



Making co-teaching partnerships work: Tips for ELL educators

Co-teaching can be an exciting way to support ELL success! It can also present many kinds of challenges. Here are some tips for ELL educators on how to make the most of their co-teaching partnerships.

Note: For more ideas, see our related article with tips from ELL coach Katy Padilla: <https://www.colorincolorado.org/article/co-teach/ell>



Co-Teaching ELLs: Strategies for Success

Observe your partner teacher in their classroom.

Start by observing your partner teacher. Get to know how the teacher and classroom work. Consider how you might fit into the picture and how this co-teaching arrangement may compare to others in your experience.

Get to know each other's strengths.

Recognizing each other's strengths helps establish a partnership of equals. Share some of the teacher's strengths you notice and ask them what they feel their strengths are. Then you can share some of your own!

Share your ELL expertise.

Help your partner better understand your expertise by asking them what questions they have about their ELLs, sharing examples of your other co-teaching experiences, or offering to co-plan a lesson.

Establish clear communication procedures.

Be very specific about how and when you will communicate and how to handle changes to your lesson.

Be flexible with your co-teaching arrangements.

Keep in mind that each teacher is unique and that co-teaching can take a lot of different forms. Talk about some different options as you figure out what will work best for your partnership.

Be ready to try new things — and fail.

It's important to be able to try new things together knowing that some of them won't work. Keep an open mind, avoid making judgments, and keep moving forward when the lesson doesn't go as planned.

If co-teaching is new to your team, start small.

Find a trusted colleague and brainstorm some ideas for co-teaching. Once classroom teachers see what is possible, they often will share those experiences with others and collaboration will start to grow organically.

Share successes with colleagues!

Share your successes with your team (and with administrators) in order to build more support for co-teaching and collaboration throughout the school community.