Stronger Together: A case for team teaching in the elementary school setting

Jenna C. Degan
Dominican University of California
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“Teaching alone was so much to take on, I didn’t know how I could sustain that by myself.”
What is team teaching?

My Definition of Team Teaching:

Two credentialed, general education, teachers who bring their two classrooms together to deliver instruction simultaneously.

What the Literature has Focused on:

Research thus far has focused on differentiation for special needs students and collaboration between special education and general education teachers.
What the literature tells us

Social Capital
Research suggests that strong social capital positively affects interpersonal relationships and facilitates trust and support, which leads to collective- and self-efficacy.

Collaborative Culture
A collaborative culture requires administrative support so that time to collaborate is built in to teachers’ schedules.

Teacher Efficacy
Teacher efficacy is increased when teachers collaborate which curbs burnout and has a direct and positive link to student achievement.
Research Questions:

How does team teaching affect teacher efficacy and mitigate burnout in one elementary school site?

How do team teaching practices contribute to student engagement, as perceived by the teacher?
Methodology

- In depth interviews & observations
- Elementary school in a suburb of San Francisco
- Two general education teachers and one specialist
Findings
Collaboration

“Kids are seeing how to be a good partner. We are working toward the same goal of teaching them, when I am missing something, my partner steps in. We are modeling teamwork.”

When two teachers in a classroom have different strengths, and take advantage of those differences as they plan and deliver instruction, they are modeling collaboration and teamwork for their students.
Learning from Each Other

“It has made me a better teacher because I have learned from my colleague. You just have to be open to learning. There is a little bit of grace that has to come from this, you have to ask yourself what can I learn from this if they do it differently than me?”

Participants all noted how teaching with their partners made them grow. This made them feel more effective overall.
Established Relationships

“Because we are friends, I feel more comfortable.”

Team teaching partners must have positive and established relationships in order to be effective team teachers and learn from each other.
Theory:

Team teaching creates a school wide collaborative community which leads to a stronger school community. This is because teachers are modeling collaboration, relationship building, and are learning together through the process of team teaching.
Implications

➢ There is a reciprocal relationship between a collaborative culture and team teaching.

➢ Does the shared workload that comes from team teaching affect equitable working conditions at a school site?

➢ There are needs that must be met for team teaching to be effective. Those are: shared time, shared space, and the ability and willingness to give up some control.
Thank you!

Any questions?