### What Does Co-Teaching Look Like? Four Approaches

**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.

**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 and are comfortable alternately taking the lead and being the supporter. The test of a successful team teaching partnership is that the students view each teacher as equally knowledgeable and credible.

**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.. Key to parallel co-teaching is that each co-teacher eventually works with every student in the class. **Teachers new to co-teaching often begin with this approach.**

***Examples of Parallel Co-Teaching***

* **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.
* **Cooperative Group Mentoring:** Each co-teacher takes responsibility for monitoring and providing feedback and assistance to a given number of cooperative groups of students.
* **Experiment or Lab Monitoring:** Each co-teacher monitors and assists a given number of laboratory groups, providing guided instruction to those groups requiring additional support.
* **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.