Kansas Co-Teaching Initiative 2014
The Kansas Co-Teaching Initiative was created in response to requests from teachers, administrators, and other school personnel. Through co-teaching, special education and general education teachers work together to provide evidence-based instructional practices that meet the needs of all students. True co-teaching involves teamwork throughout the entire instructional process. This level of collaboration requires a substantial support system including ongoing professional development and coaching to build capacity and support sustainability.

The KSDE operates the co-teaching initiative through a five-year (2012-17) SPDG-funded partnership with TASN Project Success at the University of Kansas Beach Center and Keystone Learning Services. In addition to coordinating co-teaching trainings and in-district coaching, Project Success staff coordinate the training of a TASN team of recognized co-teaching professional development providers. Dr. Richard Villa, a national expert on co-teaching and evidence-based, effective instructional practices to support students in the least restrictive environment, serves as a professional development provider. He collaborates with TASN Project Success staff to build statewide training capacity within the TASN team. Through regional trainings and ongoing coaching, it is expected that educators in more than 80 districts across all regions of the state will be implementing evidence-based instructional practices within co-taught classrooms by 2017.

During the 2013-14 school year, co-teaching professional development addressed a variety of topics, including an overview of the four co-teaching approaches, strategies for providing administrative support, strategies to include paraeducators as co-teachers, and instructional practices such as differentiated instruction and cooperative learning structures. After receiving initial training in the model, teams received follow-up support through in-district observations. For each observation, co-teaching teams were observed in their classroom, assessed using an online observation tool, and coached according to their specific strengths and needs.

In order to ensure sustainability for the initiative, local coaches are trained to use the online observation tool and coaching protocol. These local coaches continue the observation process across multiple years with support from trained TASN providers. Using A Guide to Co-Teaching professional development kit, these local coaches also have the capacity to train new co-teaching teams in their district. It is anticipated that by 2017, the Kansas Co-Teaching Initiative will operate at full capacity with recognized TASN co-teaching trainers and trained local coaches across the state.
During each year of the grant, initial training and coaching is provided to qualifying districts in a different region of the state. For the 2012-13 school year, the northeast region of the state served as the pilot region for co-teaching professional development efforts. Teams from 14 districts participated during the pilot year. Eleven of these districts are still active in the Kansas Co-Teaching Initiative. During the 2013-14 school year, teams from an additional 12 districts in northwest and southwest Kansas participated in co-teaching professional development activities. Throughout this document, participating districts will be categorized as members of either the 2012-13 or 2013-14 cohort according to the year they began participating in the initiative.

The SPDG and TASN evaluation team collects data on all aspects of the co-teaching training process. The use of adult learning principles is assessed using the High-Quality Professional Development Checklist and pre/post-tests gauge knowledge gain. Observation and coaching data are collected through the online observation tool and analyzed to show whether teams are improving in implementation. Co-teaching teams also reflect on their implementation and the quality of the coaching following each observation. Additionally, each spring, an online survey assesses teachers’ implementation, their attitudes about co-teaching, and their perceptions of administrative support. District-level reports are developed to support the leadership teams in continually using data to improve implementation.
The Kansas Co-Teaching Initiative produces a number of outcomes ranging from short- to long-term, as described in the logic model. Short-term outcomes impact teachers’ knowledge base, satisfaction, and implementation. Intermediate outcomes reflect the project’s classroom-level impact, while long-term student and implementation outcomes provide encompassing benefits at the school, district, and state levels. As shown in the graph to the right, districts that began participation in the Co-Teaching Initiative during 2012 have improved their inclusion of students with IEPs in the general education classroom (State Performance Plan Indicator 5A).
A total of 47 trainings have been provided through the Kansas Co-Teaching Initiative between August 2012 and April 2014. These workshops covered the following topics:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Training Topic</th>
<th>Number of Trainings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2012-2013</td>
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<tr>
<td>Co-Teaching Overview &amp; Team Training</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-Teaching with Paraeducators</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-Teaching Coaches' Training/Webinar</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Co-Teaching Sustainability Training</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Differentiated Instruction &amp; Universal Design for Learning</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cooperative Structures and Effective Instruction</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Content Enhancement</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Increasing Student Motivation and Engagement</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>25</td>
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The workshops included a total of 1400 attendees (825 during the 2012-13 school year and 575 during the 2013-14 school year).* These participants included general and special educators, administrators, TASN personnel, paraeducators, and coaches.

*Total attendees represent the total count from workshop sign-in sheets. An individual who attended multiple trainings is counted multiple times.

For the initial trainings, each participating district sent a team consisting of a building administrator, a district coach, general education teachers, and special education teachers. The team approach ensured that teachers, administrators, and coaches developed a shared understanding of effective co-teaching practices and the supports necessary to sustain these practices.

One hundred and sixty-four participants completed the TASN Evaluation after co-teaching trainings during the 2013-14 school year. The results show that over 75% of participants responded that their work-related knowledge had increased “quite a bit” or “a lot” as a result of the co-teaching trainings. Almost 74% of respondents also reported that their work-related motivation had increased “quite a bit” or “a lot,” and 60% reported that their work-related skills had increased “quite a bit” or “a lot.”
Pre- and post-tests were administered at five of the co-teaching core trainings during the 2013-14 school year. The graph below displays overall averages of pre/post scores across the trainings. On average, participants scored just 64% correct on the pre-tests, but their average score rose to 93% on the post-test—a gain of 29%. In addition to resources to monitor the implementation of co-teaching practices, each team was also provided with copies of Access and Success for All Students, a resource developed by Families Together, Inc. and the Kansas Parent Information Resource Center (KPIRC) that informs parents of the benefits of co-teaching and other inclusive practices.

When surveyed over what was most beneficial about the co-teaching trainings, 213 participants responded to this open-ended question, and 22% made comments pertaining to learning about the four co-teaching approaches or models. The opportunity to see examples of actual co-teaching, whether through video or modeling by the experts/presenters, was reported to be most beneficial by 19% of the respondents. Ideas, suggestions, and instructional strategies were mentioned by 17%, and general information regarding gaining an understanding of co-teaching (what it is and how to do it) was also mentioned by 17% of respondents. Collaboration with other co-teachers (12%) and time to plan/work with their co-teachers, paraeducators, or other staff (9%) were other factors identified as beneficial.
In order to help teachers improve their use of co-teaching practices, classroom observations and coaching sessions are an integral component of the initiative. For districts in their initial year of implementation, Dr. Richard Villa provided in-district observations to model the practice for local coaches. Each 20 to 30 minute observation was followed by a coaching session with the co-teaching team and local coach. Each conference began with the co-teachers reflecting on aspects that went well in their co-taught lesson and identifying what they might have done differently to enhance their co-teaching and student achievement. By utilizing the observation data, these coaching sessions included praise for the teachers’ strengths in co-teaching as well as suggestions for areas that needed continued improvement. Praise and suggestions were tailored to each team’s unique teaching practices.

In addition to participating in observation and coaching sessions with Dr. Richard Villa, district coaches were trained in effective coaching methods using the online observation protocol. Through mock and video observations at the Co-Teaching Coaches’ Training and individualized coaching during the in-district observation, the district coaches were supported to provide continuing observations and coaching for local teams.

A total of 68 observations were conducted using the online protocol between September 2013 and April 2014. Of these, 31 were completed by the professional development providers and 37 were completed by local coaches. The following graph describes the classes that were observed during the 2013-14 school year. Approximately 48% of the classes observed were grade levels Kindergarten through 5th, and 52% of the observations occurred at the middle and high school levels (grades 6-12).

The data reported on the following pages show results for various classroom variables observed during the observations.
A breakdown of classes observed by subject shows that the majority of observations were of language arts or mathematics courses, which are core content courses at all grade levels. All co-taught classes included both students with and without disabilities. Class sizes varied, but on average, 18 students were present in the observed classes. Of these students, an average of four (21.7%) received special education services.

An important component of the observation was recording which co-teaching approaches the teaching team used during the observation period. During professional development, educators were taught about the four co-teaching approaches: supportive, parallel, complementary, and team.

The graph above shows that teachers most frequently used the supportive approach in their instruction, though the parallel and complementary approaches were also used relatively frequently. When reading this graph, be aware that values do not total to 100% since multiple co-teaching approaches could be observed during each observation.

Though each of the approaches has its own merits, research on the evidence-based practices used with the parallel, complementary, and team approaches indicates that these three approaches are more likely to produce a stronger impact on students’ engagement and academic achievement than the supportive approach. As displayed in the graph, in 86.8% of the observations, the teaching teams utilized the parallel, complementary, or team approach to co-teaching for all or some of the observation period. Effective co-teachers are able to move fluidly in and out of the different approaches based on the instructional needs of their students.
Co-teachers’ use of multiple intelligence theories throughout the observation period was also observed. In general, instruction that incorporates a variety of the multiple intelligences is considered to be more effective. As the graph to the right displays, co-teachers most commonly used the verbal/linguistic intelligence, followed by logical/mathematical, interpersonal, and visual/spatial intelligences. The use of more than one type of intelligence was reported in 88.2% of the observations.

Evidence-based instructional practices also include supporting students to access higher order cognitive skills. During each observation, teacher-initiated questions and students’ responses were categorized based on the cognitive hierarchy. Higher-order thinking was reported in 43% of the observations, with an increase from 26% in Fall 2013 to 50% in Spring 2014.
Research shows that increased use of evidence-based co-teaching practices results in higher levels of student engagement as co-teaching strategies support higher levels of teacher-student contact and individualized support. Additionally, the professional development training sessions on effective instructional practices highlight improving student engagement as a desired outcome.

One indicator of student engagement is the amount of student talk. During each observation, the balance between teacher and student talk was assessed. Overall, 56% of the observations reported that the teachers talked more than the students, 38% reported equal teacher and student talk, and 6% of the observations identified that the students conversed more than the teachers. When comparing observations in 2013-14 cohort schools from Fall 2013 to Spring 2014 (as shown below), it is clear that observations with primarily teacher talk decreased from 74% to 48%, equal teacher and student talk increased from 26% to 43%, and primarily student talk grew from 0% in the fall to over 9% in the spring. These results indicate that co-teaching teams improved in facilitating student talk within their classrooms over time.
Observers also monitored the percentage of students who were engaged in learning throughout the observation period and recorded the highest and lowest levels. In 2013-14, the highest percentage of students engaged during an observation was recorded as 90-100% in 85.3% of observations in schools from both cohorts, indicating high levels of student engagement in co-taught classrooms. The graph above illustrates the comparison of observations in 2013-14 cohort schools from Fall 2013 to Spring 2014; results show that both the highest and lowest levels of student engagement improved during the school year.
In order to understand how teachers implementing co-teaching perceive co-teaching professional development and administrative support for co-teaching, an online survey was conducted in March/April of 2014. A total of 142 responses were collected, 59 of which were from the 2013-14 cohort. The survey’s 42 questions spanned five categories: Mutual Respect, Shared Responsibility, Co-Teaching Approaches, Shared Planning, and Resources and Support.

Mutual respect is a key part of the co-teaching philosophy. When co-teachers respect each other’s abilities, more effective collaboration and instruction can occur. Overall, teachers felt that they were effective in identifying each other’s resources and talents, communicating concerns, and having fun during the co-teaching process.
The Shared Responsibility category of questions contained multiple items about co-teachers’ cooperation in the classroom. Sharing responsibility is highlighted as very important throughout professional development, during coaching sessions, and in accessing the supplemental materials provided to teams. Survey results showed a high level of shared responsibility between co-teachers; for example, over 80% of co-teachers reported that they “always” or “frequently” work together to identify students’ strengths and needs.

### Shared Responsibility

Percent of Respondents Answering “Always” or “Frequently”

- We identify student strengths and needs: 91.2%
- We share responsibility for differentiating instruction: 70.2%
- We agree on discipline procedures and jointly carry them out: 82.5%
- We depend on one another to follow through on tasks and responsibilities: 92.9%
- We are aware of what one another is doing, even when we are not directly in one another’s presence: 75.4%
- We share responsibility for deciding who teaches what part of a lesson: 63.2%
- We can show that students are learning when we co-teach: 80.7%
- We are each viewed by our students as their teacher: 76.8%
Co-teachers’ use of the co-teaching approaches was also examined. Teachers responded very positively: 93% reported that they “always” or “frequently” are flexible and make changes as needed during a lesson, and 83% reported that they “always” or “frequently” model collaboration and teamwork for their students. These results show that teachers feel empowered to adapt their teaching practices to fit students’ needs.

As part of the survey, information was collected about co-teachers’ shared lesson preparation time. One of the questions addressed the amount of weekly collaborative planning time. The most common response was “Less than an hour,” followed by “1-2 hours.”

Finally, the survey asked co-teachers whether they felt they had the administrative support necessary to allow them to co-teach effectively; 69% reported that they “always” or “frequently” have the administrative support necessary to effectively co-plan and co-teach.

One hundred and seventy-eight respondents across both cohorts replied to the open-ended question of what additional support they would like regarding co-teaching, with 23% requesting more training and 20% requesting more time for planning with their co-teacher. More coaching, observations, and feedback would be helpful according to 14% of respondents, and 11% would like more information, ideas, suggestions, and strategies to apply to their co-teaching. Approximately 15% of the respondents reported that they needed no further support with their co-teaching at this time, while 2% claimed they would take any support available.
The annual implementation survey was also disseminated to co-teachers from the 2012-13 training cohort to identify sustained practices and support needs. The graph below shows the domain averages for the 175 respondents in Spring 2013 and 83 respondents from these same districts in Spring 2014. Overall, implementation has been maintained.

![2012-13 Cohort Averages by Domain Across Years](chart.png)

During the 2014-15 school year, the existing co-teaching teams will be supported to sustain and expand co-teaching practices. District coaches will participate in follow-up training to continue to hone their skills. The SPDG evaluation team, in collaboration with TASN Project Success, will continue to monitor and report short-term, intermediate, and long-term outcomes of the initiative. Additionally, the Kansas Co-Teaching Initiative will focus on building the expertise of co-teaching trainers around the state. By working with Dr. Richard Villa, these trainers will complete an extensive training and coaching series and meet proficiency standards to become recognized Kansas Co-Teaching Trainers. Once fully trained, these individuals will support the scale-up of evidence-based co-teaching practices across the state.
**Resources**

KSDE Special Education Services  
[http://www.ksde.org](http://www.ksde.org)

Kansas Technical Assistance Systems Network (TASN)  
[http://ksdetasn.org](http://ksdetasn.org)

Kansas TASN Project Success  
[www.KansasProjectSuccess.org](http://www.KansasProjectSuccess.org)

Kansas Parent Information Resource Center  
[www.kpirc.org](http://www.kpirc.org)


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This report was developed by the SPDG evaluation team at the University of Kansas, Center for Research on Learning. For more information on the Kansas SPDG Evaluation, go to [www.researchcollaboration.org](http://www.researchcollaboration.org). Contact Dr. Amy Gaumer Erickson at (785) 864-0517 or aerickson@ku.edu with questions about the project evaluation.