



NASET's Inclusion Series

Integrated Co-Teaching Services

Introduction

While many school districts may consider a variety of inclusive education systems like an Inclusion Class, others may use another form of inclusive education to provide services to students with disabilities. This system is called integrated co-teaching and this article will answer all questions on this type of inclusive setting.

WHAT IS THE DEFINITION OF INTEGRATED CO-TEACHING SERVICES?

Integrated co-teaching services, as defined in regulation, means the provision of specially designed instruction and academic instruction provided to a group of students with disabilities and nondisabled students.

WHERE CAN SCHOOL DISTRICTS ACCESS INFORMATION ON INTEGRATED CO-TEACHING TO SUPPORT SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION IN ITS SCHOOLS?

School districts are encouraged to review information that can be found at the following web sites:

www.k8accesscenter.org/index.php

www.ped.state.nm.us/seo/library/qtrly.0404.coteaching.lcook.pdf

These web sites are two of many that identify the research that supports this practice and provides practical information on the various ways in which integrated co-teaching may be

provided and provides professional development modules for teachers and supervisors regarding this service.

MUST EVERY SCHOOL DISTRICT OFFER INTEGRATED CO-TEACHING SERVICES ON THE CONTINUUM OF SERVICES?

No. However, the use of integrated co-teaching services is strongly encouraged. School districts may strategically determine, based on the needs of its students, to offer such services at certain grade levels, or in certain subjects. Implementation of integrated coteaching could be gradually phased into a school district.

CAN A SCHOOL DISTRICT DETERMINE THAT IT WILL OFFER INTEGRATED CO-TEACHING SERVICES AT SOME, BUT NOT ALL, OF ITS CLASSES, GRADE LEVELS OR SUBJECTS?

Yes.

CAN INTEGRATED CO-TEACHING BE PROVIDED FOR PART OF THE DAY (E.G., FOR ONE PERIOD A DAY)?

Yes. The CSE could determine that the student needs integrated teaching, for example, for English and math classes only. To meet the individual needs of a student, the CSE could recommend a combination of services, including, but not limited to, integrated coteaching for some classes, special class(es) for a portion of the day, CT or other supports in other general education classes for the remainder of the day. The specific recommendations must be indicated in the student's IEP.

WHAT FACTORS SHOULD BE CONSIDERED WHEN DETERMINING WHETHER TO RECOMMEND INTEGRATED CO-TEACHING SERVICES FOR A STUDENT WITH A DISABILITY?

The determination of whether integrated co-teaching services are an appropriate recommendation for an individual student with a disability must be made on an individual basis. For some students, integrated co-teaching would be an alternative to placement in a special class with the added benefit of having both a special education and a general education teacher deliver the curriculum to the student. For each student, whether the general education classroom is the least restrictive environment for the student to receive his or her special education services should be made in consideration of, but not limited to the following factors:

- the classes in which integrated co-teaching is offered and the match to the students needs;

- the extent of special education services the individual student needs to access, participate and progress in the general education curriculum;
- the similarity of needs of the other students with disabilities in the class;
- the potential effect of the class size on the student's learning needs;
- any potential benefits and harmful effects such services might have for the student or on the quality of services that he or she needs; and
- whether the extent of the environmental modifications or adaptations and the human or material resources needed for the student will consistently detract from the opportunities of other students in the group to benefit from instruction.

A CSE must consider integrated co-teaching services only to the extent such services are available consistent with the district's plan for special education services (see questions 34 - 36).

MAY SCHOOL DISTRICTS CONTINUE TO USE OTHER TERMS TO IDENTIFY INTEGRATED CO-TEACHING SERVICES IN A STUDENT'S IEP?

No. It is now required that all districts use the terminology "integrated co-teaching," consistent with the regulatory requirements, so that the level of services being provided to a student is clear and consistent among school districts. New York City (NYC) has used the term "collaborative team teaching" (CTT) to identify a service that meets the regulatory definition of integrated co-teaching services. While other terms, such as blended or inclusion classes have been used by other school districts, the actual services provided varied among districts (e.g., some districts used the term inclusion class to identify a class where a teaching assistant and a general education teacher were assigned). To clarify for parents that a previously recommended service means the same as integrated co-teaching, terms such as CTT, blended class or inclusion class may also be indicated in the IEP. Special Education Program/Services Frequency Duration Location Integrated Co-Teaching Services (Collaborative Team Teaching) 5 days a week 40 minute class periods English class

WHAT IS THE MAXIMUM NUMBER OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES THAT CAN BE INCLUDED IN A CLASS WHERE INTEGRATED CO-TEACHING SERVICES ARE PROVIDED?

The maximum number of students with disabilities that can be on the class roster of a class where integrated co-teaching services is provided is 12, unless a variance is provided pursuant to section 200.6(g)(1)(i)-(ii) of the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education (<http://www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/lawsregs/sect2006.htm>). The total of 12 students includes

any student with a disability in that class, regardless of whether all of the students are recommended for integrated co-teaching services. For example, if two students with disabilities in a class are recommended for resource room and related services and ten are recommended for integrated co-teaching services, there are 12 students with disabilities in that classroom. While the two students in the above example may benefit incidentally from the integrated co-teaching services, their IEPs would not need to specify the integrated co-teaching services.

A variance to temporarily exceed 12 students with disabilities in an integrated coteaching class by not more than two additional students may be provided through two variance procedures: (1) a variance by notification to temporarily increase the maximum number of students with disabilities to 13; and (2) a variance request for Commissioner's prior approval to temporarily increase the number of students with disabilities to not more than a total of 14. For information on the procedures that a school district must follow in order to obtain a variance to temporarily exceed 12 students with disabilities in a class where integrated co-teaching services are provided, see <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/publications/varianceprocedures-jan2011.htm>. (Revised 11/13)

WHAT IS THE MAXIMUM NUMBER OF NONDISABLED STUDENTS THAT CAN BE INCLUDED IN A CLASS WHERE INTEGRATED CO-TEACHING SERVICES ARE PROVIDED?

There is no regulatory maximum number of nondisabled students in an integrated coteaching class. However, the number of nondisabled students should be more than or equal to the number of students with disabilities in the class in order to ensure the level of integration intended by this program option. A CSE's recommendation for integrated co-teaching services should consider the overall size of the class enrollment (which includes students with disabilities and nondisabled students) and the ratio of students with disabilities to nondisabled students in relation to the individual student's learning needs. An important consideration in determining the number of students with disabilities and nondisabled students on an integrated class roster is that the ratio must not result in a de facto segregated class which would undermine the philosophy of inclusive practices.

IN AN INTEGRATED CO-TEACHING CLASS, MUST BOTH TEACHERS BE HIGHLY QUALIFIED IN THE CORE ACADEMIC SUBJECT AREA?

School personnel assigned to each class must minimally include a special education and a general education teacher. However, only one teacher in an integrated co-teaching class would need to be highly qualified in the core academic subject area. For information on the requirements relating to highly qualified teachers, see <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/nclb/>.

MAY A TEACHING ASSISTANT SERVE AS THE STUDENT'S SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER FOR STUDENTS RECEIVING INTEGRATED CO-TEACHING SERVICES?

No. However, a teaching assistant can be assigned to a class where integrated coteaching is provided to assist the teachers in providing instruction to the students in the class.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN DIRECT CT SERVICES AND INTEGRATED CO-TEACHING SERVICES?

While both direct CT and integrated co-teaching services are provided in a student's general education class, and to the casual observer may appear the same, they differ in the manner and in some circumstances, in the extent to which, such supports are provided to the student.

Integrated co-teaching services means students are intentionally grouped together based on similarity of need for the purpose of receiving specially designed instruction in a general education class, usually daily for the identified class. In this model, a general education teacher and a special education teacher share responsibility for the delivery of primary instruction, planning and evaluation for all students.

Direct CT services are specially designed individual or group instruction recommended for an individual student with a disability in his or her general education class, the purpose being to adapt, as appropriate to the needs of the student, the content, methodology, or delivery of instruction to support the student to successfully participate and progress in the general curriculum during regular instruction. The focus of services provided by the CT is to an individual student with a disability.

IF A SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER IS PROVIDING INTEGRATED CO-TEACHING, FOR EXAMPLE, TO A GROUP OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES IN THEIR ENGLISH AND MATH CLASSES THREE DAYS A WEEK AND FOR THE REMAINING TWO DAYS A WEEK, A TEACHING ASSISTANT IS ASSIGNED TO THE STUDENT'S CLASSES TO PROVIDE INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT TO THE STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES, CAN THE DAYS THE TEACHING ASSISTANT IS ASSIGNED ALSO BE CONSIDERED INTEGRATED CO-TEACHING?

No. In the example provided above, the student would be receiving integrated coteaching (instruction in the student's math and English classes) for only the days the special education teacher is in those classes. The IEP would indicate integrated coteaching, three days a week, for math and English classes.

The teaching assistant support the students receive in the general education class for the remaining class periods during the week would be documented in the IEP as a supplementary support and service, provided two days a week to the student for math and English classes.