

13 TEACHERS TEACHING TEACHERS™

FOR A DYNAMIC COMMUNITY OF TEACHER LEADERS

FROM ISOLATION TO PARTNERSHIP

ESL CO-TEACHING LEADS TO TEACHER LEADERSHIP

**Andrea Honigsfeld
and Maria Dove**

With classrooms tucked away in the basement or makeshift spaces in auditoriums or lunchrooms, many English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) teachers experience a sense of isolation that mirrors the stand-alone nature of the work they do with students. Often, English Language Learners (ELLs) are pulled from their classrooms at the elementary level to receive English language instruction in 40-

to 80-minute periods. In secondary schools, ELLs are scheduled for up to three periods of ESL classes per day, and the curriculum taught in these classes is rarely aligned to content courses. ESL teachers are also isolated from their colleagues: they rarely join grade-level or team meetings and are often not invited to child study or instructional support meetings. In addition, what ESL teachers accomplish in their sessions with ELLs is often a mystery to many mainstream teachers.

In our work with ESL teachers, we have discovered something exciting. When schools and districts forge teacher partnerships and implement co-teaching practices to improve learning for ELLs, the outcomes are remarkable: teacher isolation and a disconnected or fragmented ESL curriculum are replaced with joint planning, collaborative instructional and extracurricular activities,

What's inside

Lessons from a coach

Julia Aguilar
Zongker listens,
teaches, measures.

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and the emergence of teacher leadership.

The concept of co-teaching and collaboration has been accepted for many years within the special education community (Cook & Friend, 1995; Villa, Thousand, & Nevin, 2008; Conderman, Bresnahan, & Pedersen, 2009). Traditionally, co-teaching is a collaboration between general and special education teachers for all of the teaching responsibilities of all of the students assigned to a classroom (Gately & Gately, 2001). Together, general education classroom teachers and specialists, such as remedial reading teachers, math specialists, teachers of the gifted and talented, and more recently, ESL teachers, have also developed collaborative partnerships. The leadership opportunities these partnerships encourage are another significant benefit for the teachers involved as well as the schools and students they serve.

Caryn Bachar: SIDE-BY-SIDE COACHING

We invite you to visit the south shore of Long Island, N.Y., a suburban area as diverse and often as segregated as any big city's distinct neighborhoods. First, meet Caryn Bachar, who teaches ESL in grades 2-5 in Hewlett-Woodmere Public Schools. Bachar co-teaches with two mainstream teachers during their literacy block, thus assisting ELLs, former ELLs who tested out of her program, and other general education students.



Bachar

While she is working inside the regular classroom, Bachar is also helping all her mainstream colleagues to apply Reading and Writing Workshop (Calkins, 2000) techniques to enhance ELLs' oral language and literacy skills. She provides short, meaningful mini-lessons for individual or small groups of students on different reading and writing concepts and strategies. As an instructional partner in the class, Bachar participates in assessing the reading and writing progress of ELLs alongside their peers and also teaches students how to self-assess their own reading and writing skills. She has taken the lead on issues that involve the academic progress of ELLs, and has become a strong child advocate for the education of English learners in

her district.

Bachar, the 2007 New York State ESL Teacher of the Year, is frequently sought after as a workshop presenter in her own district and beyond. Through her willingness to share her many years of experience through case studies and vignettes, and her stacks of professionally created, teacher-made instructional materials, her impact reaches beyond the two classrooms in which she regularly co-teaches.

Nancy Berg: WORKING IN HARMONY

Next, visit Nancy Berg in Freeport Public Schools, a high-needs school district with 17% English Language Learners. She is dually certified in ESL and special education and co-teaches with her middle school English teacher colleague for four of five periods every day. She modifies and adapts reading materials, scaffolds assignments, develops alternate assessments, and more. Additionally, she creates lessons that support and remediate the specific needs of ELL and special education students. Berg is responsible for the creation and implementation of IEPs (Individual Education Plans) for all of the students who are classified as special education, several of whom are also ELLs. She attends team meetings every other day and coplans with her colleague, Matt Fliegel, on a regular basis. To deliver instruction for their ELLs, both Berg and Fliegel execute their lessons seamlessly through the use of various co-teaching models in one 42-minute period.



Berg

Berg and Fliegel, a first-year English teacher, co-teach for several periods a day, every day. In two of their inclusion classes, both classified and regular education ELLs work alongside English speaking special education and nonclassified 7th graders, giving the teachers for different subgroups to manage. Fliegel is pleased to have an in-class coach and mentor available almost the entire day as they share planning, delivering, and assessing instruction.

Michelle Angiulo: TAPPING INTO EXPERTISE

Travel further east on Long Island with us and you will find yourself in Farmingdale High School

Together, general education classroom teachers and specialists, such as remedial reading teachers, math specialists, teachers of the gifted and talented, and more recently, ESL teachers, have also developed collaborative partnerships.

NSDC'S BELIEF

Schools' most complex problems are best solved by educators collaborating and learning together.

Co-teaching models

Based on our combined experiences with ESL co-teaching and training others in teacher collaboration and co-teaching practices, we adapted Vaughn, Schumm and Arguelles’s (1997) co-teaching models to the ESL context (Honigsfeld & Dove, 2008). The teachers we work with use and adapt the following models.

| MODEL TYPE | MODEL DESCRIPTION |
|---|---|
| ONE STUDENT GROUP: One lead teacher and one teacher teaching on purpose | The mainstream and ESL teachers take turns assuming the lead role. One leads while the other provides mini-lessons to individuals or small groups to pre-teach or clarify a concept or skill. |
| ONE STUDENT GROUP: Two teachers teach the same content | Both teachers direct a whole-class lesson and work cooperatively to teach the same lesson at the same time. |
| TWO STUDENT GROUPS: Two teachers teach the same content | Students are divided into two learning groups; teachers engage in parallel teaching, presenting the same content using differentiated learning strategies. |
| TWO STUDENT GROUPS: One re-teaches; one teaches alternative information | Flexible grouping provides students at various proficiency levels with the support they need for specific content; student group composition changes as needed. |
| MULTIPLE STUDENT GROUPS: Two teachers monitor/teach | Multiple groupings allow both teachers to monitor and facilitate student work while targeting selected students with assistance for their unique learning needs. |

(Farmingdale Public Schools) where Michelle Angiulo, one of four ESL teachers, has invited some of the most willing content area teachers in her building to partner with her. Her ability to identify the teachers with the most sensitivity to students’ linguistic needs and to develop a shared commitment to working with ELLs led to opportunities to engage in collaborative planning and co-teaching with a teacher certified in Biology and one in English.



Angiulo

When Angiulo and her co-teachers share instruction, she helps clarify difficult concepts, writes notes on the board, and circulates and offers a different perspective. She sometimes asks questions that she knows her ELLs might like to ask if they were comfortable enough to do so. Thus, she

models appropriate classroom behavior and helps redirect her content area specialist colleagues to focus on challenging concepts.

Angiulo invites her two colleagues to ESL meetings, regional ESL conferences, and offsite workshops so they may explore critical issues together. As they examine the topics of adapting instruction for students with interrupted formal education, they each rely on their own background knowledge and experience in the content areas as well as on their emerging, shared knowledge of ESL pedagogy. Angiulo acts not only as a guide on the side and the knowledgeable other, but also as the momentum that keeps the spotlight shining on the special concerns of English learners.

Bachar, Berg, and Angiulo are all highly experienced, extraordinary educators. They perceive their role not only to offer the best possible instruction to their ELLs but also to make sure

their colleagues are able to provide that, too. They accomplish all that as authentic, naturally emerging teacher leaders. Through their partnerships with mainstream colleagues, they regularly engage in joint teaching and learning opportunities and also take on informal yet powerful leadership roles and responsibilities.

Teacher leadership roles and opportunities vary, but all three educators we portrayed here found co-teaching to be one strong avenue to turn teacher collaboration to partnerships while also developing qualities of teacher leadership. According to Glickman, Gordon, and Ross-Gordon (2007), teachers commonly seek each other's advice, support, and assistance more often than those of administrator. Therefore, it is only natural that the development of teacher leaders, in formal as well as informal positions, would be an important means to provide instructional support to teachers to enhance learning for ELLs.

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