Similarities, Advantages, & Differences of Co-Teaching Approaches

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| Similarities Among the Four Co-Teaching Approaches | | | |
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| Supportive Differences | Parallel Differences | Complementary Differences | Team Differences |
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| Supportive Cautions | Parallel Cautions | Complementary Cautions | Team Cautions |
|  |  |  |  |
| Supportive Advantages | Parallel Advantages | Complementary Advantages | Team Advantages |
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### What Does Co-Teaching Look Like? Four Approaches

Co-teaching has many faces. In a national survey, teachers experienced in teaching in a diverse classrooms reported that they used four approaches to co-teaching – supportive, parallel, complementary, and team teaching (National Center for Educational Restructuring and Inclusion, 1995).

**SUPPORTIVE**

Supportive co-teaching is when one teacher takes the lead instructional role and the other(s) rotates among the students providing support. The co-teacher(s) taking the supportive role watches or listens as students work together, stepping in to provide one-to-one tutorial assistance when necessary while the other co-teacher continues to direct the lesson. Teachers new to co-teaching or who are short of planning time often begin with this approach.

**PARALLEL**

Parallel co-teaching is when two or more people work with different groups of students in different sections of the classroom. Co-teachers may rotate among the groups; and, sometimes there may be one group of students that works without a co-teacher for at least part of the time. Teachers new to co-teaching often begin with this approach. Key to parallel co-teaching is that each co-teacher eventually works with every student in the class.

**COMPLEMENTARY**

Complementary co-teaching is when co-teachers do something to enhance the instruction provided by the other co-teacher(s). For example one co-teacher might paraphrase the other co-teacher’s statements or model note-taking skills on a transparency. Sometimes, one of the complementary co-teaching partners pre-teaches the small group social skill roles required for successful cooperative group learning and then monitors as students practice the roles during the lesson taught by the other co-teacher. As co-teachers gain in their confidence and acquire knowledge and skills from one another, complementary co-teaching become a preferred approach.

**TEAM CO-TEACHING**

Team co-teaching is when two or more people do what the traditional teacher has always done – plan, teach, assess, and assume responsibility for all of the students in the classroom. Team co-teachers share leadership and responsibility.

Team co-teachers share lessons in ways that allow students to experience each teacher’s expertise. For example, for a lesson on inventions in science, one co-teacher with interests is history explains the impact on society. The other, whose strengths are with the mechanisms involved, explains how inventions work.

In team co-teaching, co-teachers simultaneously deliver lessons. The test of a successful team teaching partnership is that the students view each teacher as equally knowledgeable and credible.

**The Many Faces of Parallel Co-Teaching**

**Activity - “In what ways might we use this parallel structure?”**

**SPLIT CLASS**

Each co-teacher is responsible for a particular group of students, monitoring understanding of a lesson, providing guided instruction, or re-teaching the group, if necessary.

**STATION TEACHING OR LEARNING CENTERS**

Each co-teacher is responsible for assembling, guiding, and monitoring one or more different learning centers or stations. Either students or teachers my rotate among stations. If teachers rotate they may teach different components of a lesson.

**MONITORING OF COOPERATIVE GROUPS OR LABORATORY GROUPS**

Each co-teacher monitors a given number of cooperative groups of students or lab groups, providing guided instruction or assistance and feedback, as needed.

**LEARNING STYLE FOCUS**

One co-teacher works with a group of students using primarily visual strategies, another co-teacher works with a group using primarily auditory strategies, and yet another may work with a group using kinesthetic strategies

**SUPPLEMENTARY INSTRUCTION**

One co-teacher works with the rest of the class on a concept or assignment, skill, or learning strategy. The other co-teacher a) provides extra guidance on the concept or assignment to students who are self-identified or teacher-identified as needing extra assistance, b) instructs students to apply or generalize the skill to a relevant community environment, c) provides a targeted group of students with guided practice in how to apply the learning strategy to the content being addressed, or d) provides enrichment activities.

**Role Differentiation “If one of us is doing…, the other could be doing…!”**

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| **Co-Teaching**  **Approach** | **If one is.…** | **The other could be ….** |
| **Supportive** | Providing direct instruction to whole class | Circulating, providing one-on-one support as needed |
| Supportive | Facilitating an activity | Circulating, checking for comprehension |
| Supportive | Providing large group instruction | Circulating, using proximity control for behavior management |
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| **Parallel** | Prepping half of the class for one side of a debate | Prepping the other half for the opposing side of the debate |
| Parallel | Re-teaching or pre-teaching with a small group | Monitoring large group as they work on practice materials |
| Parallel | Facilitating stations or groups | Facilitating stations or groups |
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| **Complementary** | Giving instructions orally | Writing down instructions on board |
| Complementary | Lecturing | Modeling note taking on the board/overhead |
| Complementary | Explaining new concept | Conducting role play or modeling concept |
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|  |  |  |
| **Team** | Considering differentiation, modification and enrichment needs | Considering differentiation, modification and enrichment needs |
| Team | Guiding students through odd steps of a procedure | Guiding students through even steps of a procedure |
| Team | Planning the lesson, assessment, and individual student adaptations | Planning the lesson, assessment, and individual student adaptations |
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Similarities, Advantages, & Differences of Co-Teaching Approaches

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| Similarities Among the Four Co-Teaching Approaches | | | |
| * Two or more co-teachers are in the classroom. * They capitalize on specific strengths and expertise of both co-teachers. * They provide greater teacher-to-student ratios and additional one-on-one support for students in the classroom. * All approaches have benefits and cautions associated with their use. * Students are primarily heterogeneously grouped by mixed abilities and interests. * There are shared responsibilities. * Each approach requires trust, communication, planning time, and coordination of effort. (Note: The need for all of these elements increases as you move from supportive to parallel, parallel to complementary, and complementary to team teaching co-teaching.) | | | |
| Supportive Differences | Parallel Differences | Complementary Differences | Team-Teaching Differences |
| One co-teacher is in the lead role; the other provides support. Who is in lead and who provides support may change during a lesson. | Co-teachers work, monitor, or facilitate different groups of students in the same room. (There are at least seven different options for arranging the groups.) | One co-teacher teachers content; the other facilitates access (e.g. clarifies, paraphrases, simplifies, provides visual scaffolding, records content.)  One co-teacher may pre-teach specific study or social skills and monitors students’ use of them; the other teaches the academic content. | Both co-teachers are equally responsible for planning, instruction of content, assessment, and grade assignment.  This approach requires the greatest amount of planning time, trust, communication, and coordination of effort. |
| Supportive Advantages | Parallel Advantages | Complementary Advantages | Team-Teaching Advantages |
| Allows immediate support (academic or behavioral) to students.  Can be used when there is little or no planning time.  A way for a new member of a co-teaching team to get to know other co-teachers, the students, the curriculum, and the classroom routines.  New content is introduced by the teacher with the greatest content mastery.  Allows the supportive co-teacher to monitor and collect data. | Reduces student to teacher ratio. (Divide and conquer).  Increases teacher feedback to students.  Each co-teacher instructs and uses instructional expertise.  Co-teachers can be viewed as equal partners.  Allows for greater individualization, data collection, monitoring, and relationship building with students.  Students have greater opportunities to engage in conversation and peer-mediated instruction with partners, at stations, or in cooperative groups. | Complementary “experts of access,” regardless of their level of content mastery, influence instruction by making content more accessible.  Co-teachers are viewed as teachers of all students in the classroom. | All co-teachers are viewed as equal and teachers of all students.  Content experts acquire and practice access skills.  Access experts acquire and practice content skills.  It is difficult to identify who is the “content” vs. the “access” expert. |
| Supportive Cautions | Parallel Cautions | Complementary Cautions | Team-Teaching Cautions |
| Beware of the “Velcro effect,” where the supportive co-teacher hovers over one or selected students, stigmatizing both the student(s) and the co-teacher.  Beware of making the supportive co-teacher the “discipline police,” materials copier, or in-class paper grader, rather than an instructor.  Beware of ineffective use of the supportive co-teacher’s (e.g. special educator, ELL specialist) expertise.  Beware of resentment, if the skills of the supportive co-teacher (e.g. special educator) are not being used or the lead co-teacher (e.g. content teacher) feels an unequal burden of responsibility.  Beware of staying “stuck” in the supportive role due to lack of planning time. | Beware of creating a special class within the class and lowering student achievement by homogeneously grouping lower-performing students together.  Beware that the noise level can become uncomfortably high when numerous activities are occurring in the same room.  Beware of failing to adequately prepare other co-teachers to ensure that they deliver instruction as intended, since co-teachers cannot monitor one another while all are simultaneously co-teaching different groups. | Beware of failing to closely monitoring students, as co-teachers co-instruct in the front of the class.  Beware of too much teacher talk, repetition, and reduced student-student interaction.  Beware of “stepping on one another’s toes.”  Beware of “typecasting” the co-teacher delivering content as the “real” or “expert” teacher.  Beware of failing to plan for “role release” or “role exchange,” so that all co-teachers get a chance to lead instruction of the content. | Beware of failing to closely monitoring students, as co-teachers co-instruct in the front of the class.  Beware of too much teacher talk, repetition, and reduced of student-student interaction.  Beware of “stepping on one another’s toes.” |

**Co-Teaching Nuptial Conversations**

**The strengths we bring to our team are…**

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|  | Co-Teacher A   * Content mastery * Organized * Hold high expectations for students   Co-Teacher B   * Flexible * Behavior management strategies * Experience in differentiating for diverse learners * Sense of humor   **Our concerns about co-teaching are…**   |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | |  | Co-Teacher A   * Loss of autonomy * I am the only one held accountable as I am the instructor of record * Watering down the curriculum * Teaching with someone who doesn’t know the curriculum well   Co-Teacher B   * Viewed as only a support person – not a real teacher * Not being able to use my skills * Look foolish teaching new content | | | |  |   **Our 3 to 5 team ground rules are…**   1. What happens in Vegas stays in Vegas. 2. There will be not unspoken resentments. We will deal with conflict openly. 3. We will only provide each other with positive feedback for the first month.   **Pet Peeves**   |  |  | | --- | --- | |  | Co-Teacher A   * When my co-teacher shows up late.   Co-Teacher B   * When my co-teacher says “I” instead of “we” or “our.” |   **Co-Teaching Nuptial Conversations Topics**  Time for Planning  Instruction  Student Behavior  Communication  Evaluation  Logistics  Other  **Time for Planning**:   * How much time will we need? * Where will we find the time that we need? * How will we use our time together? * What records can we keep to facilitate our planning?   **Instruction**   * What content will we include? * Who will plan for what content? * How will we share teaching responsibility? * Who will adapt the curriculum and instructional and assessment procedures for select students? * What are our strengths in the areas of curriculum, instruction, and assessment? * What unique talents, interests, life experiences, and cultural heritage9s) does each of us contribute to the instructional process? * How will content be presented – will one person teach and the other(s) arrange and facilitate follow-up activities, or will all members share in the teaching of the lesson? * How will we arrange to share our expertise? (Can we observe one another and practice peer coaching?) * Will we rotate responsibilities? * How will we assess the effectiveness of our instruction?   **Student Behavior**   * If we could each only have three class rules, what would those be? * Who will decide on the disciplinary procedure? * Who will carry out the disciplinary procedures and deliver consequences? * How will we be consistent in dealing with behavior? * How will we proactively address behavior?   **Communication**   * What types and frequency of communication do we each like to have with parents? * How will we explain this collaborative teaching arrangement to the parents? * Who will communicate with parents? Will there be shared responsibility for communication with parents of students with identified special education and other specialized needs, or will particular members of the co-teaching team have this responsibility? * What types of frequency of communication do we each like to have with students? * Who will communicate with students? * How will we ensure regular communication with one another? * Who will communicate with administrators?   **Evaluation**   * How will we monitor students’ progress? * How will we assess and grade students’ performances? * Who will evaluate which group of students – do co-teachers collaborate in evaluating all students’ performances, or is each co-teacher primarily responsible for evaluating a subset of students?   **Logistics**   * How will we explain our co teaching arrangement to the students and convey that we are equals in the classroom? * How will we refer to each other in front of the students? * How will teacher space be shared? * How will the room be arranged? * Who will complete the paperwork for students identified as eligible for special education? * How will the decision be made to expand or contract team membership? * How will a balance of decision-making power be maintained among co-teachers? |

**Nuptial Agreements for Co-Teaching Roles and Responsibilities**

Directions: Insert P, S, E, or I to designate level of responsibility. Plan to revise based on changes in co-teacher skills and/or needs of the students for whom you are co-teaching.

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| RESPONSIBILITIES | PERSON RESPONSIBLE | | | |
| NAME | NAME | NAME | NAME |
| Develop units, projects, lessons |  |  |  |  |
| Create advance organizers  (e.g., concept map, lecture guide) |  |  |  |  |
| Monitor and assess student progress |  |  |  |  |
| Assign grades |  |  |  |  |
| Schedule/facilitate team meetings |  |  |  |  |
| Assign responsibilities to paraeducators |  |  |  |  |
| Train paraprofessionals |  |  |  |  |
| Supervise paraprofessionals |  |  |  |  |
| Recruit and train peer tutors |  |  |  |  |
| Facilitate peer support and friendship |  |  |  |  |
| Communicate with administrators |  |  |  |  |
| Communicate with related service providers (e.g., speech and language) |  |  |  |  |
| Communicate with parents |  |  |  |  |
| Developing Individual Education Programs (IEPs) |  |  |  |  |
| Other: |  |  |  |  |

CODE KEY: P= Primary Responsibility S=Secondary Responsibility

E=Equal Responsibility I=Input into the Decision Making

**“Are We Really Co-Teachers?” Self-Assessment**

Directions: To what degree do you agree with each statement? Use your results to set goals!

**5 4 3 2 1**

**Always Usually Sometimes Rarely Never**

**Culture of Collaboration**

5 4 3 2 1 1. We depend upon one another to follow through on tasks and responsibilities.

5 4 3 2 1 2. We share ideas, information, and materials.

5 4 3 2 1 3. We identify the resources and talents of each co-teacher.

5 4 3 2 1 4. We model collaboration and teamwork for our students.

5 4 3 2 1 5. We are both viewed by our students as their teachers.

5 4 3 2 1 6. We ensure that each co-teacher teaches each student at some time.

5 4 3 2 1 7. We share responsibility for differentiating instruction.

5 4 3 2 1 8. We are aware of what one another is doing even when we are not directly in

one another’s presence.

5 4 3 2 1 9. We communicate freely our concerns.

5 4 3 2 1 10. We have a process for resolving our disagreements, and we use it when faced

with problems and conflicts.

5 4 3 2 1 11. We celebrate the process of co-teaching as well as outcomes and successes.

5 4 3 2 1 12. We have fun with the students and each other when we co-teach.

**Planning**

5 4 3 2 1 13. We have regularly scheduled times to meet and discuss our work.

5 4 3 2 1 14. We share responsibility for deciding what to teach.

5 4 3 2 1 15. We agree on the curriculum standards that will be addressed in a lesson.

5 4 3 2 1 16. We decide which co-teaching approaches we are going to use in a lesson based

upon the needs of and benefits to the students.

5 4 3 2 1 17. We identify student strengths and needs.

5 4 3 2 1 18. We share responsibility for deciding how to teach.

5 4 3 2 1 19. We share responsibility for deciding who teaches what part of a lesson.

5 4 3 2 1 20. We share responsibility for how student learning is assessed.

**Implementation**

5 4 3 2 1 21. We use a variety of co-teaching approaches.

5 4 3 2 1 22. We effectively implement the chosen co-teaching approach(es) we’ve

planned for the lesson.

5 4 3 2 1 23. We are flexible and make changes as needed during a lesson.

5 4 3 2 1 24. We agree on discipline procedures and jointly carry them out.

**Reflection**

5 4 3 2 1 25. We give feedback to one another on what goes on in the classroom.

5 4 3 2 1 26. We make improvements in our lessons based on what happens.

5 4 3 2 1 27. We can show that students are learning when we co-teach.

5 4 3 2 1 28. We can see our own growth in co-teaching together.

**Promoting Co-Teaching**

5 4 3 2 1 29. We seek and enjoy additional training to become better co-teachers.

5 4 3 2 1 30. We are mentors to others who want to co-teach.

5 4 3 2 1 31. We communicate our need for logistical support and resources.

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| **Co-Teaching Tracking Matrix: Which Co-Teaching Approaches Do We Use?**  **Week of:**  **Directions:** Monitor, plan, and document your co-teaching experiences! For each co-teaching approach briefly describe what co-teachers plan to do or did each day.   |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | |  | Supportive | Parallel | Complementary | Team | Additional Notes | | Monday |  |  |  |  |  | | Tuesday |  |  |  |  |  | | Wednesday |  |  |  |  |  | | Thursday |  |  |  |  |  | | Friday |  |  |  |  |  | | Notes and Plans for Next Week |  | | | | |   **Supportive** - One co-teacher takes the lead instructional role and the other(s) rotates among the students providing support. The co-teacher(s) taking the supportive role watches or listens as students work together, stepping in to provide one-to-one tutorial assistance when necessary while the other co-teacher continues to direct the lesson. The role of lead and supportive co-teacher can switch.  **Parallel** - Two or more people work with different groups of students at the same time in different sections of the classroom. Co-teachers may rotate among the groups; and, sometimes there may be one group of students that works without a co-teacher for at least part of the time.  **Complementary** – All co-teachers have a large group instructional role. One may introduce the new academic content while the other makes it more accessible through complementary instruction (modeling note taking, use of different examples or analogies, paraphrasing, creating visuals).  **Team** - Co-teachers equitable share responsibility for that which one teacher otherwise would have performed alone; namely, planning, teaching, and assessing the instruction of all assigned students. Co-teachers simultaneously deliver instruction and equitably share leadership and responsibility. Students view each co-teacher as equally knowledgeable and credible. |

**CO-TEACHING LESSON PLANNING TEMPLATE #1: GRAPHIC ORGANIZER**

When co-teachers plan for instruction for each block of their instructional time, they also plan the co-teaching approaches they will use. This graphic organizer is a tool designed to facilitate the planning conversation for co-teaching. Writing in the graphic organizer is *optional*. The tool prompts co-teachers to: 1) identify what content is being taught and how; 2) identify student learning challenges and differentiation needs;3) identify the co-teaching approach(es) that best supports student differentiation needs and content demands; and 4) describe what each co-teacher does in his/her co-teaching role.

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| **Instructional Content:**  **In each section of instructional time, what are we teaching & how?** | **What learning differences do students experience? What differentiation is needed that co-teaching supports?** | **Which**  **co-teaching approach(es) do we plan on using?** | **CO-TEACHER**  **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**  **What will I do?**  **(If I do this…)** | **CO-TEACHER**  **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**  **What will I do?**  **(I will do this…)** |
|  |  | Supportive  Parallel  Complementary  Team |  |  |
|  |  | Supportive  Parallel  Complementary  Team |  |  |
|  |  | Supportive  Parallel  Complementary  Team |  |  |
|  |  | Supportive  Parallel  Complementary  Team |  |  |
|  |  | Supportive  Parallel  Complementary  Team |  |  |

**Math (Absolute Value) Example Using the Co-Teaching Graphic Organizer**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Instructional Content:**  **In each section of instructional time, what are we teaching & how?** | **What learning differences do students experience? What differentiation is needed that co-teaching supports?** | **Which**  **co-teaching approach(es) do we plan on using?** | **CO-TEACHER**  **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**  **What will I do?**  **(If I do this…)** | **CO-TEACHER**  **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**  **What will I do?**  **(I will do this…)** |
| Review math homework | Several students are easily distracted; several students likely will need clarification and redirection | **Supportive**  Parallel  Complementary  Team | I leading.  I go over the answers for the math homework and clarify concepts as needed. | I support.  I make sure students are attending and “tutor,” as needed, to be sure questions are answered. |
| Math mini-lesson: Absolute value (use of number line) | Four students need visual and concrete modalities to help construct understanding | Supportive  Parallel  **Complementary**  Team | I lead content instruction.  I teach a mini-lesson on the concept and skills of absolute value | I complement.  I provide examples, graphic illustrations and models on the board while my co-teacher guides concept/skill instruction. |
| Guided practice of determining absolute value (in teacher-designated table groups) | Small group application, with manipulatives (for all tables) providing target students support | Supportive  **Parallel**  Complementary  Team | I monitor 3 groups that included students who need paper number line strip manipulatives to determine absolute value. | I monitor the rest of the groups of students who are ready for paper and pencil problems (with number lines also on the tables for reference). |

CO-TEACHING LESSON PLAN FORMAT #2 (BEFORE-DURING-AFTER)

Co-Teachers: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date:

(Names)

Content Area(s): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Common Core and Other Standard(s) Addressed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Lesson Objectives:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Circle the Co-Teaching Model(s) Used: **Supportive Parallel Complementary Team Teaching**

What is the room arrangement? Will other spaces outside of the classroom be used? (Draw a picture of the room arrangement.)

What varying materials do co-teachers need?

In what varying ways do co-teachers assess student learning?

What additional differentiated material, objectives, instructional methods, assessment methods, or supports, do particular students need?

What does each co-teacher do before, during, and after the lesson?

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Co-Teacher**  **Name:** |  |  |  |  |
| What are the specific tasks I do **BEFORE** the lesson? |  |  |  |  |
| What are the specific tasks/steps I do **DURING** the lesson? |  |  |  |  |
| What are the specific tasks I do **AFTER** the lesson? |  |  |  |  |

Where, when, and how do co-teachers debrief and evaluate the outcomes of the lesson?

**CO-TEACHING LESSON PLAN FORMAT #3 (DIRECT INSTRUCTION “If one does…, the other can…”)**

**Class: Date:**

**Lesson Topic:**

**Standards Addressed:**

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|  | **If \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is doing this…**  ***Example: Explaining a new concept*** | **Then \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_will be doing this…**  ***Example: Conducting role-play, modeling concept, asking clarification questions*** | **Co-Teaching Approach(es)** |
| **Anticipatory**  **Set** |  |  |  |
| **Instruction** |  |  |  |
| **Guided**  **Practice** |  |  |  |
| **Closure** |  |  |  |
| **Independent**  **Practice** |  |  |  |