



## **USING CO-TEACHING TO BRING ABOUT EXCELLENCE IN A BILINGUAL CLASSROOM**

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### **Abstract**

*Co-teaching is a methodology where two co-teachers use their distinct skills to instruct both academically and behaviourally several courses or classes. This study was designed to give pre service teachers an experience of learning through co-teaching as students. In addition the researchers wanted to find out if co-teaching will cater to the needs of a bilingual classroom and bring about excellence in teaching. The sample of the study consisted of 42 English and Marathi Medium Second Year pre-service teachers of Adarsha Comprehensive College of Education and Research, Pune who opted for the Elective Course BED 204-01 "Guidance and Counselling". The researchers taught the content of the course using the team-teaching model of co-teaching and collected feedback from the pre service teachers regarding the sessions. The findings of the study indicated that the pre service teachers developed a positive view about co-teaching as a useful teaching methodology for bringing about excellence in teaching and learning. They further showed readiness to use co-teaching in their future career.*

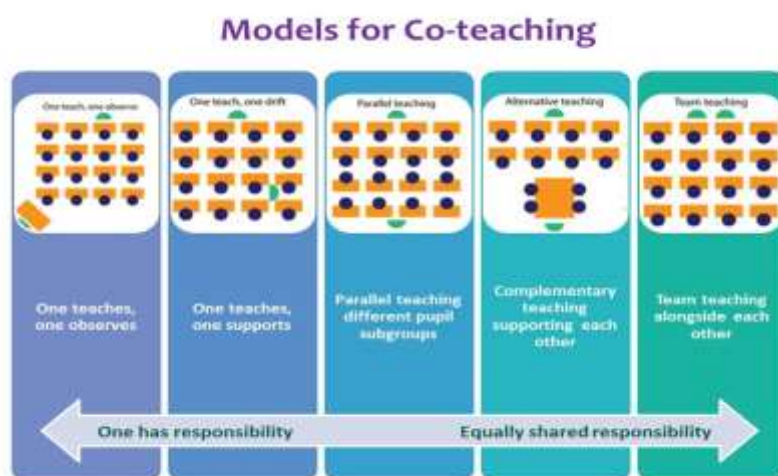
**Key words:** *co-teaching, team teaching, pre service teachers, feedback, teaching, learning.*

### **Introduction:**

The teaching profession has evolved and become one in which expertise from multiple fields are integrated to support the educational outcomes of *all* learners. Today the general education classroom is integrated with learners with varying abilities. (Shaffer & Brown, 2015). Various teaching methodologies and strategies have come up in order to cater to the varying needs of learners. One of these is Co-teaching.

Co-teaching is a methodology that involves two or more co-teachers who use their distinct skills to instruct both academically and behaviourally several courses or classes (Davis, 1995; Welch, Brownell and Sheridan, 1999; Letterman and Dugan, 2004; Mckinley, 1996; Hughes and Murwaski, 2001). Friend and Cook (2004) have given the following models of Co-teaching as shown in figure 1:

- One teach, one observe: one teacher delivers instruction while the other observes student learning and assesses student understanding and academic functioning
- One teach, one assist: one teacher will take the lead in providing instruction while the other moves around the classroom and assists students who may be struggling
- Parallel Teaching: The class is divided in half and the same material is presented at the same time by both teachers (teacher to student ratio becomes more manageable)
- Station Teaching: Both teachers are actively involved in instruction and the students rotate from one station to the next, learning new material
- Alternative Teaching: One teacher takes a small group of students and provides instruction that is different than what the large group is receiving
- Team Teaching: Both teachers instruct on the same lesson with all students present (Ferry, 2013).



**Figure 1: Models of Co-Teaching**

Research on co-teaching is relatively new as the practice has only been implemented over the last twenty years. Research focusing on effective co-teaching has particularly increased over the last 10 years as educators attempt to implement models of instruction to meet the needs of students with varying abilities. While many researchers have attempted to identify best practices in co-teaching, co-teaching at the elementary level is more common than high schools (Morocco & Aguilar, 2002; Rice, Drame, Owen, & Frattura, 2007) which is why more research is needed at the secondary level. (Woods, 2017).

### **Review of Literature:**

#### **Conceptual Review:**

When the five elements of the cooperative learning model are evaluated and compared to co-teaching, co-teaching can be viewed as an instructional model under Johnson and Johnson's Cooperative Learning Theory (2009). The five elements of cooperative learning are clearly perceived positive interdependence, considerable promotive (face-to-face) interaction, clearly perceived individual accountability and personal responsibility to achieve the group's goals, frequent use of the relevant interpersonal and small-group skills, and frequent and regular group processing of current functioning to improve the group's future effectiveness (Johnson and Johnson, 2009). When teachers are actively involved and

providing successful instruction under the co-teaching model, these five elements are utilized (Johnson, 2012).

Gately and Gately (2001) completed ongoing research on co-teaching and emphasized that adopting and implementing a co-teaching model is a process. They suggest that three stages exist in the co-teaching relationship: beginning, compromising, and collaborating. The first stage of the co-teaching process is called the beginning stage. During the initial implementation of the co-teaching model, teachers are getting to know one another, personally and instructionally. The next stage of the co-teaching process, as determined by Gately and Gately (2001) is the compromising stage. During this stage communication increases as the general education and special education teachers develop a give and take in their relationship. Teachers in a co-teaching model may decide to share these responsibilities or divide them in an equitable manner. The last stage in developing an effective co-teaching model is the collaborative stage. During the final stage, open communication and positive interaction solidify the co-teaching relationship between the regular and special education teachers (as cited in Woods 2017, p 19-20).

Kloo and Zigmond (2008) identified an acronym that summarizes and specifically defines the role of the special education teacher in a co-teaching model. The acronym TEACH represents five actions that teachers can take to make co-teaching more successful. The letter T stands for targeting the skills and strategies of the students. The special education teachers can hone in on the skills and strategies that students need to obtain within the regular education classroom. Next, the E is the need to express enthusiasm. Serving as a motivational factor, the special education teacher can encourage the student and mould their interest in the topic being studied in class. The letter A is for adapting the instructional environment. Special education teachers in a co-teaching model may need to adjust a number of factors in the classroom environment including student seating or proximity to peers. The C stands for create. The special education teacher creates opportunities for small group and individualized instruction for students. Lastly, the H signifies the help that is required for students to apply the skills being taught in the classroom. The special education teacher often provides the remediation needed for students to acquire the necessary academic skills. These five factors can contribute to a successful co-teaching environment, though each may develop and grow at a different rate. (as cited in Woods 2017, p 18-19)

### **Research Reviews:**

In a study titled ‘Teaching for Inclusive Learning: Purposes, Practices and Perceptions of a Team-teaching initiative in Irish post primary schools’ conducted by Finbarr Murphy (2011) team teaching dyads were studied from seven project schools. The research showed how team teaching has the potential to promote inclusive learning and when implemented appropriately can impact positively upon the learning experience of both the students and teachers.

‘A Case Study examining the secondary co-teaching program at a South Jersey High school’ conducted by Karen Foglia (2015) generated a clearer understanding of co teachers’ needs for resources and training. This study utilized surveys, co-teacher classroom observations, semi structured interviews and co teaching documents like lesson notes and

assessments. The co teachers expressed that planning time and professional development can assist them in further development of their co teaching knowledge and skills and improve their instruction in their inclusive classrooms.

Researches have indicated that many pre service teachers are not prepared to engage in co-teaching partnerships due to lack of hand-on experience with co-teaching models. Bacharach, Heck and Dahlberg (2008) examined the co-teaching model at the university level. Their research found that when professors modeled co-teaching in their classes resulted in an increase in student participation and collaborative skills. As pre service teachers were able to observe the model in action, they reported increased knowledge of using co teaching in the future (as cited in Wood, 2017, p)

Vogler and Long (2003) also investigated co-teaching at the university level and spoke with undergraduate students about becoming a member of co-teaching team. The study reported that participants expressed mixed feelings about co-teaching and identified various conflicts that could occur. Grading, classroom policies, management, and discipline were identified as areas of concerns when implementing with two teachers.

Perceptions of Secondary Teachers on the CoTeaching Model: An Examination of the Instructional Practices in Co-Teaching Classrooms in Western Pennsylvania conducted by Woods (2017) aimed at understanding the perceptions of teachers using co-teaching models to learn about the strengths of the program, as well as areas for improvement .High school teachers of English Language Arts and special educators who were partners in a co-teaching model were interviewed. Through this study, the researcher concluded that general and special educators have mixed perceptions regarding co-teaching models in secondary schools. Overall, secondary teachers perceive co-teaching to be a necessary model of instruction that requires knowledge, support, and time to plan and implement effectively.

### **Need and Significance:**

India is a multicultural country with a wide variety of languages. Our education system consists of students coming from primarily two types of schools with respect to the medium of instruction i.e English Medium and Vernacular Medium students. In higher education these students often face difficulties when the medium of instruction is not very familiar for them. In order to cater to the different needs of students from different medium of instructions co-teaching can be utilized where teachers, each fluent in the languages familiar to the students can cater to their different needs.

This study was designed to give pre service teachers an experience of learning through co-teaching as students. In addition, the researchers wanted to find out if co-teaching will cater to the needs of a bilingual classroom and bring about excellence in teaching.

This raised the following questions in the mind of the researchers:

- How will co-teaching help create a favourable learning environment for the pre service teachers?
- If the pre service teachers feel that co-teaching will bring about excellence in teaching a bilingual classroom?
- Whether the pre service teachers prefer having more than one teacher giving instructions?

- If the experience of being taught using co teaching motivates the pre service teachers to use co-teaching as future teachers?
- What are the hurdles perceived by the pre service teachers in using co-teaching as future teachers?

**Statement of the problem:**

To find out the views of pre-service teachers regarding a programme on co-teaching used to teach course BED 204-01 'Guidance and Counselling' to bring about excellence in teaching a bilingual class.

**Definition of key terms:**

- Conceptual Definition:
  - Co-teaching: "two or more professionals delivering substantive instruction to a diverse or blended group of students in a single space." (Friend & Cook, 2010, as cited in Woods, 2017 p. 6)
- Operational Definitions:
  - Views: In this study it refers to the preceptions expressed by the pre-service teachers about co-teaching regarding:
    - a. Teacher- teacher interaction and teacher- student interaction
    - b. its usefulness for moving towards excellence in the teaching learning process.
    - c. Problems that might be faced in implementing it in classrooms.
  - Pre-service teachers: Students pursuing the Bachelor's Degree in Education studying in the Second Year who have opted for the Elective Course BED 204-01 'Guidance and Counselling' from the B.Ed. Two- year programme choice-based credit system annual pattern-2015 from colleges affiliated to the Savitribai Phule Pune University formerly the University of Pune.
  - Bilingual class: A class consisting of Second Year Bachelor of Education students belonging to both English and Marathi medium.
  - Programme: refers to sessions prepared for teaching the Elective Course BED 204-01 'Guidance and Counselling' from the B.Ed. Two- year programme choice-based credit system annual pattern-2015 using co-teaching.
  - Excellence in teaching: in this study it refers to positive views of the pre service teachers regarding the co-teaching sessions, creating a favourable learning environment and motivating them to use co-teaching as future teachers.
  - Co-teaching: it refers to a Professor teaching in Marathi language pairing with a Professor teaching in English language using the Team Teaching Model in a bilingual classroom.

**Objective:**

1. To find out the views of pre-service teachers in a bilingual classroom regarding the co-teaching for bringing about excellence in teaching.

**Population, Sample and Sampling Procedure:**

- **Population:** English and Marathi Medium Second Year pre-service teachers from B.Ed colleges affiliated to Savitribai Phule Pune University formerly the University of Pune.

- **Sample:** 42 English and Marathi Medium Second Year Pre-Service Teachers of Adarsha Comprehensive College of Education and Research, Pune who opted for the Elective Course BED 204-01 “Guidance and Counselling”.

- **Sampling Procedure:** Purposive sampling technique was used for the study.

**Scope:** The present research focuses on the opinions of Second Year pre-service teachers of a bilingual classroom regarding co-teaching.

**Limitation:** The motivation levels, fatigue, mood, past experience of the pre-service teachers which may affect their responses are beyond the control of the researcher.

**Delimitation:** The study was limited to

- Pre-service teacher colleges in Pune city.
- Second Year pre-service teachers from both English and Marathi medium.
- Course BED 204-01 ‘Guidance and Counselling’ from the B.Ed. Two- year programme choice-based credit system annual pattern-2015.

### **Research Design/ Methodology:**

#### Mono method research:

Descriptive Study: Programme Evaluation (Best, & Kahn, 2005)

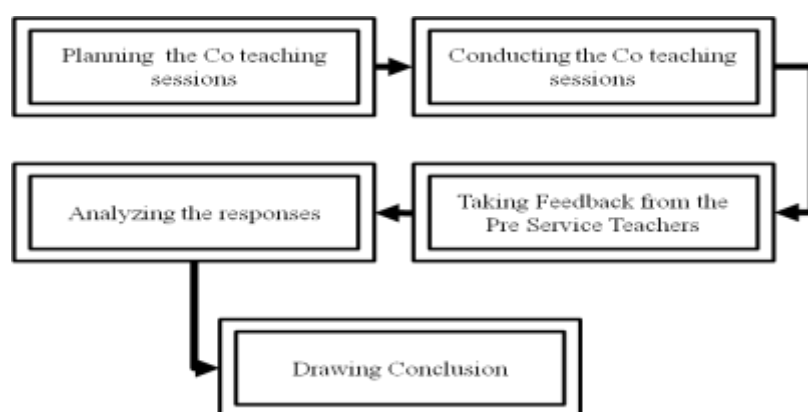
#### Mixed method research:

Quantitative Data was collected using a rating scale and percentage was used to analyse it. A questionnaire with open ended questions was used to collect qualitative data, which was coded using categories and themes.

#### **Tools:**

Feedback sheet for pre-service teachers regarding co-teaching consisting of a rating scale with 19 items and 3 open ended questions.

#### **Procedure:**

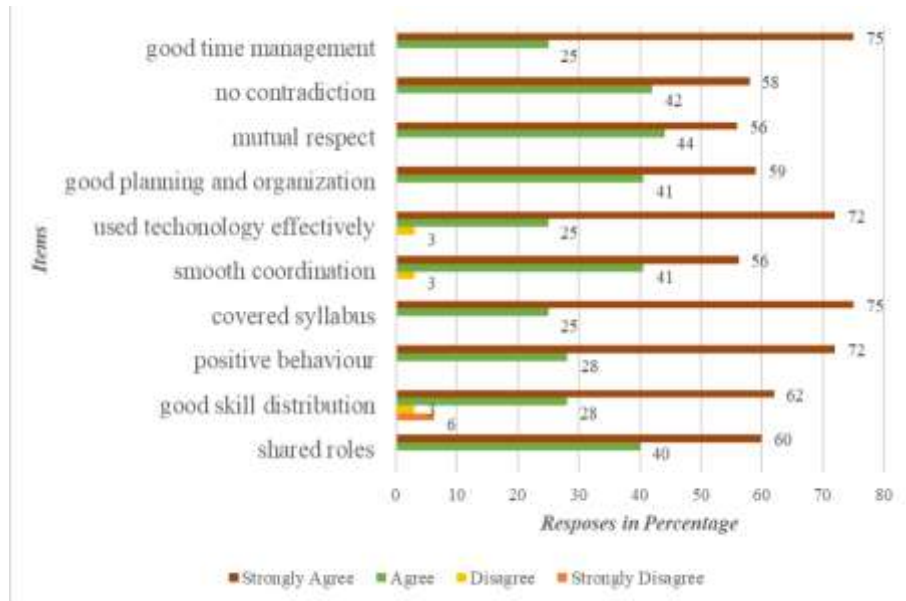


**Figure 2: Procedure of the research study**

#### **Analysis of the Responses: Quantitative Data**

All the four Units of the course BED 204-01 ‘Guidance and Counselling’ from the B.Ed. Two- year programme choice-based credit system annual pattern-2015 was taught to both Marathi and English medium pre service teachers simultaneously using co-teaching. After the sessions were completed the co-teachers (researchers) took feedback from the pre service teachers to find out if co-teaching helped in achieving excellence in teaching and helped in their learning.

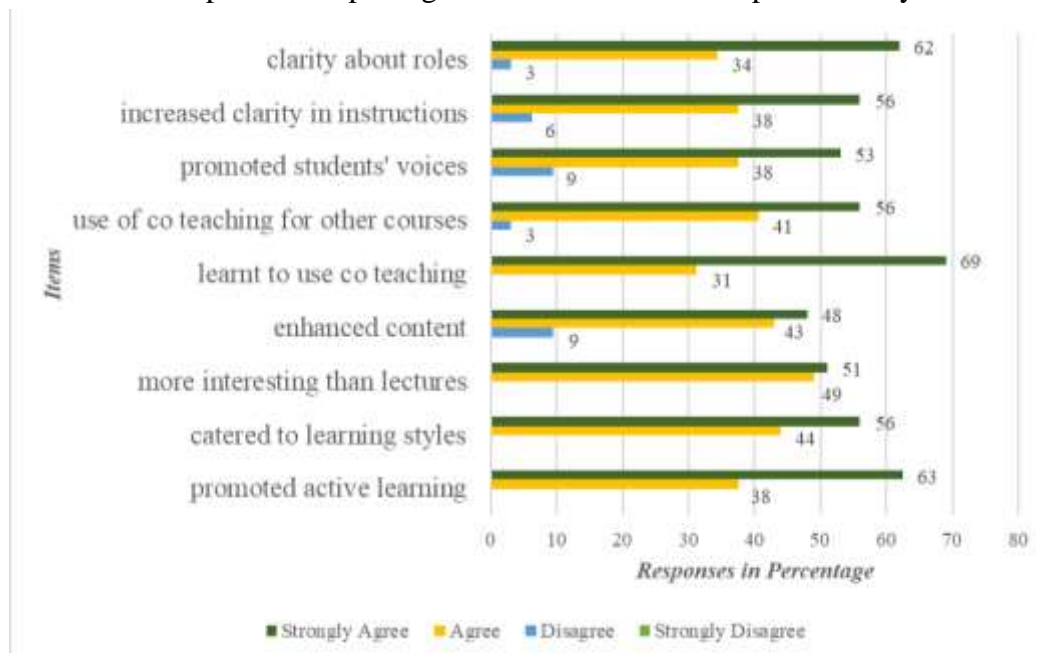
The responses obtained from the pre service teachers to the rating scale were analysed using percentage are given in the figures below.



**Figure 3: Responses of Pre Service Teachers regarding Teacher-Teacher Interaction**

Observation: Figure 3 shows that all most all the pre service teachers agreed or strongly agreed that the interaction between the co teachers were positive. All the pre service teachers opined that the co teachers showed smooth coordination along with good time management, effective use of technology for covering the syllabus comprehensively.

Interpretation: The pre service teachers had a positive view about the interation between the co teachers which helped in completing the course material comprehensively.



**Figure 4: Responses of Pre Service Teachers regarding Teacher-Student Interaction**

**Observation:** All the pre service teachers concented that they found co teaching more interesting than traditional lectures which catered to different learning styles and promoted active learning. They also opined that they understood the roles of the co teachers and students which in turn helped them learn about how to use co teaching in their career.

**Interpretation:** The data given in figure 4 shows that the pre service teachers found co teaching helped in making the teacher student interaction more favourable for learning. They preferred learning through co-teaching as compared to traditional teaching.

### **Qualitative Data Analysis:**

The qualitative data obtained from the open questions were coded. The responses were organized into patterns and themes to reach to a conclusion. The pre service teachers liked the fact that co teaching helped in learning, they appreciated the coordination between the co teachers and felt that co-teaching brought about effective classroom interaction. The figure 5 given below gives the details of the analysis.

All the pre service teachers were ready to use co teaching as future teachers since they felt that the methodology helps in catering to inclusion and enriching both the teacher's and student's knowledge bringing about excellence in the teaching learning process.

The pre service teachers were also able to identify hurdles a teacher may face while using co teaching. The major hurdles they mentioned were improper time management and lack of coordination between the co teachers.

The responses of the pre service teachers were synthesized and a conclusion was drawn from the qualitative date. This has been depicted in the figure 5 given below:



**Figure 5: Conclusion from the Qualitative Data Analysis**



### **Major Findings:**

1. The pre service teachers appreciated the interaction between the co teachers which helped in completing the course material comprehensively.
2. The pre service teachers preferred learning through co teaching as compared to traditional teaching as they found co teaching helped in making the teacher student interaction more favourable for learning.
3. The pre service teachers liked co-teaching as they found it useful in creating a favourable learning environment motivating them to use co-teaching in the future for bringing about excellence in the teaching learning process, in spite of its hurdles like time mismanagement and in coordination between the co teachers.

### **Conclusion:**

The pre service teachers felt that co-teaching is useful to bring about excellence in teaching in a bilingual classroom.

### **Discussion:**

Several studies have been done using co-teaching at the primary level, however there were very few studies done regarding co teaching at higher education levels. The results of the current study matched with those done by Murphy (2011) where in co teaching has been considered as being helpful in learning.

Conclusions arrived by Bacharach, Heck and Dahlberg (2008) correspond with the present study. Both showed that as pre service teachers were able to observe the model in action, they reported increased knowledge of using co teaching in the future.

However, studies conducted by Vogler and Long (2003) indicated other hurdles or concerns identified by the participants than those identified by the pre service teachers in the current study. The former study highlighted grading, classroom policies, management, and discipline as the hurdles, where as the pre-service teachers in the present study identified time mismanagement and in coordination between the co teachers as major hurdles.

### **Conclusion and Suggestions:**

Despite the hurdles and concerns expressed by the teachers, co-teaching has definite advantages to cater to heterogeneous ability students. Co-teaching could be introduced for teaching students in the educational institutions because of the variety it provides. Institutions should try to experiment with the teaching methodology as it gives teachers the opportunity to share and exchange knowledge and experiences. The benefits of a successful team in teaching cannot be over-emphasized.

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