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ESL Coteaching and Collaboration: Opportunities to Develop Teacher Leadership and Enhance Student Learning

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This article presents seven English as a second language (ESL) coteaching models and explores other possibilities of collaboration between general education classroom teachers, content area teachers, and ESL specialists in the K–12 context. Through authentic case vignettes, we illustrate how collaborative experiences and coteaching opportunities can lead to the emergence of teacher leaders and enhanced student learning.

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Across the United States, mainstream and English as a second language (ESL) teachers have been sharing their expertise using coteaching and collaboration strategies gleaned from their counterparts in special education inclusion classrooms (Nordmeyer, 2008; Wertheimer & Honigsfeld, 2000). These teacher leaders are working together to enhance instruction for their English language learner (ELL) populations. Through the use of successful cooperative planning and organizational techniques, teams of classroom educators and ESL teachers discover how to improve their lesson delivery and differentiate instruction for ELLs.

Collaborative practices and coteaching arrangements have completely and successfully replaced all ESL pull-out services in the St. Paul (Minnesota) Public Schools, in the United States (Pardini, 2006; Zehr, 2006). Through the use of successful cooperative planning and organizational techniques, teams of classroom educators and ESL teachers not only discover how to improve their

lesson delivery and differentiate instruction for ELLs, but also offer peer support to each other and engage in formal or informal mentoring and peer coaching arrangements (Dunne & Villani, 2007). Because approximately 50% of teachers leave their assignment in the first 5 years (Allen, 2005), more than 25% of new teachers leave the profession in their first 3 years, and many more within 5 years (Boe, Cook, & Sunderland, 2008), innovative means for teacher induction and support are essential. Sustained collaborative practices not only create a model of teacher support for the novices, they may also lead to teacher leadership development for more experienced faculty (Donaldson, 2001; Lieberman, Saxl, & Miles, 2006).

In our observations, teacher leaders most committed to social justice and inclusive practices (Theoharis, 2009) willingly work with their colleagues to enhance instruction for ELL populations—sometimes with little or no guidance from their administrators. By building on the literature as well as our own ongoing research into and practice of teacher collaboration, in this article we offer a comprehensive framework for collaborative teaching practices by presenting seven coteaching models and connect such endeavors to teacher leadership opportunities.

AN INVITATION TO OUR READERS

Take a walk with us into classrooms in which coteaching teams for ELLs are in action, and you will see and hear activities designed to scaffold learning and improve comprehension for all students. You will observe a classroom teacher conducting a shared reading lesson with a group of fourth graders while an ESL specialist uses computer-generated photographs to increase another group's understanding of the same printed material. Down the hallway, you will catch sight of a mathematics teacher presenting a new concept to an entire sixth-grade class while the ESL teacher scaffolds instruction by writing spoken questions and fill-in-the-blank answers on the board to facilitate oral participation of all learners. How do these teachers collaborate for the sake of ELLs? What role does teacher leadership play in collaborative practices? In this article, we uncover some answers and offer suggestions for how ESL professionals can build collaborative relationships with their

colleagues to enhance the educational experiences of ELLs, participate in job-embedded professional development, and take on teacher leadership roles at the same time.

COLLABORATIVE PRACTICES

It has been documented extensively that teacher collaboration is a necessary element for improved student achievement and ongoing school success (DelliCarpini, 2008; Guiney, 2001). It often occurs through the most casual sharing of ideas in faculty lunchrooms as well as in more structured cooperative settings. According to Glickman, Gordon, and Ross-Gordon (2007), teachers commonly seek each other's advice, support, and assistance more often than those of an administrator. Therefore, it is only natural that the development of teacher leaders, in formal as well as informal positions, would be an important means to provide instructional support to teachers in order to enhance learning for ELLs.

According to Cook and Friend (1995), collaboration is a style of interaction between at least two coequal parties voluntarily engaged in shared decision making as they work toward a common goal. Among dozens of researchers and practitioners, Risko and Bromley (2001) emphasize the importance of teacher collaboration because it is what "moves professionals and families from the deficit model to one that affirms and is responsive to students' strengths, backgrounds, beliefs, and values" (p. 11). Most important for the field of English language teaching, they also propose that collaboration "reduces role differentiation among teachers and specialists, resulting in shared expertise for problem solving that yields multiple solutions to dilemmas about literacy and learning" (p. 12).

ELLs in the mainstream classroom often confound teacher planning, decision making, and lesson delivery. As staff developers, we frequently meet general education (mainstream and content area) teachers who—in response to our invitation to discuss their questions and concerns—often admit their lack of understanding of ELLs' sociocultural, linguistic, academic, or emotional needs. We also find that many teachers continue to work in isolation and, left to their own devices, may not know how to best assist their divergent ELLs, especially those who have had limited formal

schooling (DelliCarpini, 2008). In a general context, Elmore (2000) states that teaching as a vocation is often characterized by a sense of seclusion, claiming that “individual teachers invent their own practice in isolated classrooms, small knots of like-minded practitioners operate in isolation from their colleagues within a given school, or schools operate as exclusive enclaves of practice in isolation from other schools” (p. 21).

In the ESL context, we have observed that many district ESL directors often get bogged down by the managerial aspects of program administration, which take precedence over instructional issues, and are not always available to assist struggling teachers or provide ongoing support or professional challenge to experienced ones. However, when teachers engage in collaborative practices, they experience a reduction in isolation, enjoy more occasions to share their expertise, and appreciate the opportunity to shape the way the ESL program operates in their schools.

ESL COTEACHING

Coteaching is traditionally defined as the collaboration between general and special education teachers for all of the teaching responsibilities of all of the students assigned to a classroom (Gately & Gately, 2001). This definition has frequently been expanded to include collaborative partnerships between a mainstream teacher and a specialist such as a remedial math teacher, a reading specialist, a teacher of the gifted and talented, and more recently the ESL teacher. Based on our combined experiences with ESL coteaching and training others in teacher collaboration and coteaching practices, we adapted and expanded Vaughn, Schumm, and Arguelles’s (1997) coteaching models to the ESL context (Honigsfeld & Dove, 2008; Honigsfeld & Dove, in press; see Table 1).

In the first three models, the teachers work with the same group of students, typically the entire class, including ELLs as well as mainstream students. In the next three models, the two collaborating teachers work with two groups of students divided between them. Students may be grouped both homogeneously (one group containing only ELLs and the other non-ELLs) or heterogeneously (each group including ELLs and non-ELLs). In the

TABLE 1. Coteaching Models

Model Type	Description	Examples
One student group: One lead teacher and another teacher teaching on purpose	The mainstream and ESL teachers take turns assuming the lead role. One leads while the other provides minilessons to individuals or small groups in order to preteach or clarify a concept or skill.	While the mainstream teacher introduces the mathematical conventions for reducing fractions, the ESL teacher clarifies the meanings of numerator and denominator, and helps students understand the concept of equal fractions with visually depicted fractions and math manipulatives.
One student group: Two teachers teach the same content	Both teachers direct a whole-class lesson and work cooperatively to teach the same lesson at the same time.	The teachers collaboratively agree on content and language objectives for a lesson on the rock cycle. The mainstream teacher focuses on the content goals of the three main classes of rock and how they are formed. The ESL specialist supports students' linguistic development through the matching language objectives that target key concept vocabulary; adjectives describing the colors, shapes, textures, and sizes of rocks; and the passive voice.
One student group: One teacher teaches, one assesses	Two teachers are engaged in conducting the same lesson; one teacher takes the lead, and the other circulates throughout the room and assesses targeted students through observations, checklists, and anecdotal records.	While the fourth-grade classroom teacher leads a review and practice lesson on two-digit subtraction, the ESL specialist circulates throughout the room, observing and informally assessing how the ELLs and possibly other at-risk students are mastering the new content.

TABLE 1. Continued

Model Type	Description	Examples
Two student groups: Two teachers teach the same content	Students are divided into two learning groups; the teachers engage in parallel teaching, presenting the same content using differentiated learning strategies.	In a middle school technology class, the topic of bridges and their associated forces is explored. One group works at the computer stations conducting research and creating a PowerPoint presentation while the other engages in labeling and matching activities using line drawings.
Two student groups: One teacher preteaches, one teaches alternative information	Teachers assign students to one of two groups based on their readiness levels related to a designated topic or skill. Students who have limited prior knowledge of the target content or skill are grouped together to receive instruction to bridge the gap in their background knowledge.	One teacher preteaches the format and sequence of a lab report while reviewing the components of the scientific method. The other group compares inductive and deductive reasoning as related to the logical reasoning behind the scientific method.
Two student groups: One teacher reteaches, one teaches alternative information	Flexible grouping provides students at various proficiency levels with the support they need for specific content; student group composition changes as needed.	In an upper elementary cotaught English language arts class, one teacher revisits the effective use of transitions in expository writing with one group of students. The other teacher examines nonfiction mentor texts that include obvious as well as subtle transition words.
Multiple student groups: Two teachers monitor and teach	Multiple groupings allow both teachers to monitor and facilitate student work while targeting selected students with assistance for their particular learning needs.	Teachers collaboratively set up several learning stations in a high school social studies class. Students at each station are assigned a different authentic document from the Cold War with a matching, differentiated, and scaffolded activity sheet.

seventh model, the class is divided into multiple small groups, and learning activities are facilitated and monitored by both teachers.

Regardless of the grade level or the content area taught, each of these models may be implemented in any cotaught classroom in which teachers share not only the space but also responsibility for the students. “My students” and “your students” turn into “our students.” How to determine which model to implement? Teachers usually consider the students’ needs, the specific content being taught, the type of learning activities designed, and the participating teachers’ teaching styles and preferences.

How do we know this works? We know that fragmented special service delivery, frequent interruptions for pull-out services, and the social isolation that some ELLs experience can be detrimental. Collier and Thomas (2004) discuss the importance of keeping ELLs connected to the mainstream curriculum and recognizing the challenge they face to catch up to their English-speaking peers:

If students are isolated from the curricular mainstream for many years, they are likely to lose ground to those in the instructional mainstream, who are constantly pushing ahead. To catch up to their peers, students below grade level must make more than one year’s progress every year to eventually close the gap. (p. 2)

Frattura and Capper (2007) also have found that, traditionally, students with special needs, including ELLs, are removed from the general education classroom for extended periods of time, resulting in a disconnected instructional experience, lack of increased achievement, and no sense of belonging.

There is emerging research documenting the impact of coteaching for the sake of ELLs (sometimes called *inclusive ESL services*) on the participating teachers (Davison, 2006) and on students (Theoharis, 2007). Davison identifies five stages of increasing effectiveness in teacher collaboration and claims that teachers engaged in what she calls *teacher partnerships* may do so at one of the following levels (we indicate observable teacher behaviors in parentheses):

1. *Pseudocompliance or passive resistance* (Teachers would prefer to continue with the traditional pull-out program, so they do not embrace the philosophies or practices of teacher collaboration.)

2. *Compliance* (Teachers perceive the program as externally imposed. Despite limited understanding of the full impact and implications of collaborative practices, teachers at this stage show good intentions and positive dispositions.)
3. *Accommodation* (Teachers show interest in experimenting with practical implementations of collaborative teaching, but also expect continued external support.)
4. *Convergence* (Teachers are ready to learn from each other and share each other's beliefs and practices.)
5. *Creative co-construction* (As coteaching becomes the preferred way of ESL service delivery, teachers develop authentic, genuine partnerships with fluid personal and professional interactions.)

Most recently, Causton-Theoharis and Theoharis (2008) report significantly increased reading achievement scores over a 3-year period in a Wisconsin school that moved to a full inclusion model, eliminating all pull-out services for special education students and ELLs. Through an extensive restructuring of the school that used only existing human resources and required no extra cost, collaboration and coteaching practices became the dominant service delivery format.

Coteaching Challenges

We recognize that coteaching requires teachers to share their ideas, classroom resources, skills, and physical space with other educators to provide an optimal learning environment for ELLs. According to Villa, Thousand, and Nevin (2008), various communication, instructional, and organizational issues need to be addressed by coteaching teams. In particular, coteaching demands the identification of individual teacher roles and responsibilities as well as a firm agreement on the decision-making process for instruction, student behavior, communication with students and their parents, and evaluation of student progress. Additionally, each coteaching member must possess a common view of coteaching models and knowledge of effective ways to execute selected models.

The most effective means for overcoming the challenges of coteaching for ELLs is for teachers to engage in ongoing, regularly scheduled collaboration. Special education researchers have documented the benefits of teacher collaboration for inclusive models of instruction (Pugach & Johnson, 1995; Schwab Learning,

2003; Thousand, Villa, Nevin, & Paolucci-Whitcomb, 1995; Villa, Thousand, Nevin, & Liston, 2005), and ESL teachers and their mainstream colleagues have adopted these practices for the education of ELLs. Time must be built into the regular school day to accommodate professional conversations among teaching teams. However, from our conversations with ESL teachers throughout the United States, we have concluded that most teachers are not given adequate time to plan cotaught lessons for ELLs. Therefore, planning is conducted informally—during a chance meeting in the hallway, on the playground during recess, waiting in line at the cafeteria. Although scheduled time alone is not a panacea for planning instruction for ELLs in the cotaught classroom, we contend that it is one of the essential ingredients to the success of coteaching ELLs. The outcomes of teacher collaboration and coteaching for ELLs are part of our current research investigation.

Administrative Challenges

According to Roberts and Pruitt (2009), in order to meet the needs of diverse learners, administrators must establish a means for all students to access the curriculum. Furthermore, those in leadership positions must commit to collaborating with those who provide these students with the necessary learning opportunities. Therefore, arranging and organizing the proper resources for collaborative and coteaching practices must begin with administrators identifying the specific needs of their schools and offering support for teacher leaders who are willing and eager to take on the challenge.

Administrators need to provide the time for teachers to have professional conversations with their colleagues on an ongoing basis. Additionally, administrators may be asked to offer other resources such as materials, personnel, and professional development to support coteaching efforts. However, issues beyond the control of an individual administrator may hamper coteaching initiatives. Scheduling constraints, lack of funding, or contractual and union issues may prevent opportunities for collaborative and coteaching practices to be initiated. These issues can be resolved over time as long as teacher leadership, collaboration, and coteaching are established priorities.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Classroom teachers are often held accountable for employing new program initiatives without the benefit of hands-on, concrete guidance or ongoing support as to how to implement them. In increasingly diverse classrooms, all teachers are expected to differentiate instruction as a standard practice in their lesson delivery routines. Although many school districts offer some professional development, most workshop activities are provided piecemeal and are inadequate to prepare classroom teachers to deal with the day-to-day challenges they face.

Another concern is that those responsible for planning professional development often do not take into account the level of expertise of their target audience. First-year teachers frequently are seated alongside their veteran colleagues in the same professional development sessions. Classroom teachers rarely receive the level of support they require to understand second language acquisition and to be able incorporate new strategies and methodologies into their lessons.

Recently, Darling-Hammond and Richardson (2009) reviewed 20 years of research on effective teacher learning and professional development, examining the content, context, and design of high-quality professional development. They conclude that teachers learn most effectively when (a) the professional development addresses their content knowledge and how to best convey that knowledge to students; (b) they understand how students acquire specific content; (c) they have opportunities for active, hands-on learning; (d) they are empowered to acquire new knowledge, apply it to their own practice, and reflect on the results; (e) their learning is an essential part of a reform effort that connects curriculum, assessment, and standards; (f) learning is collaborative and collegial; and (g) professional development is intensive and sustained over time. Darling-Hammond and Richardson note that the most successful framework for this type of professional learning for teachers is professional learning communities.

We have also found that professional development that is ongoing, subject specific, and collaborative allows teachers to practice their new skills and provide a mechanism to debrief and gather new information. For mainstream as well as ESL teachers

who venture into it, coteaching is one such avenue for continuing professional growth and effective intervention to improve instruction for ELLs.

TEACHER LEADERSHIP

Teacher leadership can play a critical role in sustaining school reform and supporting academic success for all students in a school community. In their landmark publication *Awakening the Sleeping Giant: Helping Teachers Develop as Leaders*, Katzenmeyer and Moller (1996) offer this definition: “Teachers who are leaders lead beyond the classroom, identify with and contribute to a community of teacher learners and leaders, and influence others toward improved educational practice” (p. 5). Since the mid 1990s, teacher leadership has been the topic of dozens of books and numerous research and practitioner-oriented publications (see, e.g., Barth, 2001; Institute for Educational Leadership, 2001; Lieberman & Miller, 2004). Yet for many educators, the concept of teacher leadership is still relatively new.

Donaldson (2001) and Lieberman et al. (2006) suggest that teacher leaders are able to support an overall vision of change by mentoring new teachers, providing input for evaluating teacher performance, participating in district policy committees, and spearheading in-house professional development. Recently, the National Association of Secondary School Principals’ (n.d.) Middle Level Task Force published *Practical Suggestions for Developing Leadership Capacity in Others*, focusing on how school administrators may encourage teacher leadership roles to emerge. Based on our observations and ongoing research, we confirm that teacher leadership may also be closely tied to ongoing teacher collaboration and coteaching for the sake of ELLs.

Leadership among ESL teachers can help design and shape an inclusive curriculum and service delivery for ELLs and provide a means for continual in-class teacher support through the facilitation of coteaching and collaboration strategies (Causton-Theoharis & Theoharis, 2008). Frequently, ESL teachers are the individuals who may make the first move toward developing a coteaching partnership or other collaborative team efforts to support ELLs in learning grade-level curriculum (Honigsfeld & Dove, in press).

However, mainstream teachers may also initiate coteaching and collaborative approaches, particularly with novice ESL teachers, who may not have experience with grade-level-appropriate content, scope and sequence of curriculum, local and state testing requirements, and so on.

Although teacher leadership undertakings may begin without administrative requirements or direction, administrative support has been found to be essential to the success of sustained collaborative efforts (Davison, 2006; Spraker, 2003). Informal teacher leadership established at the grassroots level may face certain challenges, thus requiring a comprehensive plan for successful implementation. To enhance such efforts, we summarize the different roles and responsibilities that teacher leaders face in and outside cotaught classrooms (see Table 2).

VOICES FROM THE FIELD

We have both practiced coteaching in the ESL context and extensively trained others in collaborative ESL practices. We also have observed many classrooms to investigate cotaught activities and would like to share the experiences of three teachers we recently visited. They represent outstanding teacher leaders who facilitated coteaching instruction as a means to improve the

TABLE 2. Teacher Leadership Roles and Responsibilities

Established Teacher Leadership Responsibilities	Coteacher Leadership Responsibilities
Mentor new teachers	Identify leadership roles and individual responsibilities of each teacher
Provide input for evaluating teacher performance	Propose, implement, and evaluate the effectiveness of coteaching models
Serve on district policy boards and committees	Establish regular avenues of communication
Present in-house professional development	Outline and agree on decision-making approaches
Promote and support grant-writing opportunities	Provide strategies to meet ELL needs
Act as in-class literacy coach	Model and observe in-class lessons
	Share and codevelop instructional resources

education of ELLs. The coteaching models these teachers adapted are identified in the following vignettes.

When Paula Barnick thinks back to her earliest coteaching experiences, she finds herself remembering what two teachers can accomplish when a good mix exists. For Paula, that professionally enriching first teaching experience included coteaching with a fifth-grade classroom teacher in an urban public school in 1998. Both teachers brought their enthusiasm, expertise, and sense of caring and responsibility together in one room to present challenging yet differentiated curriculum to students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Approximately 46% of the area's residents were born outside of the United States, and the students in this fifth-grade class represented homelands and cultures from numerous countries worldwide. Surrounded by great diversity, these two educators together built a successful learning environment on a foundation of shared philosophies about how children learn best and by carefully and consistently discussing and preparing lessons together. They experimented with different coteaching models, and managed to find a comfort zone that worked for each of them as well as their students. As Paula reflects,

although we had much common ground between us, we were in no way clones of one another, and our differences also contributed to our successful interactions with each other and our students as we provided varying insights, teaching strategies and activities, and materials that served to enrich all. (personal communication, February 11, 2009)

Today, Paula teaches ESL in a suburban district where the ELL demographics do not warrant self-contained cotaught classes. Nonetheless, she takes every opportunity to engage in joint lesson planning with fellow ESL and mainstream teachers and frequently “parallel teaches” with them so that the ELLs in her classes will not miss content or skills presented by the mainstream teacher during pull-out periods. She introduces age- and grade-level-appropriate content and skills to help frontload difficult information to ELLs and uses best practices in language teaching, including scaffolding, tiering tasks, and using multisensory resources.

Three years ago, in a small suburban town, Liz Roberts Scaduto, a fifth- and sixth-grade ESL teacher, first ventured into coteaching

by partnering with the math specialist for one period per week. By the 2007–2008 school year, Liz started to regularly coteach the Read 180 program in the middle school with Carole Kirchhoff, a special education teacher who is English certified with a strong background in social studies. The community in which these two specialists taught had a student population, according to the 2000 U.S. Census, that was 58% White, 25% Black, 16% Hispanic, and 1% Asian. The median household income of the town was approximately \$42,000 per year.

Liz and Carole began by teaching periods 1 and 2 collaboratively and chose to plan together during period 3. Working together and pooling their years of experience, they used ESL methodology and developed learning experiences for each social studies topic to meet the cultural and linguistic needs of the students in their classes. ELLs who entered hesitant to read and address content material in English finished the year far more confident in their abilities.

Together, both teachers employed various coteaching models to deliver social studies instruction to students. To introduce new content, Carole took the lead due to her expertise in the subject matter while Liz worked with ELLs at their individual desks to clarify concepts (One student group: One lead teacher and another teacher teaching on purpose). They frequently divided the class into different groupings, such as two groups to reteach information to those students who needed that particular support (Two student groups: One teacher reteaches, one teaches alternative information) or multiple groups that facilitated the supervision of student activities by both teachers while offering assistance to those in need (Multiple student groups: Two teachers monitor and teach). Within these flexible groupings, both Liz and Carole would support ELLs' learning challenges; ELLs were not the sole responsibility of the ESL teacher.

Liz is now the ESL director in her district. Her coteaching efforts and interdisciplinary partnerships have continued with subsequent ESL teachers, and she emerged as a teacher leader through collaborative teaching experiences that laid the groundwork for continued exploration of coteaching among ESL and content area teachers. In 2008–2009, coteaching with ESL and content teachers was implemented in three of the buildings. At the high school level,

two innovative ESL/study skills classes are cotaught by an ESL specialist and a Global Studies and a Living Environment teacher. The former uses a centers-based approach, and the latter uses a technology-enhanced sheltered instruction approach. In both cases, teachers report that students feel more comfortable asking questions and participating, thereby gaining confidence, English skills, and greater content knowledge. Liz acknowledges that “we are still in the beginning stages of determining whether coteaching is the best approach for Riverhead, but we are proud of what we are accomplishing so far” (personal communication, May 27, 2009).

In a linguistically diverse school district on the border of a sprawling urban city, Maria Neckonoff recalls fondly her first year of teaching in a cotaught classroom with an experienced, energetic kindergarten teacher, Arlene Sacks. Thirty percent of the students in this particular class were ELLs, and the majority spoke Maria’s native language, Spanish. However, several of the students spoke other languages such as Urdu, Tagalog, and Chinese, and Maria often wondered how she might teach those students as well as their Spanish-speaking counterparts.

Right from the start, Arlene took the lead with her new ESL teacher and devised a plan to use a multiple-group model (Multiple student groups: Two teachers monitor and teach) known as *station* or *center teaching* as part of their coteaching plan. Learning stations or centers are specified classroom spaces or activities in which students, working individually, in pairs, or in small groups, are involved in practicing previously introduced academic material. Arlene demonstrated scaffolded lessons and provided Maria with classroom resources, which were adapted for ELLs. Scaffolded lessons include a variety of strategies and techniques that clarify information by introducing academic context in smaller units so that it is more accessible to ELLs.

Maria reported that she learned how to “think out of the box” and developed an understanding of kindergarten-level literacy, which involves “more than just a story and an activity.” She began to produce her own hands-on activities to target students’ different perceptual strengths. She reported that together with Arlene, she created supportive learning activities and provided complementary instruction so that struggling learners received additional support

within the classroom (Two student groups: Two teachers teach the same content). Maria states, “Working with Arlene and receiving her support and advice has been an invaluable experience for me, and I can only hope that I have in some way reciprocated” (personal communication, February 13, 2009).

According to Davison’s (2006) framework, the teachers featured in these vignettes all reached the creative co-construction level. Their positive dispositions and multiple teaching and collaborative skills led not only to normalized collaboration but to teacher-initiated professional learning opportunities. Their expertise and the high degree of trust placed in them by others supported them in taking on new responsibilities and leadership roles.

CONCLUSION

In our professional development work, we have encountered numerous success stories of teacher collaboration and coteaching arrangements. However, enthusiasm may not be initially high for those who engage in coteaching. Coteaching goals need to be carefully identified and articulated in terms of their purpose, process, and problem-solving strategies for success. Role definition is key to any successful teacher leadership initiative. Johnson and Donaldson (2007) discovered that few schools reorganized to make the most of the expertise teachers had to offer and that teacher leadership roles were seldom well defined. Professional development needs to be in place to prepare teachers to understand the methods and procedures involved in a coteaching partnership, as does a system to maintain their individual roles and deal with conflict.

According to Fullan (1993), effective teachers are committed to being active learners who value and practice collaboration with their colleagues. However, an important matter to consider is how coteaching and collaborative efforts are being implemented. Lack of proper training and exclusive school cultures may lead to feelings of resentment among colleagues; great care must be taken so that classroom teachers do not feel that their ESL coteacher counterparts are intruding on their personal classroom domain. Thus, our recommendations for current and future ESL and mainstream collaborative teacher leaders are as follows:

- Start small.
- Have realistic expectations for yourself and your colleagues.
- Look for “found time” for planning, or explore electronic means of communication.
- Over time, expand joint planning and parallel teaching to more extensive collaborative initiatives.
- Advocate for establishing collaborative teacher practice as an accepted form of professional development.

As with any new school initiative, all those involved in coteaching and collaboration programs need to begin slowly and clearly, gathering support from teachers who are willing to participate and building new relationships with those who may be reluctant. With carefully planned and sustained training and long-term planning that get all stakeholders on board, schools will be better able to establish a new culture over time, which supports collaboration and coteaching and allows teacher leadership to emerge.

THE AUTHORS

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