

# Designing reasonable adjustments to support school inclusion

for children with a disability

## Evidence Review Summary

### Co-teaching

What is it?	A model of inclusive education in which a general education teacher and a special education teacher work together in the same classroom.
Who are the co-teachers?	The general education teacher is the content expert, and the special education teacher is the expert in adapting lessons to suit students with various needs. Unlike an Education Support Staff member, who may be assigned to assist a student with a disability, the special education teacher helps all students access the content.
In what settings has it been used?	Co-teaching has been used in mainstream schools, at primary and secondary levels.
Evidence of good outcomes	Co-teaching has been found to lead to better gains for students than pull-out instruction by an Allied Health Professional (1). Co-teaching appears most effective when the co-teachers have a collaborative approach, have had more pre-service and professional development in collaborative co-teaching and inclusive education, and the school environment provides (and the pair make the effort to use) planning time (2). Effective collaboration through co-teaching has been found to require collaborative preparation, provision, and evaluation (3) and to be supported through monitoring, feedback, and continual professional development (2, 4, 5). Techniques found to be effective include activation of prior knowledge, processing activities, strategy instruction, scaffolding, providing a structured environment with clear routines, and asking students to draw connections between topics to emphasize big picture learning (6).
Evidence of poor outcomes	When the pair is less collaborative, the special education teacher has been found to be treated like an Education Support Staff (2), and become “responsible” for the students with disabilities while the generalist teacher relinquishes this responsibility (6). There is evidence that the specialist may also be at risk of exploitation, expected to put in extra hours teaching content to the students with disabilities, when s/he is not a content expert (7). Co-teaching has been found to have different effects on student participation at primary and secondary levels (8), which may need to be taken into consideration.
Barriers to effective use of Co-teaching	Teacher attitudes towards co-teaching (4) and how co-teachers work together has been found to be critical (9, 10), as has the adequate provision of collaborative planning time (11, 12). One recommendation was that no more than 30% of students in a classroom should have a disability (13).

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