

Making co-teaching partnerships work: Tips for ELL educators

Co-teaching can be an exciting way to support English language learners' (ELL) success, but it can be challenging. Here are some tips for ELL educators on making 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

Get to know your partner teacher.

Visit your partner teacher's classroom and get to know the teacher's style. 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.

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.

Be flexible with your co-teaching arrangements.

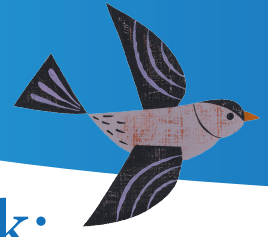
Keep in mind that each teacher is unique and that co-teaching can take a lot of different forms. Talk about some different options as you figure out what will work best for your partnership.

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.

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.



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Co-Teaching ELLs: 8 Strategies for Success

Observe your ELL colleague in different settings.

Start by observing your partner teacher in another co-teaching situation or in a small group lesson. Make a note of how the teacher is supporting students and how you might work together to support your students.

Get to know more about your partner's ELL expertise.

Many classroom teachers haven't had a chance to learn about what ELL educators do every day. You can learn more by asking questions about your ELLs or co-planning a lesson together.

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If this is your first time co-teaching, start small.

Start with small activities and short lessons at the beginning. Find out what the ELL teacher is doing in other classrooms and what might work in your room.

Be flexible with your co-teaching arrangements.

Keep in mind that each team 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.

Share successes with colleagues!

Share your successes with your team (and with administrators) to build more support for co-teaching and collaboration. You can also help others understand what your ELL colleagues have to offer!