

Figure 1. Essential Aspects of Effective Co-Teaching

1. Professionalism: build credibility	Be consistent. Show up on time and every day. Be courteous. Let partner teachers know if you're not going to be there. Be informative. Suggest and model alternate methods of instruction, lessons, themes, connections to other content areas. Provide information on individual student needs, curricular modifications, and new software programs. Be proactive. Anticipate what you can do to enhance lessons and the instructional environment.
2. Articulate and model instruction to meet student needs	Be specific. Explain how particular instructional strategies impact students with certain difficulties and suggest alternatives. Be analytical. Conduct a skill task analysis or a functional behavior analysis. Teach students the prerequisite skills necessary to acquire a higher-order skill or to effect a change in behavior. Be exemplary. Model reinforcement of positive behavior change.
3. Accurately assess student progress	Be helpful. Volunteer to help with grading to enhance understanding of course expectations and range of student performance. Work with student to teach the grading system and to help him/her succeed in understanding course content. Be resourceful. Connect student IEP goals to course expectations. Develop at least two methods of assessment, combining IEP goals and course content. With general educator, select the most appropriate method of assessment. Present to IEP team.
4. Analyze teaching/teaching styles	Be observant. Point out classroom nuances to assist students in organizing information and seeing patterns in a teacher's practices. Show your co-teacher how she can make routines and expectations more explicit for students, and explain how and why this can be helpful.
5. Work with a wide range of students	Be creative. Use knowledge of learning styles to adapt traditional lesson formats. Be innovative. Use opportunities, such as assistive technology, to aid in bridging the learning styles between and among students. Educate both instructors and students about different learning styles.
6. Knowledge of course content	Be honest about your background. Many special educators don't have a degree in math or English—no one expects you to! Be curious. Ask what you could be reading; borrow a teacher's edition of the textbook; use Internet, library, and other resources to develop your background knowledge of a subject. Be prepared. Have a clear concept of the main ideas/the main goals of the lesson/unit. Focus on these with a small group so students can participate in whole-class discussions. Be a co-learner. Use your own process of learning to identify where students might get stuck; share materials that you used in your "review" with students and teachers; make connections to other content areas; show how core ideas apply to "real life" or current events.