

# 8 Truths About High School Co-Teaching

## How to Use This Guide

Don't try to implement everything at once. Instead, choose one truth and one small action to try during the next week.

The most successful co-teaching teams don't do everything perfectly. They consistently make small improvements together.

### Reflection Questions

- Which truth is already a strength for our team?
- Which truth would have the biggest impact if we improved it?
- What is one thing we'll try before we meet again?

## The 8 Truths (Quick Reference)

### TRUTH 1

#### Co-Teaching Benefits Every Student

Co-teaching isn't about supporting some students. It's about creating better instruction for every learner.

When two educators intentionally work together, students experience:

- More discussion
- More participation
- More feedback
- More flexible grouping
- More opportunities to learn

### TRUTH 2

#### You Don't Have to Know Everything

General educators bring deep content expertise. Special educators bring expertise in access, learning, and support. Neither teacher has to become the other. Students need both.

Ask:

- What expertise do I bring?
- What expertise does my partner bring?
- How can we combine them?

## TRUTH 3

### Your Superpower Is Creating Access

Before planning supports, ask:  
Can every student access today's learning?  
Look for opportunities to increase:

- ✓ Engagement
- ✓ Participation
- ✓ Practice
- ✓ Ways to demonstrate understanding
- ✓ Strategic support

Access comes before achievement.

## TRUTH 4

### Every Lesson Has Access Points

Every lesson can include multiple ways for students to:

- Explore ideas
- Practice skills
- Collaborate
- Ask questions
- Show what they know

You don't need a different lesson.  
You need more ways into the lesson.

## TRUTH 5

### Let the Lesson Drive the Co-Teaching Model

Choose the model that best matches today's learning goal.

Often Most Effective

- ✓ Station Teaching
- ✓ Parallel Teaching
- ✓ One Teach, One Make Multisensory

Use Sparingly

- One Teach / One Assist
- One Teach / One Float
- Duet Teaching

Ask: "Which model creates the greatest student participation today?"

## **TRUTH 6**

### **Five Minutes Is Better Than None**

Even a short planning conversation can dramatically improve a lesson.

Try asking:

- What are students learning today?
- Where might they struggle?
- What supports will help?
- Who is doing what?

Tiny planning creates better teaching.

## **TRUTH 7**

### **There Is No "My Students" and "Your Students"**

Every student belongs to both teachers.  
Students quickly notice whether adults truly share ownership.

Use language like:

- "Our students..."
- "Our class..."
- "Let's help them..."

Shared ownership builds belonging.

## **TRUTH 8**

### **Progress Beats Perfection**

Great co-teaching develops over time.

Start with:

- One lesson
- One new model
- One new access point
- One reflection afterward

Small changes become powerful habits.

## The Co-Teaching Planning Conversation

### (5 MINUTES BEFORE CLASS)

1. WHAT ARE STUDENTS LEARNING TODAY?
2. WHERE MIGHT STUDENTS GET STUCK?
3. HOW CAN WE INCREASE ACCESS?
4. WHICH CO-TEACHING MODEL FITS BEST?
5. WHO IS DOING WHAT?

## Try One New Access Point Tomorrow

Could students...

- ☐ Talk before writing?
- ☐ Draw before explaining?
- ☐ Build or manipulate something?
- ☐ Work with a partner?
- ☐ Choose between two ways to show learning?
- ☐ Use sentence starters?
- ☐ Watch a brief demonstration?
- ☐ Respond with whiteboards?
- ☐ Use visuals?
- ☐ Practice before being assessed?

## A Quick Reflection After Class

### SPEND JUST TWO MINUTES ASKING:

- WHAT WORKED REALLY WELL TODAY?
- WHERE DID STUDENTS STRUGGLE?
- WHAT SHOULD WE TRY NEXT TIME?

## Remember These Four Ideas

1. Access comes first.
2. Participation matters.
3. Both teachers are experts.
4. Progress beats perfection.