

Collaboration to Support All Students

This FACT Folio defines and highlights collaboration practices for students with disabilities so that a student with a disability is receiving education in a general education regular class setting, reflecting natural proportions and age-appropriate heterogeneous groups in accordance with section 1003.57, Florida Statutes (F.S.).

WHAT IS COLLABORATION?

Collaboration is a common practice among teachers. These terms foster a shared common understanding for teacher collaboration:

- **Collaboration:** A style for direct interaction between at least two coequal parties voluntarily engaged in shared decision making as they work toward a common goal. (Friend & Cook, 2017)
- **Collaborative Partners:** Co-teacher, support facilitator, team teacher, related service provider.

In teaching students with disabilities using in-class service delivery models, one purpose of collaboration is to provide specially designed instruction. A general education and a special education teacher share responsibility in a single class using flexible groupings with a heterogeneous mix of students.

Additional definitions related to collaboration include:

- **Specially Designed Instruction (SDI):** adaptations to the content, methodology or delivery of instruction that:
 - Address the unique needs of a child that result from the child's disability
 - Ensure access to the general education curriculum so that the child can meet the educational standards that apply to all children
 - Are guaranteed by law and implemented in accordance with the individual educational plan (IEP) process (Section 300.39 of Title 34, Code of Federal Regulations)
- **Least Restrictive Environment:** the placement in which an individual student can be taught and make progress in the general education curriculum to the maximum extent possible with students without disabilities.
- **Flexible Grouping:** a fluid process of short-term grouping and regrouping practice that responds to student needs.
- **In-Class Supports:** services provided in the general education classroom, as designated by the student's IEP. In-class supports include co-teaching, support facilitation, and dual-certified models.



COLLABORATIVE PLANNING

Collaborative planning is one of the most essential ingredients for successful collaborative teaching (Murawski & Goodwin, 2014). “The secret to effective planning for co-teaching is to realize that face-to-face planning should be just a single component of the process” (Friend, 2019). With this thought in mind, teachers may need to adjust their planning practices to utilize a three-part planning process:

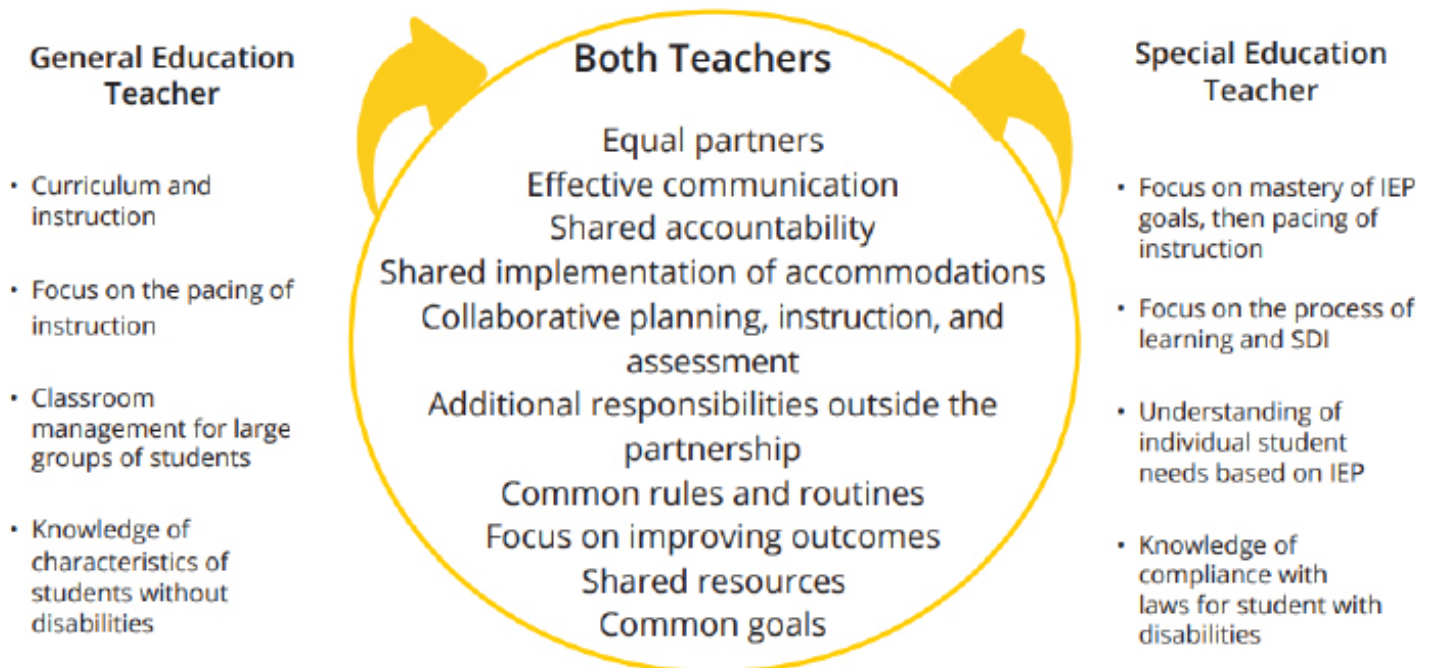
- 1. Periodic face-to-face planning – at least one hour every 3-4 weeks for macro-planning**
- 2. Electronic planning – primary means of outlining details and responsibilities**
- 3. On the Spot planning – just a few minutes to touch base or adjust to events in the school day**

In order to efficiently use an hour of face-to-face planning time, a macro planning agenda could look like this:

Time allotted	Topic
12 minutes	1. The general education teacher outlines upcoming curriculum, content, and activities and projects for material that will be addressed within the co-taught class.
10 minutes	2. Both teachers review student data.
15 minutes	3. Both teachers discuss points of difficulty in the upcoming instruction.
15 minutes	4. Both teachers discuss patterns for their co-teaching.
8 minutes	5. This time is partnership discussions and successes/issues related to the past macro-planning period.

School and district leaders can also assist teachers by defining and developing teacher roles in achieving the benefits of collaborative teaching. The graphic below shows the distinction and overlap between the two teachers' roles.

Roles and Responsibilities of General and Special Education Teachers



COLLABORATIVE TEACHING - 15 WALKTHROUGH INDICATORS

Classrooms with two teachers should look different than a single-teacher classroom. Administrators, district specialists, instructional coaches, or other personnel trained in collaborative teaching can provide support by observing teacher teams to find evidence of 15 indicators of effective collaborative teaching. This tool is intended to be used on multiple observations over time, and in conjunction with follow-up coaching.

FIN can provide training and support on the use of the full classroom walkthrough tool. There are three phases of growth of teacher teams.

Non-negotiables

1. Both teachers are directing student actions and activities.
2. Teachers are using developmentally appropriate classroom management techniques.
3. A collaborative relationship is evident among both teachers.
4. Physical environment and professional practice reflect collaboration and parity among both teachers.
5. Students are actively engaged in the instruction.

Instructional Focus

6. Formative Assessment: student mastery of concepts is assessed periodically throughout instruction.
7. Pre-teaching and re-teaching occur based on student performance.
8. Purposeful, flexible grouping of students is observed.
9. Student self-assessment of progress is observed.
10. Teachers use collaborative approaches to grading and assessment.

Embedded Supports

11. Teachers are using specially designed instruction including behavior supports and assistive technology (AT) tools/strategies.
12. Planning: Teachers collaborate to develop lessons that utilize the principles of Universal Design for Learning.
13. Assignments and tasks reflect accessible learning designs.
14. Teachers are using specially designed instruction including supports, modifications, and accommodations.
15. Teachers are using specially designed instruction including intentional selection of strategies.

(Walkthrough Tool adapted in 2020 by FIN from Anne Arundel County Public Schools, Maryland, 2018)

This tool is designed to support instructional coaching and is NOT intended to be used in an evaluative manner.

The following are ways that administrators can provide additional support for collaborative planning:

- Involve teachers in analyzing and interpreting student data
- Assist with use of flexible grouping strategies
- Support accessible lesson designs and differentiated instructional strategies
- Consider ways to utilize substitute teachers for planning
- Provide regularly scheduled time for planning and problem-solving for collaborative partners

TRAINING REQUIREMENT:



Section 1003.03, Florida Statutes (F.S.) states that teachers who teach together must be trained in team-teaching methods within 1 year after assignment. In addition, at least one member of the team must have at least 3 years of teaching experience, and at least one member must be teaching in-field.

Please contact your local FIN facilitator for information regarding this training.

THE CONTENT OF THIS F.A.C.T. FOLIO SUPPORTS MULTIPLE SCHOOL AND DISTRICT BPIE ASSESSMENT INDICATORS.

Use the QR codes to access the BPIE Indicators-At-A-Glance.

Consider how the information in this F.A.C.T. Folio can be used to promote collaboration for in-class supports.

School BPIE Indicators



District BPIE Indicators



For more information or assistance related to planning in-class supports for students with disabilities on your campus, please contact your FIN facilitator or visit the [FIN website](#).

Contact Us!

