010).

### ***Mainstream and TESOL Teacher Collaboration Issues***

According to Slater and Mohan (2010), an issue that is standard within most school districts is cooperation between TESOL and mainstream teachers is often difficult to achieve. This is credited to limited time to prep and co-plan for students. How can ELLs be successful in the mainstream classroom if the teacher is unaware of the best strategies and methods to utilize with them? Co-teaching partners must have planning periods, professional development, and support from the administration for students to be successful (Guise et al., 2016).

It appears that the simple solution would be for co-teaching partners to collaborate and share their pedagogical knowledge to generate ideas on best practices for ELLs. However, this is shown time and again as being quite difficult to accomplish (Slater & Mohan, 2010). What are the reasons that the two qualified teachers are having difficulty collaborating, which would be in the best interests of the students?

As attested by Honigsfeld and Dove (2015), mainstream and TESOL teachers address the needs of ELLs with a collaborative instructional cycle that starts with co-planning. A co-teaching and co-planning classroom consist of a mainstream teacher working collaboratively throughout the school day with the TESOL teacher. A variety of different methods for this can be implemented. Full day collaboration or selected push in periods throughout the day are valuable methods to ensure success. According to Mofield (2019), co-planning and co-teaching

are beneficial to both mainstream and ELL students.

### **Purpose of Capstone**

The purpose of the Capstone Project is twofold. The initial purpose of the study is to research and address the overarching issue of how to establish successful collaboration between mainstream and TESOL teachers. The subsequent purpose is to create a professional development (PD) for partner mainstream and TESOL teachers to acquire skills and strategies to implement in the classroom. Lucas et al. (2008) explicitly state the majority of mainstream teachers are not certified in TESOL but have ELLs in their classroom the majority of the instructional day. As a result of this, students become successful if teachers are collaborating, co-teaching, and co-planning. The professional development is a full day designed for mainstream and TESOL teachers that have been previously partnered to co-teach by their administration.

The first session of PD consists of an icebreaker activity focusing on explicit instruction of ELLs within the mainstream classroom. Teachers work with their co-teaching partners to discuss the concepts contained on the card and how to successfully incorporate that into the classroom. The PD continues with training on strategies for successful co-teaching. Honigfeld and Dove (2015) explicitly state that “content area teachers and ESL teachers can address the needs of ELLs with a collaborative instructional cycle that starts with co-planning” (p. 4). Successful co-teaching is implemented through planning and collaboration techniques. The end of session one concludes with teachers completing an exit ticket and taking a ten-minute break.

The second session of PD consists of collaborative strategies for success in the co-teaching classroom. The learning outcomes for the second session consist of teachers incorporating the strategies into the classroom with their co-teaching partner. Furthermore,

teachers will be able to implement shared accountability, build a sense of community in the classroom, and be able to effectively co-plan with their partner teacher. Regrut (2020) found that partner teachers must have effective communication and conflict management skills to have a successful co-teaching relationship. The end of session two concludes with teachers completing an exit ticket and taking a 45-minute lunch break.

The third session of PD consists of presenting various models of effective co-teaching in the mainstream classroom. Strogilos and King-Sears (2019) found that partner teachers must utilize a variety of co-teaching models in the classroom in order to effectively work with mainstream and ELLs. Teachers will be able to implement the following co-teaching models; one teacher and one support, team teaching, and alternative teaching. In preparation for the collaborative instruction to be successful, the mainstream and TESOL teacher must incorporate the following concepts into their co-teaching partnership; build a relationship with one another, maintain the collaborative instructional cycle which includes co-planning, co-teaching, co-assessment of student work, and reflection, and maintain consistent leadership support (Honigsfeld & Dove, 2015). The end of session three concludes with teachers completing the exit tickets. Teachers are instructed that all documents used during the PD will be sent via Google Docs.

### **Conclusion**

This Capstone Project focused on the overarching issue of how to establish successful collaboration between mainstream and TESOL teachers. Chitiyo's (2017) research shows that teachers lack the skills needed to effectively collaborate and co-teach. Due to the fact the population of ELLs has greatly increased in the United States, mainstream teachers are finding

more ELLs within their classroom. According to Guise et al. (2016), teachers expressed they fell short on receiving the proper resources to work with ELL students. In order for ELLs to receive successful education, the curriculum needs to include co-planning and co-teaching with their TESOL and mainstream teacher.

A full day of professional development program was designed for partnered mainstream and TESOL teachers to collaborate and obtain knowledge on skills and strategies to utilize in the classroom. Teachers will build relationships with their co-teacher and employ three effective co-teaching models in the classroom.

Chapter two will present and review literature regarding collaboration between mainstream and TESOL teachers. Chapter three presents the full-day professional development to support mainstream and TESOL teacher's collaboration, as well as PD materials. Chapter four will reflect on the Capstone Project. In addition, included will also be Appendix A, the materials used in the professional development.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

### **Theory of Cooperative Learning**

Johnson and Johnson (2009) theory of cooperative learning is used worldwide from preschool education to higher educational institutions. Cooperative learning is defined as the instructional use of small groups so that partners work together to maximize content learning. Five elements of the theory of cooperative learning correlate into successful co-teaching and co-planning instructional methods. The five elements consist of positive interdependence, individual and group accountability, interpersonal and small group skills, face to face promotive interaction, and group processing. When used to co-teach and co-plan, the five elements provide successful results that benefit teachers, as well as mainstream and ELL students.

Through the lens of cooperative learning, I will examine the overarching issue of how to establish successful collaboration between mainstream and TESOL teachers. According to Schoor et al. (2015), “the ultimate goal is the co-construction of knowledge shared among members of the group” (p. 2). Ultimately, if mainstream and TESOL teachers are collaborating and sharing knowledge, the result is academically successful students.

### **Social and Emotional Development in ELLs**

According to Yehui et al. (2019), social and emotional development refers to the “process though which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions” (p. 3). Promoting positive social and emotional development should be the primary concern for educators working with mainstream and ELL students. Yehui et al. acknowledge that

ELLs face difficulties in maintaining positive social and emotional interactions with their English-speaking peers. Furthermore, Neihaus and Adelson (2014) claim that ELLs face difficulties such as immigration, family separation, poverty and cultural conflicts between home and school. Ultimately, these difficulties lead to a negative impact on ELLs academic, social, and emotional development.

Wang et al. (2019) concedes that social and emotional development within the United States school system is a new and complicated concept for ELLs to learn because these skills are socioculturally situated. These findings suggest that co-teaching and co-planning should incorporate English proficiency skills, content area instruction, social skills, and emotional development skills. Through co-teaching, educators can support both mainstream and ELLs social and emotional development to cultivate academic success.

### **Co-teaching and Co-planning for ELLs**

Sipe (2019) informs that co-teaching has evolved as a popular service delivery approach to meet diverse needs of students with disabilities in the general education classroom. Likewise, this popular delivery approach is beneficial to ELLs in the mainstream class. This Capstone Project focuses on collaboration between mainstream and TESOL teacher's and how the lack of collaboration can pose significant problems for successful instruction for ELLs. The goal is to create a plan for the mainstream and TESOL teachers to collaborate, in order to create lesson plans for ELLs that will focus on building skills and strategies. Furthermore, these strategies will strengthen and develop their English proficiency, as well as their content area skills.

Giles and Yazan (2019) focus on the importance of TESOL and mainstream teachers' collaboration. Giles and Yazan's study determined the outgrowth of collaboration can ultimately contribute to favorable ELLs learning outcomes. When mainstream and TESOL teachers work in collaboration they will benefit from each other's experience and expertise. In fact, this wealth of information can be utilized in the classroom with all students. Furthermore, when mainstream and TESOL teachers work collaboratively, ELLs will confidently work in connection with teachers. Ultimately, because ELLs become aware that efforts are made in order to promote learning goals (Giles & Yazan, 2019).

What is more, Spezzini and Becker (2012) report that when TESOL and content teachers collaborate, graduation rates increase. Graduation rates among ELLs were significantly higher when students participated in a summer reading program in which TESOL and mainstream teachers worked collaboratively to provide equitable learning opportunities. The teacher's main goal is educating the student as a whole in order to achieve academic success. Graduation would be the highest academic success that a student can ultimately achieve. Knowing that the graduation rates are higher for ELLs who's mainstream and TESOL teacher collaborated is reason enough for administration to begin having teachers work collaboratively.

Despite the fact that collaboration is advantageous for ELLs, there is a drawback. Gilles and Yazan (2019) explore difficulties that may occur when mainstream and TESOL teachers have different philosophies and pedagogical beliefs. TESOL teachers can be viewed by their colleagues as having a lack of professional knowledge in specific content areas. According to Creese (2002), TESOL teachers become the less important teacher, when compared to the

mainstream teacher. Ultimately, it is the TESOL teacher's responsibility to create a pathway to strengthen the unity with mainstream teachers. Furthermore, the responsibility to create a successful environment for collaboration lies on the TESOL teacher (Creese, 2002).

Gilles and Yazan (2019) analyze how collaboration between the mainstream and TESOL teachers change approaches that are utilized within the mainstream classroom. The five-month study was centered around an 8<sup>th</sup> grade ELA teacher and the middle school TESOL teacher. The TESOL teacher worked with the ELA teacher, on both formal and informal teaching practices, to incorporate into the classroom with ELLs. The study continues with the ELA and TESOL teacher collaborating and co-planning, to co-teach lessons within the ELA classroom. The study found that when the ELA and TESOL teacher worked collaboratively, the ELA teacher changed her perceptions about lesson design and delivery of instruction. The ELA teacher recognized she was not conceptualizing her role as a language teacher of ELLs. Gradually, she understood that her content teacher positioning needed to include language to serve ELLs within her classroom. Ultimately, by working in collaboration, the ELA teacher recognized her misconceptions about the ELLs and changed the way in which she taught them. The change in her teaching style, and incorporating different practices and strategies, led to ELLs participating more frequently in her classroom and improved literacy skills.

The study confirms that mainstream and TESOL teacher collaboration is vital for ELLs success. Students had increased participation, high standards for ELLs were established, and the ELA teacher implemented skills to help the students articulate their thoughts in order to build confidence.

In line with the notion of the theory of cooperative practices, Batt (2008) indicates that in the past 20 years the United States has seen substantial growth in ELL population. Federal programs are implemented to ensure that ELLs are receiving the proper services needed throughout content area programs.

The study aimed to directly solicit solutions and priorities from teachers to design professional development for the short term, as well as to rethink teacher education in a proactive mode for long term. Major questions of the study were: (1) What are the greatest challenges impeding effective education for the state's ELLs? (2) What areas of professional development are needed to overcome these challenges? It was quickly discovered that not all teachers working with ELLs are qualified to do so. Mainstream teachers and administrators lacked understanding of how to successfully work with ELLs. The result of the study was the LEP migrant programs director of the state department of education observed the need for training of mainstream teachers. Some of the solutions offered were extensive professional development requirements of all teachers and administrators in a variety of methods and approaches to improve instruction for ELLs. The methods include parent involvement, curriculum development, L1 and L2 literacy methods, and sheltered English instruction. Additionally, more TESOL teachers would be hired by the district, advanced professional development would be implemented, and students would be grouped according to varying proficiency levels.

Batt (2008) indicates that teacher preparation programs need to start implementing more course work to prepare pre-service teachers to work with ELLs. If teacher preparation programs are not preparing our future educators for working with this growing student population, then the

responsibility falls on administration. This proves to be a difficult and costly task. Teacher educators could alleviate challenges articulated in this study by advising pre-service teachers into courses that already exist but are not required.

Undoubtedly, restructuring the entire teacher education preparation program would be left up to individuals at state and federal level. The study proposes that school level teachers can evaluate the research and incorporate changes within the individual school system in their classroom. This can best be done by working on professional development programs for mainstream and TESOL teachers to collaborate. Teachers can implement concepts on how to successfully incorporate ELLs into content area instruction.

### **Models of Co-Teaching**

Solis et al. (2012) analyzed differentiated co-teaching models. One of the more common models is where the mainstream teacher delivers whole group instruction, while the TESOL teacher circulates throughout the room informally evaluating students and monitoring. An additional co-teaching model analyzed is where the classroom is split into small groups. The mainstream and TESOL teacher deliver instruction to specific small groups. There are other options available for co-teaching that will require varied levels of responsibility from both the mainstream and TESOL teachers. According to Solis et al. "The first step in successful implementation includes establishing a co-teaching relationship by developing goals, expectations, and roles, as well as understanding setting demands" (p. 4). This ensures that the co-teaching and co-planning relationship is successful.

### ***Application of Models of Co-Teaching Instruction***

After analyzing the models of instruction discussed above, it can be argued that the determination on which model to use should be decided during collaborative co-planning of a specific lesson. The above-mentioned research suggests that in order for co-teaching and co-planning to be successful, teachers will need to commit time each day to collaborate. During this co-planning time, the teachers determine the needs of students, both the mainstream and ELLs. Teachers must also discuss with their partner specific areas of strengths and weaknesses in instructional delivery of content. Partner teachers must coordinate how they are going to share responsibilities, their expectations from one another, and goals for lessons and students.

### ***Mainstream Teacher Teaches, TESOL Teacher Observes***

A model of instruction to be implemented during co-teaching is where the mainstream teacher teaches whole group instruction and the TESOL teacher observes. The goal for the TESOL teacher is to informally assess ELLs educational needs. The TESOL teacher can use this information to co-plan with the mainstream teacher on improved instructional methods. This approach of co-teaching can be a purposeful method in order for TESOL teachers to gain valuable information of where ELLs are struggling, as well as succeeding. The TESOL teacher can also use information obtained to work one on one with ELLs and offer individualized support.

### ***Co-Teaching with Team Teaching***

This instructional model of co-teaching that can be incorporated into the classroom is team teaching. According to Krammer et al. (2018) team teaching is when two teachers share

the accountability and responsibilities of the classroom equally. In this case, partner teachers are the mainstream and TESOL teachers. This model of instruction ensures that both the mainstream and TESOL teacher are equally responsible for success of all students within the classroom. The partner teachers have joint responsibilities, goals, and expectations for the classroom. The partner teachers co-plan lessons and devise a plan for differentiated instruction. During the lesson, the partner teachers collaborate in order to deliver instruction of the content. The partner teachers collaborate in a highly effective manner and incorporate their specific strengths into the lessons. In this instructional model, mainstream and ELL students are taught together using whole group instruction. The mainstream and TESOL teacher are viewed as equals by students because the lesson is engaging and there are two educators facilitating instruction. One downfall of this instructional model is that it does not generally offer time for individualized instructional support for students that may be struggling.

### ***Differentiated Co-Teaching***

The differentiated co-teaching model has the mainstream teacher working with the class for whole group instruction, while the TESOL teacher delivers instruction to a small group of students. The mainstream and TESOL teacher co-plan instruction for the lesson and produce methods to scaffold instruction. The partner teachers explicitly teach the same content to both the mainstream and ELL students. While working with small groups, the TESOL teacher can provide instruction targeting ELLs needs, while whole group instructional needs are being met by the mainstream teacher.

## **Conclusion**

In this Capstone Project, the overarching issue of how to establish successful collaboration with mainstream and TESOL teachers was researched and analyzed. Research suggests that co-teaching is an effective method to teach ELLs, as well as mainstream students. This is proven true in content area instruction, English language proficiency, social skills, and emotional development.

Teachers are required to do more than teach content-based instruction to students. Teachers are expected to incorporate social and emotional learning (SEL) into the instructional day. This can prove quite challenging for ELLs, as cultural barriers play a role in determining what is acceptable in SEL instruction. “Research consistently indicates that evidence based SEL programs can instill strong values, foster relationships, and provide comprehensive support for students by leveraging the social resources of the school, family, and community” (Haymovitz et al., 2018, p. 2). Benefits of social and emotional instruction include increased student performance in academics. For ELLs, SEL also improves L2 proficiency, which leads to academic success.

Cohen (2015) research supports that co-teaching and co-planning can greatly improve instruction and students’ success. This is significantly accurate if the mainstream and TESOL teacher work in collaboration to equally share the responsibility of the lesson. Sileo (2011) maintains that effective communication between the two teachers is the key to success for co-teaching. Mofield (2019) clearly argues that mainstream teachers often need additional support in their classroom to differentiate instruction, especially for ELLs.

As indicated earlier, few mainstream teachers have qualified experience to work with ELLs. Therefore, collaborating with a TESOL teacher will ensure success of both mainstream and ELL students. According to Sileo (2011), when TESOL and mainstream teachers collaborate, ELLs have increased participation in the classroom. Furthermore, ELLs are more confident in the classroom community and have an increased graduation rate. Conversely, Wassel and LaVan (2009) argue that a drawback from collaboration is when partner teachers have different teaching and pedagogical philosophies. The different philosophies would not prepare them for a successful co-teaching classroom. Administration must appropriately partner teachers to ensure success. “It is important to pair individuals who will be comfortable and confident working together, and who may be able to push each other throughout the experience (Wassel & LaVan, 2009, p. 5). Furthermore, professional development needs to be provided on successful co-teaching models, strategies for collaborating, and implementing successful concepts in the classroom for ELLs.

Chapter three presents the full-day professional development to support mainstream and TESOL teacher’s collaboration, as well as PD materials.

### **Chapter 3: Professional Development**

This Professional Development is created to address the overarching issue of how to establish successful collaboration between mainstream and TESOL teachers. Co-teachers have been partnered by administration and will be working together for the duration of the PD.

According to Slater and Mohan (2010), an issue that is standard in most school districts is that cooperation between TESOL and mainstream teachers is often difficult to achieve. As educators, do you feel this statement is accurate? Do you find it difficult to collaborate with partner teachers?

According to Sileo (2011), when TESOL and mainstream teachers collaborate, ELLs have increased participation in the classroom. Furthermore, ELLs are more confident in the classroom community and have an increased graduation rate. Today will focus on discovering ways to establish successful co-teaching relationships.

#### **First Session of PD**

##### ***Learning Target***

According to Honigfeld and Dove (2015), “Content-area teachers and ESL teachers can address the needs of English language learners with a collaborative instructional cycle that starts with co-planning” (p. 4). The first session of PD focuses on incorporating strategies and concepts to utilize with ELLs to develop English proficiency (see Appendix, Figure 1). According to Mohr and Mohr (2007) effective teachers will utilize a variety of strategies with ELLs to create proficient and productive students.

Teachers will be able to build background knowledge regarding successful co-planning and co-teaching. Cossett-Lent (2020) states that building background knowledge is essential

because it enables teachers to comprehend new ideas. Teachers will build background knowledge of successful co-teaching classrooms, as well as what the classroom should not portray (see Appendix, Figure 2).

### *Activities with Time Allocation*

**8:30AM-9:15AM:** The facilitator of the PD will initiate the icebreaker activity. Teachers will spend 20 minutes with their partner teacher playing the Did You Know? activity (see Appendix, Figure 3). Teachers will return to their seats and spend five minutes discussing the activity and concepts. To conclude the icebreaker activity, twenty minutes will be spent with the facilitator of the PD reviewing concepts and strategies discussed.

**9:15AM-10:00AM:** Strogilos and King-Sears (2018) indicate that teachers raise concerns with roles and responsibilities in the co-teaching classroom. The facilitator of the PD will create an anchor chart as a visual for teachers to address these concerns. The anchor chart will include the following questions: (1) How do you define co-teaching? (2) What role can you play in a successful co-teaching classroom? (3) What will a successful co-teaching classroom look like? (4) What should a co-teaching classroom not portray? Once the anchor charts are filled in, teachers can formulate working concepts about co-teaching in the school district. Teachers will have copies of the anchor chart at their table (see Appendix, Figure 4).

**10:15AM-11:00AM:** Teachers will be presented with a visual model of successful co-teaching (see Appendix, Figure 5). The facilitator of the PD will introduce concepts and ideas about successful co-teaching through (1) planning and administration and (2) implementation. According to Krammer et al. (2018) successful co-teaching can be established through school

district support combined with classroom level implementation. The previously created anchor chart will be used as a guide to support comprehension.

**11:00AM-11:15AM:** The facilitator will conclude the first session of PD by having teachers complete an exit ticket. The exit ticket asks teachers two questions: (1) What role can you play in a successful co-teaching classroom? (2) How can administration support teachers on their co-teaching experience? (see Appendix, Figure 6). Teachers will then have a ten-minute break.

### ***Outcome for First Session of Professional Development***

The goal of the first session of PD is teachers will develop strategies and concepts to utilize with ELLs to develop English proficiency. Giles and Yazan (2019) study determined the outgrowth of collaboration can ultimately contribute to favorable ELLs learning outcomes. Teachers will be able to build background knowledge of successful co-planning and co-teaching established through school district support and combined with classroom level implementation.

### **Second Session of PD**

#### ***Learning Target***

According to Regrut (2020) it is vital for success of the co-teaching relationship if partner teachers have effective communication and conflict management skills. The second session of PD will focus on building the above-mentioned skills. Teachers will be able to develop collaborative teaching strategies that are effective for a successful co-teaching classroom. Teachers will be able to implement shared accountability, a sense of community, and effective collaboration.

*Activities with Time Allocation*

**11:25AM-12:30PM:** The facilitator will resume the PD with discourse on the importance of collaborating in the co-teaching classroom for mainstream and ELL students. Alonso and DelliCarpini (2013) explicitly state to fully meet the needs of ELLs in language and content learning, mainstream and TESOL teachers must work in collaboration. The following collaborative strategies will be introduced: (1) Teachers establish clear goals for shared responsibility, as well as individual accountability, (2) Build trust and communication to be implemented by partners by thoroughly explaining concepts and any interpersonal issues that may occur throughout the partnership, (3) Teachers will foster a sense of community. Teachers need to relate to their partner if they are going to have successful collaboration and (4) Teachers effectively plan how to share information about students. A handout will be provided for teachers to assess students informally (see Appendix, Figure 7).

Teachers will collaborate with their partner teachers to discuss how they can utilize these learned concepts within their classroom, for mainstream and ELL students. A graphic organizer is provided for teachers (see Appendix, Figure 8).

**12:30PM-12:45PM:** At the closure of the second session of PD, the facilitator will give the teachers an exit ticket (see Appendix, Figure 9). The exit ticket asks teachers the following questions: (1) How can you determine the shared responsibilities and goals with your co-teaching partner? (2) How will you build communication and trust with your co-teaching partner? Teachers will then take a 45-minute lunch recess.

### ***Outcome for Second Session of Professional Development***

The goal of the second session of PD is for teachers to be able to develop and utilize strategies in a co-teaching partnership. According to Solis et al. “The first step in successful implementation includes establishing a co-teaching relationship by developing goals, expectations, and roles, as well as understanding setting demands” (p. 4). Teachers will be able to communicate and build trust with their partner. Teachers will be able to set clear expectations, goals, and responsibilities for the co-teaching partnership.

### **Third Session of PD**

#### ***Learning Target***

Solis et al. (2012) analyzed various differentiated co-teaching models. Teachers will be able to use differentiated models of effective co-teaching for academic success of mainstream and ELLs. Murawski and Hughest (2009) inform that teachers will need to assess students’ academic needs for a specific lesson and choose the co-teaching model that best supports achievement.

#### ***Activities with Time Allocation***

**1:45PM-2:15PM** The facilitator will resume the PD and instruct teachers on various models of co-teaching (see Appendix, Figure 10). The first model is one teach and one support. According to Strogilos and King-Sears (2019), this model places the primary responsibility of planning and instruction on one teacher, while the other provides support. One teach and one support has partner teachers effectively co-teaching a lesson where one teacher is instructing whole group and the other is informally accessing ELLs. The model helps ELLs academic

achievement by gathering data on their English and content area proficiency. Teachers use this data to construct future lessons.

**2:15PM-2:45PM:** The next model presented is team-teaching. Partner teachers equally share responsibility of creating and implementing lessons through whole group instruction. Both teachers are equally involved in the structure of lessons and continuous discourse with students. According to Watkins et al. (2004), team teaching will be successful if partner teachers outline their specific roles during co-planning. Krammer et al. (2018) inform this model of co-teaching supports ELLs success because students view teachers as equals and are able to confidently participate in classroom discourse. ELLs increased participation in classroom discourse leads to academic success.

**2:45PM-3:15PM:** The final model of co-teaching instructed is alternative teaching. Partner teachers share equal responsibility of creating and implementing the content area lesson. However, one teacher will be facilitating whole group instruction, while the other is teaching the same content through small group instruction. Solis et al. (2012) inform that this model will address specific needs of ELLs through individualized instruction.

**3:15PM-3:30PM:** Teachers will spend 15 minutes engaging in discourse on three models of co-teaching with their partners. Teachers will be asked to work in collaboration to implement models in their co-teaching partnership. The facilitator will then welcome collaborative discourse. Teachers will discuss ideas they can include with the three models of co-teaching. The facilitator will create an anchor chart for the models discussed and ideas that can be incorporated.

**3:30PM-4:00PM:** At the conclusion of the PD, teachers are given an exit ticket to complete (see Appendix, Figure 11). The exit ticket instructs teachers to choose one co-teaching instructional model and explain how they will utilize that model in the co-teaching classroom.

### ***Outcome for Third Session Professional Development***

After analyzing the models of instruction discussed above, it can be argued that the determination on which model to use should be decided during collaborative co-planning of a specific lesson (Murawski & Hughest, 2009). The outcomes for the third session of PD will be that teachers will be able to successfully incorporate three models of effective co-teaching in the classroom with their partner during co-planning.

### **Conclusion of Professional Development**

At the conclusion of the professional development, the facilitator will open the floor to the ask and answer session. Teachers will be able to ask the facilitator any additional questions they have. The facilitator instructs teachers that a Google Docs drive of materials used throughout the full day of professional development will be sent to teachers. The presentation of the professional development is provided as well (see Appendix, Figure 12). Chapter four will reflect on the Capstone Project.

## **Chapter 4: Conclusion**

### **Introduction**

This Capstone Project addresses the overarching issue of how to establish successful collaboration between mainstream and TESOL teachers. Chitiyo's (2017) research explicitly states the majority of teachers lack skills needed to effectively collaborate and co-teach. Despite negative assertions, teachers indicate even without co-teaching skills, they still feel co-teaching would be an effective tool for success of mainstream and ELL students.

### **Conclusions**

Through the lens of cooperative learning, the overarching issue of how to establish successful collaboration between mainstream and TESOL teachers was researched and examined. According to Schoor et al. (2015), "the ultimate goal of cooperative learning is the co-construction of knowledge shared among members of the group" (p. 2).

Yehui et al. (2019) inform that ELLs face challenges in creating positive social and emotional connections with English-speaking peers. Mainstream and TESOL teachers can rectify this deficiency by co-teaching and co-planning lessons that incorporate English proficiency skills, content area instruction, social skills, and emotional development skills. Through co-teaching, teachers support both mainstream and ELLs social and emotional development to promote academic achievement.

When mainstream and TESOL teachers collaborate, advantageous outcomes occur for both mainstream and ELLs. The primary goal for academic success is graduation. Spezzini and Becker (2012) report that when TESOL and content teachers collaborate, graduation rates for ELLs increase.

Gilles and Yazan (2019) study analyzed how collaboration between the mainstream and TESOL teachers change methodologies utilized in the classroom with ELLs. The study explicitly shows how working in collaboration, the ELA teacher acknowledged her misconceptions about ELLs and transformed the way she instructed them. By incorporating different practices and strategies, ELLs ultimately participated more frequently in her classroom and improved English language proficiency.

Based on the above findings, co-teaching, and co-planning between mainstream and TESOL teachers greatly benefit ELLs. In order to accomplish success for ELL students, co-teachers must learn skills and strategies to effectively co-teach.

Honigsfeld and Dove (2015) explicitly state that “content area teachers and ESL teachers can address the needs of ELLs with a collaborative instructional cycle that starts with co-planning” (p. 4). In order to resolve the overarching issue of how to establish successful collaboration between mainstream and TESOL teachers, a full day professional development is created. Partner teachers will work together to develop strategies for successful co-teaching that leads to mainstream and ELLs academic success.

### **Implications for ELLs Learning**

Brooks et al. (2010) study explicitly state successful co-teaching collaboration that is supported by administration will ensure that ELLs are achieving English language proficiency. ELLs develop strong English proficiency skills and have a higher graduation rate when placed in a supportive co-teaching classroom. When co-teachers are able to utilize a variety of models in the classroom, mainstream and ELLs academic needs are fulfilled. Teachers are able to gather

valuable data on ELLs to support future co-planning. Partner teachers instruct whole group instruction to incorporate mainstream and ELLs working collaboratively. Lastly, co-teachers work in small group instruction to meet the individualized academic needs of ELLs.

### **Implications for Co-Teaching**

Mainstream and TESOL teachers working in collaboration produce thriving students. Jimenez-Castellanos and Garcia (2017) found that mainstream teachers have increased ELL student population in the classroom. However, according to Lucas et al. (2008) mainstream teachers lack knowledge required to cultivate skills ELLs need to acquire English proficiency. Creating a professional development to address these issues benefit mainstream and TESOL teachers, as well as students.

When mainstream and TESOL teachers collaborate, they benefit from each other's experience and expertise. Furthermore, successful co-teaching will ensure that needs of mainstream and ELLs are met. Gilles and Yazan (2019) study inform that mainstream teachers that have minimal experience working with ELLs recognized misconceptions about ELL students and modified instruction, after collaborating with the TESOL teacher.

### **Recommendations**

In order for school districts to continue to address the overarching issue of how to establish successful collaboration between mainstream and TESOL teachers, professional development must be continued frequently. Professional development should be provided to teachers, support staff, and administrators. Brooks et al. (2010) found that when faced with lack of knowledge, many administrators solely left the responsibility of ELLs academic success on

the TESOL teacher. Therefore, administration must be included in professional development to support ELLs success. All certified teachers in the school district must attend PD on this topic.

### **Final Thoughts**

This Capstone Project addresses the overarching issue of how to establish successful collaboration between mainstream and TESOL teachers. The influx of ELL classified students into the United States, and lack of certified TESOL teachers, lead to the demand to produce resources to remedy the issue. TESOL and mainstream teachers must work in collaboration through successful co-teaching in order to ensure success in students. Administration can support ELL students by implementing professional development for all staff working with ELLs. The ultimate goal for teachers is to ensure that all students are successful. This can be accomplished through continuous professional development. Throughout their career, all teachers will most likely have ELLs in their classroom and its vital they develop skills and strategies to utilize with this student population.

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**Appendix**

**Figure 1**

*Strategies and Concepts for Working with ELL Students*

**Strategies and Concepts for Working with ELL Students**

Pre-Teach Vocabulary	Model with Visuals
Incorporate Group Work	Incorporate Scaffolding in Native Language L1
Make classroom Culturally Responsive	Prepare for Purposeful Planning
Content and Language Objectives	Prior Knowledge

**Figure 2**

*Basis of Successful Co-teaching*

<p><b>How do you define coteaching?</b></p> <p>Teachers working together to share the responsibilities of planning, instructing, and assessing students.</p>	<p><b>What role can you play in a successful coteaching classroom?</b></p> <p>Sharing equal responsibility, co-planning, and co-teaching, building rapport with my partner teacher, learning about all of the students, and working with administration</p>
<p><b>What will a successful coteaching classroom look like?</b></p> <p>Partner teachers feeding off the strengths and weaknesses of each other, establishing rules and responsibilities for each teacher, students respecting both teachers equally</p>	<p><b>What should a coteaching classroom not portray?</b></p> <p>The responsibility being placed solely on one teacher, teachers not making it a priority to collaborate</p>

**Figure 3**

*Icebreaker Activity*

<h2 style="margin: 0;">Did You Know Ice-Breaker Activity</h2>
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<u>Question</u>	<u>Possible Response</u>
<p style="text-align: center;">Did you know that pre-teaching vocabulary is an important strategy to implement with ELL students?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Yes, I know this is an important strategy because comprehension increases when students understand the definition of the words they will encounter before the lesson.</p>

**Figure 4**

*Successful Co-Teaching Graphic Organizer*

**Successful Co-Teaching**  
 Please take 20 minutes to discuss these questions with your table partners.

<p><b>How do you define coteaching?</b></p>	<p><b>What role can you play in a successful co-teaching classroom?</b></p>
<p><b>What will a successful co-teaching classroom look like?</b></p>	<p><b>What should a coteaching classroom not portray?</b></p>

**Figure 5**

*Successful Co-Teaching Through Planning, Administration, and Implementation*

<b>Successful Co-Teaching</b>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Planning &amp; Administration</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• complete support from administrators on a district level and school building level</li> <li>• Administrators will provide PD to all teachers and administrators</li> <li>• Promote shared accountability</li> <li>• Provide co-planning and co-teaching time</li> <li>• Carefully determine co-teaching partners</li> <li>• Provide necessary tools and resources</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Implementation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Utilize the co-planning time to work with your partner teacher</li> <li>• Generate ideas based off experience and research to use in the classroom</li> <li>• Build a rapport with partner teacher</li> <li>• Take equal responsibility with partner teacher</li> <li>• Determine which model of co-teaching will work for that specific lesson (Krammer et al., 2018).</li> </ul>

**Figure 6**

*Session One Exit Ticket*

**First Session of PD Exit Ticket**

Please answer the two questions and leave in mailbox on table and take a ten-minute break

**What role can you play in a successful co-teaching classroom?**

**How can administration support teachers on their co-teaching experience?**

**Figure 7**

*Student Data Collection Form*

Student Name:	Date of Data Collection:
IEP Goal:	Content of Lesson:

**Data Collection Report**

Goals/Objectives	Independent Work	Working in Collaboration	Returned Work	Verbal Prompt	Physical Prompt

Modifications Adaptions:
Overall Progress:
Additional Notes:
Signature: <span style="float: right;">Date:</span>

**Figure 8**

*Strategies to Build Successful Co-Teaching Partnerships*

<p><b>Establish Clear Goals</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Each teacher will have equal and shared responsibility</li> <li>• Teachers will predetermine which model of coteaching will be used and the role of each teacher.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Build Trust and Communication</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers need to build rapport and create mutual respect in order to create a working coteaching partnership</li> <li>• Constantly communicate in informal and formal ways</li> </ul>
<p><b>Foster a Sense of Community</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers will work in unison to build respect and a rapport with the students</li> <li>• Work together for shared goal</li> <li>• Hold weekly class meetings</li> <li>• Both teachers will allow students to have a voice</li> </ul>	<p><b>Effectively Plan &amp; Collaborate</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers will need to co-plan in order to co-teach</li> <li>• Make planning time their priority</li> <li>• Get to know all of your students, their needs, their strengths, and weaknesses</li> </ul>

**Figure 9**

*Second Session Exit Ticket*

**Exit Ticket Second Session of PD**  
Please answer the following two questions, leave in my mailbox, and take a 45-minute lunch break

<p><b>How can you determine the shared responsibilities and goals with your co-teaching partner?</b></p>	<p><b>How will you build communication and trust with your co-teaching partner?</b></p>
--	---

**Figure 10**

*Three Effective Models of Co-Teaching*

<b>Three Effective Models of Co-Teaching</b>
--

<b>One Teach, One Support</b>	<b>Team Teaching</b>
Notes:	Notes:

<b>Alternative Teaching</b>
Notes:

**Figure 11**

*Session Three Exit Ticket*

**Exit Ticket for Third Session of PD**

Please answer this final question, leave in my mailbox.  
Have a great day!

**Pick one co-teaching instructional model learned today. Describe how best to utilize that in the classroom with your co-teaching partner.**

**Figure 12**

*Professional Development Presentation*

<https://voicethread.com/share/14946971/>