

2018

# College Instructors' Perceptions on Coteaching

Theresa Da Costa  
*Walden University*

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# Walden University

College of Education

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Theresa Da Costa

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Review Committee

Dr. Kathryn Hollywood, Committee Chairperson, Education Faculty

Dr. Mary Ramirez, Committee Member, Education Faculty

Dr. Timothy Lafferty, University Reviewer, Education Faculty

Chief Academic Officer  
Eric Riedel, Ph.D.

Walden University  
2018

Abstract

College Instructors' Perceptions on Coteaching

by

Theresa Da Costa

MA, West Texas A & M University, 1996

BS, West Texas State University, 1981

Project Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Walden University

August 2018

## Abstract

Coteaching is a teaching strategy that requires 2-teachers to collaborate in developing a course syllabus, selecting materials, and assessing students' work. The research problem, addressed in this study, was an appeal to educate the diverse adult population whose needs could not be addressed through traditional instructions at Rex College. Because of a high number of enrolled adult students, coteaching at Rex College was used to improve student success for academically underprepared students in a Set for Success program. The purpose of this study was to examine the coteaching strategies used at Rex College so that teaching guides and/or professional training development workshops could be implemented to provide consistency in the program. The conceptual framework of this study was based on the constructivist theory that knowledge is constructed and internalized by an individual in a social setting. The research question for the qualitative study was designed to focus on the experiences of the faculty members at Rex College. A purposeful sampling method was used, and 15 participants, who provided first-hand information, were selected for interviews and field observations. The interview data was analyzed by creating a matrix grid to code key words or phrases from each participant's responses and linked to the interview questions. The findings were interpreted and used as themes for the narrative. The results indicated the effectiveness in teacher collaboration and planning as compared to traditional classroom approach. A positive social change may result as (a) students demonstrate success in completing studies and develop job skills; (b) instructors find collegiality in their relationship and develop new teaching skills; and (c) attrition is decreased at Rex College.

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## Dedication

To Mom, Dad, and Simba

## Acknowledgments

My appreciation to everyone who has been a part of my journey. Your high expectations of me, your continuous support, your prayers, and your encouragement have been the highlights in my life in completing this stage of my studies.

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## Section 1: The Problem

Although the number of high school graduates who have entered college has continued to increase, few of these incoming freshmen graduate college (Harris, Rosenberg, & O'Rourke, 2014). College administrators report their attrition rates shortly after the students' first year (Mattanah, Ayers, Brand, Brooks, Quimby, & McNary, 2010). Freshmen students try to develop a new social network, keep up with school work in an environment of greater independence than high school, and negotiate various academic and social challenges that may affect their interests in pursuing their studies (Harvey & Luckman, 2014). Recognizing this challenge, some college administrators in higher education institutions set up programs, ranging from informational orientation sessions to structured, clinically oriented interventions for academically underprepared students (Harris et al., 2014). These programs were designed to provide students with information to help them make wise decisions, especially the decision of whether to stay in school.

The Department of Labor's Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training (TAACCT) Grant Program provided a no consortium award of \$2.5 million to Rex College (pseudonym) in the Texas panhandle to increase initiatives such as course redesign and accelerated career pathways for student success program. In 2011, the grant provided students an opportunity to gain workforce credentials in health care and technical fields.

The diverse student population at Rex College included adult learners with limited academic skills and students with refugee status, who were academically

underprepared for higher education classes and were required to enroll in developmental courses or in English as a Second Language (ESL) course. *Academically underprepared* means students were deficient in core subjects such as math, reading, and writing (Glessner, 2015). Some of the adult students who were academically underprepared were those who dropped out of school or did not have the skills they should have received from K-12 grade levels (Glessner, 2015). Whether there was a language barrier or a lack of a basic academic foundation, underprepared students required teachers to help them on their lack of competency in general subjects (Tang, Kim, & Haviland, 2013). Because the underprepared students were not college ready, any type of help they received benefited them.

Prior to being named as the dean of student success and later the vice president of academic affairs at Rex College, Dr. Sinulc (2012) had spoken at a teacher training workshop and stated that the traditional instructors who used lectures as the main format of presenting information in class had a higher percentage of attrition and lower student performance rates. Because the college's student population was diverse and the individual needs of those attending classes differed, the teaching faculty at Rex College found ways to increase student success so that students could support themselves, provide for their families, and contribute to society (Sinulc, 2012). The instructors who used different teaching strategies accommodated students who had different learning styles and shared their experiences with other instructors.

In 2010, the instructors at Rex College completed a Survey of Entering Student Engagement (SENSE). The survey was “. . . a well-established tool that help[ed]

institutions [to] focus on good educational practice and identif[ied] areas in which they c[ould] improve their programs and services for students” (Center for Community College Student Engagement, 2010). One major finding from the survey was that most instructors at Rex College used lecturing as their only method of conveying information to the students; fewer used different teaching strategies (Center for Community College Student Engagement, 2010). The Rex College administrators used the results from this survey to apply for educational grants and to improve educational programs and student success.

As of 2015, the Rex College website (available to the public), indicated 2,163 students were enrolled in the developmental or basic education classes. The following courses and the number of students enrolled were considered developmental: basic grammar and writing (136), integrated reading and writing (89); basic mathematics (39), beginning algebra (479), intermediate algebra (455); basic reading skills (127), Reading Techniques I (177), and Reading Techniques II (168). High numbers of students were enrolled in academic skills courses: basic academic skills in writing (105); basic academic skills in mathematics (190); and basic academic skills in reading (45). Based on the survey results from the Center for Community College Students Engagement (2010), some instructors of developmental and basic education course continued to use the lecture method of teaching in their classrooms.

For years, the coteaching method had been used in primary and secondary school settings in both special education and inclusion classes. Because of the open enrollment policy for Texas community colleges, instructors educate underprepared students who

lacked the basic academic skills, which prohibited the students from fully benefiting from formal classroom instructions (Bell & Mladenovic, 2008; Chester, 2012). Community colleges have been known to provide technical/training skills and to offer opportunities to transfer academic credits for the students who planned to continue their academic journeys at a 4-year college or university. Raby and Valeau (2007) argued that community colleges should produce students who were globally competent in terms of knowledge and skills required for the modern world. By introducing a nontraditional method of teaching at the local level, some of these challenges were addressed through a coteaching framework that allowed teaching to be delivered through dual instructions, which solved diversity, literacy gaps, attrition, and student success (Sinulc, 2012). Educators were expected to find strategies that worked for diverse students, such as coteaching to increase academic success for students and their respective institutions. At the same time, the coteaching educators who were in the Set for Success program needed to find ways to share their findings with other instructors in terms of collaborating, planning, and/or team teaching.

### **Definition of the Problem**

The local problem, which a small community college in Texas faced, was the need to educate the adult population whose needs could not be addressed through traditional instructions. The Community College Performance Report, which was available through the Texas Accountability System (2016), included the following information: During the fall of 2011, there were 2,246 students enrolled at Rex College. For that semester, 26% of the students enrolled were referred to Developmental English



for Level 1, and 9% were referred for Level 2. For the Developmental math courses, 48% were referred to a Level 2 course. As compared to the year 2012, the fall semester had 2,221 students enrolled. Those referred to Developmental English were 697 and 1,086 for Developmental math (Texas Accountability System, 2016). In terms of percentages, too many students were not ready to take college courses for college credit. The English course redesign was implemented in the fall of 2011 to meet the needs of a diverse population.

For the General Education Diploma (GED) test, 842 students at Rex College enrolled to take the test, 507 passed in 2011 whereas 335 students did not pass the test; 845 students signed up for the 2012 test and only 415 passed and 430 failed (Texas Accountability System, 2016). Finally, out of 750 students enrolled in 2013, 350 students passed the GED test with 400 failing (Texas Accountability System, 2016). The faculty members at Rex College continued to prepare students to receive their GED before the students could enroll in college credit courses.

Set for Success, a program implemented in the fall of 2011 at Rex College in the Texas panhandle, was designed to promote coteaching to help guide underachieving students attain academic success by preparing students to receive their GED and to prepare them for entry into the job market (Sinulc, 2012). Students who enrolled in coteaching courses, especially those students from families who had limited exposure to spoken and written English language outside the classroom, received additional academic help. Coteaching allowed instructors (typically two) to specialize in their respective subjects to work collaboratively to meet the needs of both the class and those students

who required additional learning needs (Brown, Howerter, & Morgan, 2013; Ploessl, Rock, Schoenfeld, & Blanks, 2010), because there were no special education courses in higher education institutions. Students who were in special education courses in high school usually had their lessons modified and when they entered college, they were placed in developmental courses because they lacked the basic skills to perform given tasks at their expected level of learning. The coteaching faculty at Rex College emphasized remediation, support, and workforce training in the Set for Success program.

### **Rationale**

#### **Evidence of the Problem at the Local Level**

According to the director of the Catholic Charities of Texas Panhandle, Rex City, Texas, had the highest number of refugees per capita in the entire United States (a pseudonym has been used to protect the site of the study.). On February 7, 2014, during a local television interview, the mayor of the Rex City expressed his concern about the city's infrastructure to keep up with the growing refugee population from Burma, Iraq, and Iran (Lepohar, 2014). From 2009 to 2014, the local city received 2,723 refugees, a growth of 1.37% to the population. One elementary principal reported that at her school, 21 languages were spoken. One class had 17 children, all of whom were in an ESL class. Ninety-nine percent of the fourth-and fifth-grade refugees had never attended school. The school had failed to meet the yearly standards set under the No Child Left Behind Act (Lepohar, 2014). The mayor reached out to the state and federal representatives for monetary support because the two governments, state and federal, were responsible for K-12 levels of educational funding. The challenge at Rex College was finding ways to

teach the adult parents, whose first language was not English. For the first time in their lives, the adult parents were enrolled in college.

Another challenge was that the representatives from the Texas Education Agency had continued to send coteaching materials to all education service centers in Texas to train classroom teachers. The “A How-To Guide: Guidelines for Co-Teaching in Texas” booklet was given to each teacher at a summer training workshop in August of 2015. The handout had information referenced from 2001 to 2008. A completion of this study, as suggested by the Rex College president, would have the most updated information on coteaching, and the information could be used during teacher training sessions at the college and at the local educational center.

Although the instructors who taught traditional courses could not provide support to the diverse population because they lacked knowledge and experiences in coteaching approach, they could be assigned a mentor or attend workshop training to receive coteaching information. Coteaching instructors must be equipped and trained to deliver classroom instructions and be prepared to collaborate with both students and the instructors’ colleagues (Chester, 2012; Pancsofar & Petroff, 2013). Planning for instructional activities was necessary in making sure the participating instructors understood what was expected of themselves and their colleagues, and that allowed them to allocate responsibilities and collaborate more effectively. Even with the challenges of lengthy planning periods and overriding personal time (Pancsofar & Petroff, 2013), coteaching could be successful only if both partners were committed to planning ahead and implementing those plans in an effective and productive manner. Chester (2012) and

Pancsofar and Petroff (2013) argued that traditional instructors should be exposed to the knowledge and experiences of coteachers to understand the concept of coteaching, whether they improved their teaching styles or shared information to adopt to the coteaching concept at the local level.

During the 2016 school year, 80% of courses at Rex College had transitioned from 16-weeks courses to 8-weeks courses for the semester. This change was needed to accommodate the high population of diversity in adult students (Texas Accountability System, 2016). The Rex College career pathways were aligned with Texas House Bill 5 endorsements so that degrees and certificates met labor market demand (Texas Accountability System, 2016). The faculty members who were involved with the coteaching program provided additional academic help to those students who were underprepared. The instructors, who taught the underprepared students using traditional method, needed to find different approaches of teaching. Because achievement was based on student success at Rex College, the college president concluded that coteaching was one approach to learning for the adult learner, who fit into the diverse population, to be successful.

### **Evidence of the Problem From the Professional Literature**

Coteaching is a practice that has been in use in various educational settings for years (Pugach & Winn, 2011). Understanding faculty experiences with coteaching would provide additional teaching tools to those instructors who planned to use this nontraditional approach for improving collaboration, professional relationships, and learning outcomes. Understanding faculty experiences in coteaching was an issue that

needed to be addressed in staff development training to educate instructors who taught traditional courses (Conderman & Hedin, 2013; Hepner & Newman, 2010). The information gained could enhance skills such as collaboration and creativity, or the information could be used to decrease attrition in higher education institutions.

The available extensive literature on coteaching typically had primarily focused on K-12 grade levels and revealed limited research on higher education, creating a gap in practice. As previously noted, coteaching refers to the type of instruction simultaneously provided by two faculty members, whereby one faculty member teaches the class, whereas the other moves around the classroom and provides support to the students (Colburn, Sullivan, & Fox, 2012). Although different terminology can be used to describe coteaching, the underlying goal is still the same: to improve collaboration, student success, and teacher training. Kalchman and Kozoll (2012) suggested that the main aim of coteaching is to improve student outcomes. However, the authors recognized that to reach that goal, teachers must be able to collaborate when developing a course syllabus, selecting reading materials, and grading assignments (Kalchman & Kozoll, 2012). Kalchman and Kozoll (2012) suggested teacher collaboration has six stages, namely, course conceptualization, initial coplanning, individual instruction, coplanning revisions, coteaching, and reflection. In contrast, Chester (2012) developed a five-stage model for collaboration: teaching, encompassing preparation, observation, feedback and reflection, and planning and action. Chester's concept of coteaching was based on peer partnerships in teaching, which emphasized pairing instructors who share the ideas of improving the quality of learning and teaching. In this context, Cohen and DeLois (2002) affirmed that

instructors could benefit from coteaching because it helps them explore each other's teaching style. This instructional format is beneficial in improving the quality of learning and teaching, as the strategy develops not only the instructors' confidence and motivation to expand their skills in different disciplines but also creates partnerships (Chester, 2012). If traditional instructors do not attend professional development training sessions, they will not be able to understand the concept and experiences of coteachers.

### **Definitions of Terms**

The following terms were defined as followed:

*Collaboration*: The support and unity of faculty in improving the teaching practice to consequently influence students' academic performance. DuFour, DuFour, and Eaker (2008) defined *collaboration* as a process of sharing professional knowledge in a systematic process to analyze barriers of learning and influence teaching practice that could improve students' performance.

*Collaborative inquiry*: The process of teachers seeking information from colleagues (DuFour et al., 2008).

*Collaborative teaching*: Two instructors who come together and develop the syllabus, select and decide on course readings, and assess the grading (Brown et al., 2013; Kalchman & Kozoll, 2012).

*Continuous improvement process*: The commitment of educational stakeholders in ensuring that planning, reviewing, and designing of teaching curriculum and approaches met the learning needs of students with or without learning difficulties (DuFour et al., 2008).

*Coteaching* refers to more than one instructor who worked with the same group of students in a classroom (Chester, 2012; Maskit, 2013).

*Learning organization* is any organization that continuously innovates to improve knowledge and practices of the organizational stakeholders through creation of an enabling working environment (DuFour et al., 2008).

*Mainstreaming* is a term used by school systems to define methods in which educational strategies are manipulated to provide applicable and appropriate educational intervention for students regardless of their learning capabilities and limitations (Link, 2008).

*Peer partnership* is a model engaged in by two instructors in a cross-disciplinary partnership. These instructors are concerned in teaching and collaborating with other peer members to enhance their individual skills and to establish collegial relationships (Chester, 2012).

*Professional learning community (PLC)*: Educators bond together in shared goal of continuous professional inquiry to improve teaching practices. A PLC of educators consists of value-laden professionals who respect knowledge of others and use the shared knowledge in their respective students (DuFour et al., 2008).

*Team-teaching* is an approach wherein two instructors can be two mastery teachers because they present the same information at the same time to the same students in the classroom (Forbes & Billet, 2012).

### **Significance of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to examine the coteaching strategies used at Rex College so that a teaching guide or a professional development training may be implemented to provide consistency in the Set for Success program. According to Sinulc (2012), who was then the dean of student success, most of the adult students who attended the college academically were underprepared as they had been out of school for some time; others had refugee status or had dropped out of high school and were seeking an education. Many of these students lacked the skills to successfully function in a college classroom or workplace. As soon as the students received their GED, they were enrolled in developmental and basic education courses where their needs to be successful in academics were met. The coteaching courses in higher institutions could be designed to assist such students. According to Sinulc (2012), and Pancsofar and Petroff (2013), placing such underprepared students in a college classroom without any additional assistance in the academic world was setting the students up for failure, especially if the instructors in such classrooms were not exposed to the concept of coteaching.

This study was significant at the local level because the instructors' experiences of coteaching had not been documented at Rex College. The instructors and the administrators had focused on student success and had not taken the time to share their experiences and observations on coteaching. From this statement, the president of Rex College recommended for a study to document the teachers' experiences of coteaching. This dual method of teaching at Rex College offered intensive GED instruction, as well as college readiness work, such as its certified nursing assistant (CNA) program.



Because of the use of coteaching method, the students who needed help in this program received additional one-on-one support. According to Sinulc (2012), these students had a better chance to complete their education and to gain the knowledge and skills their future employers would have required, resulting in potential social change. Enhancing one's marketability and earning potential salary had significant ramifications for the students as well as the local community.

As indicated earlier, the coteaching approach differed from most traditional instructional methods because coteaching required students at Rex College to receive remediation in the required course (reading, writing, and/or arithmetic) or ESL support. The coteaching method was a valuable platform to facilitate contact among the students and between instructors and the student population (Bell & Mladenovic, 2008; Chester, 2012). This type of setting also provided an open channel of communication. According to Cushman (2004), in a traditional setting, instructors taught the assigned subject individually based on what was stated in the curriculum. They provided information to their students, and often, the instructors did not have time to plan and evaluate their instructions. Students who needed remediation in a traditional teaching method might meet with their respective instructors or looked for help from other sources, such as attending tutorial sessions (Cushman, 2004; Sinulc, 2012). Finding additional time to receive help sometimes was a challenge for the working adult students.

By understanding the experiences of college teachers on coteaching, the traditional classroom instructors would potentially gain knowledge about coteaching through attending professional development training or being mentored by an

experienced coteacher. Some students learned effectively with the traditional method, and some instructors went beyond the call of duty to work with their students. However, the diverse adult students needed additional help with remediation when they were enrolled in the basic college courses. A qualitative case study approach was used to explore the different classroom experiences and perceptions of the participating faculty members who cotaught at Rex College. Instructors who wished to improve student success, decrease attrition, and share knowledge in teacher training professional development workshops could adopt coteaching, thus making a difference in the classroom, in the lives of their students, and in their communities.

### **Guiding/Research Question**

The purpose of this study was to examine the coteaching strategies used at Rex College so that a teaching guide or a professional development training may be implemented to provide consistency in the Set for Success program. Using the qualitative case study approach, the research question for this study was the following: What were the experiences of the faculty members at Rex College in Texas, regarding coteaching of a diverse student population in a Set for Success program?

### **Review of the Literature**

The main search topic that I used for the literature review was *improving students' literacy through collaboration and sharing of learning*; the route led to topics such as teaching diverse students, collaboration, and coteaching topics. Narrowing down the search topics helped me identify articles used for the literature review. In this literature review, I examined the educators' efforts in the improvement of the quality of

education: (a) teaching strategies used to ensure academic performance among students, which included the conceptual framework that grounded this study; (b) coteaching and implementing professional learning communities; (c) the issues confronting collaboration for teaching; and (d) the attitudes toward teaching in collaborative manner.

### **Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework for this study derived from constructivist theory because it connected to qualitative research. The constructivist theory originated with Piaget, a self-proclaimed genetic epistemologist (Dworetzky, 1982). Piaget's theory of constructivism was centered on the idea that an individual's "maturation of the brain and the nervous system must proceed in conjunction with experience . . . for an individual to adapt to the environment" (Dworetzky, 1982, p. 344). This theory suggests that knowledge was constructed and then internalized by an individual.

The constructivist approach suggests that the existence of absolute realities is unknown; each human being has something that is unique and can be shared in a social setting. Therefore, multiple realities exist because they could be constructed through experiences (Hatch, 2002) to reach an inquiry of truth. Liu, Chen, and Yang (2010) define constructivism in modern terms as "constructing, creating, inventing, and developing one's own knowledge and meaning" (p. 65). This is a process of how people learn and think and evaluate their own learning experiences through critical thinking.

Another social constructivism theory based on Fleury and Garrison (2014) is the pedagogical constructivism, which is basically referred to social construction of knowledge. This means that the person [the student] who is seeking knowledge must be

considered first because that person is educated by culture and that the formal schooling is an intentional intervention of learning. The person in this case is left with no freedom for individuality, free will, or natural rights because he is socially controlled. The authors warned educators to not only stress “social constructivism to knowledge and pedagogy while ignoring the social and political consequences of their position” (Fleury & Garrison, 2014, p. 21). Educators should encourage themselves and their students to think creatively and critically.

As educators at all levels continue to find ways to improve student success, this study provides a need for change in the way lessons are constructed and taught in the twenty first century classrooms. According to Sinulc (2012), and Merriam, Courtney, and Cervero (2006), students in coteaching classrooms would be better equipped to enter the job market and lead fulfilling and productive lives in their communities.

### **Review of the Broader Problem**

Several online databases were used as part of the study: Academic Search Complete, EBSCOhost, ERIC, Google Scholar, ProQuest, and SAGE from libraries at Rex College in Texas, and at Walden University. The relevant peer-reviewed researches were utilized to explore an updated theoretical and empirical research on coteaching and other relevant information concerning these teaching practices. The implications of the proposed study in the implementation of coteaching method at Rex College in Texas have been discussed.

## **Transition to College Education**

The research studies that have been conducted have addressed the increasing retention rates in schools, yet researchers have reported the dynamics of teaching staff as factor that contribute to the deterring number of students' completion in college. Some studies have shown that isolation of subject contents in the practice of teaching was not beneficial to students' learning outcomes (Akour & Shannak, 2012), whereas others continued to emphasize learning across the curriculum.

Modern schools were precluded from learning organizations because of their physical structures and cultures (Elmore, 2000; Fullan, 1999). For example, teachers were generally isolated from other teachers in separate classrooms. This limited interaction, as well as teachers' ability to learn, mainly came through individual reflection. However, isolated teachers had the opportunity to tailor their practices to meet students' needs (Elmore, 2000). Otherwise, their needs were met through teacher training workshops, professional development training, or when an administrator required or suggested improvements on the instructor's evaluation.

The disengaged culture among teachers was noticed in the study of Maskit (2013), who explored the difficulties and challenges of teaching interns. Using diaries and journals, Maskit found that future teachers had difficulties in separating personal and professional lives once they entered school or work. Maskit (2013) also found that the inherent behavior of these intern teachers was to isolate themselves from those professional teachers. As a result, intern students struggled with the complexity of teaching, including the workloads expected of them.

According to Hunt and Luetkehan (2013), teachers were most effective in teaching when they established a model of professional learning. Others have found that effective schools operate by norms of collegiality and experimentation (Carson & Domangue, 2010; So, & Kim, 2013). Okudo (2013) examined the contribution of teaching in isolation in the learning outcome of students who intended to learn English as a second language. Okudo (2013) conducted a survey using a questionnaire, observation, and oral interviews to obtain data from 80 junior secondary school students and four Igbo language teachers from four secondary schools. The results of the study suggested that teachers who regularly communicated with students as well as with their coteachers were found to be the most effective in teaching the language. Okudo (2013) found that teachers, who learned the strategies of other language teachers, could implement more effective teaching methods appropriate for the diverse learning needs of their students.

Although programs and policies were implemented to address attrition among the underprepared university students, the problem continued to perpetuate in the universities, colleges, and secondary education institutions (Harris et al., 2014). An examination of these programs revealed that higher academic institutions do not undertake studies concerning the effect of teaching practices that helped students who struggled to complete the academic program (Harvey & Luckman, 2014). With the availability of technical programs, students had choices to either concentrate on academics or learn technical skills.

The next section detailed instructional leaders' strategies in improving the academic performance of students at risk of dropping out. These strategies may have

been unconventional considering that these strategies were rarely adopted in adult academic environment (Hunt & Luetkehan, 2013). Among these strategies were implementing (a) coteaching, (b) professional learning communities, (c) collaborative teaching, and (d) professional development.

### **Coteaching**

Teaching arrangements that used two teachers were generally known as coteaching. Scholars suggested that coteaching was a creative approach of interacting and supporting teachers in ensuring students' positive learning outcome (Anastasiou & Kauffman, 2011). According to Hoffart, Kuster-Orban, Spooner, and Neudorf (2013), coteaching was an effective strategy in achieving quality education. Coteaching required establishment of trust, communication, and working creatively and constructively, the issues and challenges in educating students (Johnson & Brumback, 2013). Instructors who worked collaboratively could meet these challenges with confidence due to solving problems together.

Related to the concept of coteaching were activities that supported cooperative group learning (Mattanah et al., 2010), collaboration (Moulding, Stewart, & Dunmeyer, 2014), and team teaching (Wollner & Ginsborg, 2011). The additional concept of coteaching included activities such as consultation (Charalambous, Komitis, Papacharalambous, & Stefanou, 2014), professional sharing (Lee & Nie, 2014), cooperation (Davies, Jindal-Snape, Digby, Howe, Collier, & Hay, 2014), and professional learning communities (PLCs) (Bell, 2013; Campa, 2013). The links of these terms to coteaching made several scholars to determine the elements for coteaching

(Pratt, 2014). Coteaching was said to exist according to Maskit (2013) when (a) there was a presence of coordination and shared goals; (b) a similar belief system that members of the team needed expertise; (c) opened to engage in both teaching and learning activities and became expert and a novice teacher; (d) demonstrated leadership in coteaching group members, and (e) used collaborative activities that included face-to-face interaction, interdependence with expert individuals, and engaged in monitoring interpersonal skills.

**Presence of coordination and shared goals.** Instructional events required instructional thematic elements from the teaching force (Krutka, Bergman, Flores, Mason, & Jack, 2014). Coordination ensured that teachers knew their individual expertise, skills, and resources that were needed to accomplish coteaching assignments (Korthagen, Attema-Noordewier, & Zwart, 2014). According to van Beek, de Jong, Minnaert, and Wubbels (2014), the shared goals among teachers despite their differences influenced positive interaction.

**Shared belief system.** A team of two or more teachers, having different knowledge, skills, and resources, allowed the coteachers to learn from each other (Krutka et al., 2014). The exposure of teachers in differentiated instruction and collaborative teaching often encouraged them to explore and learn relevant expertise of their co-members (van Beek et al., 2014). Haigh and Ell (2014) concluded that an outcome of teaching and learning was a necessary element of coteaching.

**Becoming novice and expert teachers.** The ability to exchange ideas without considering the differences in knowledge, skills, attitudes, and positions required some degree of respect (Haigh & Ell, 2014). Sensitivity to opinions regardless of whether the



idea came from a novice or an expert was important in coteaching (Krutka et al., 2014). The correct term of this type of respect is *parity*. Parity was demonstrated when teachers allowed paraprofessionals to demonstrate their unique knowledge in a way that could benefit the members of the team (So & Kim, 2013). In return, the teachers led an expert role in demonstrating the outcome of the teaching-learning procedure for students to achieve the learning outcomes as well as summarize the learning points for the paraprofessionals (Maskit, 2013). Sharing ideas was one way a person could learn on a one-to-one basis.

**Leadership in coteaching.** Administrators and teachers required knowledge and skills in attending to teaching and school practices that provided learning to students (Carson & Domangue, 2010). With this role, coteaching seemed to emerge when there was recognition from the coteachers to distribute or redistribute classroom responsibilities as well as the decision-making process (Gary, 2010). Leadership skills were important to manage coteaching tasks.

**Cooperative process.** Coteaching emerged as an approach following the presence of activities that combined cooperation from two or more teachers. These activities included face-to-face interaction, positive interdependence, interpersonal skills, monitoring teachers' progress, and implementing accountability (Anastasiou & Kauffman, 2011). Face-to-face interaction was an essential activity in communicating information that mattered for decisions (Mathur, Clark, & Schoenfeld, 2009). Positive interdependence recognized the responsibilities of teachers on students' learning outcome and that coteachers were equally responsible to combine their diverse knowledge, skills,

and experiences to meet this shared goal (Mathur et al., 2009). Interpersonal skills, on the other hand, required the use of verbal and nonverbal actions to establish trust, resolve conflict, as well as resolve problems (Meng, Tajaroensuk, & Seepho, 2013). Wachen, Jenkins, and Van Noy (2011) believed that an effective implementation of partnership among coteachers required encouragement and continuous feedbacks to improve their respective social and teaching skills.

Monitoring coteacher progress referred to upholding information concerning the successes as well as the issues confronting the implementation of the coteaching lessons. Coteaching emerged when coteachers equally monitored the progress of their activities as well as kept track with complex strategies that needed alignment (Katz, 2013).

Monitoring teachers' progress allowed the individual in partnership to share accomplishment and obstacles that could be utilized to improve lessons (Basham, Israel, & Maynard, 2010) and to manage challenges that required immediate attention.

Finally, accountability to quality education mandated teachers to be effective on their delivery of skills and knowledge, which could assist coteachers in meeting the desired learning outcome of the students (Lee & Nie, 2014). Individual accountability in coteaching involved taking time to assess the individual performance of each partner for the coteaching performance (Charalambous et al., 2014). In higher education, the benefits that coteaching provided to the underprepared students motivated instructors to participate in the coteaching approach. The researchers recognized that coteaching enhanced learning opportunities for learners lacking the basic academic skills and helping them advance in their studies (Colburn et al., 2012). The effects of coteaching have been

examined among teachers of music education in higher education (Wollner & Ginsborg, 2011). Using survey information data from 142 music students, Wollner and Ginsborg (2011) observed the extent to which respondents valued team teaching in relation to the length of time for which this approach had been used. The results of the study showed that coteaching observed from the instructors exposed them to new ideas and feedback. The drawbacks of coteaching required coteachers to settle individual differences and that their knowledge and skills may need to be integrated in a shared goal to uphold students' learning.

However, despite evident success of coteaching in practice, this teaching approach had not been formalized, nor had the elements it required to be effective been adequately studied. In responding to this need, the concept of coteaching has emerged as an approach to resolving the collaboration among teachers from different disciplines (Kalchman & Kozoll, 2012). Chester (2012), on the other hand, recognized the beneficial effect of collegial support in promoting skill development, as this collaborative effort supported staff at all levels of teaching. Kalchman and Kozoll (2012) and Chester (2012) recognized this type of support would be particularly beneficial for the instructors who have no prior coteaching training. In addition, Murawski and Lochner (2010) argued that the importance of collaboration in coteaching required special and general education educators to work closely together during the planning, instructing, and assessing processes. It is widely recognized that adopting coteaching in a bilingual classroom could be helpful in clarifying information to students who may struggle understanding the language (Wang, 2010). In this context, the foreign language teacher can act as an

interpreter for the native language instructor or work individually with students who lacked the necessary language skills. For this approach to work effectively, the emphasis was placed on instructional planning, which assisted instructors to learn from their students and helped them respond to the learning needs (Wang, 2010). In planning the instruction, instructors needed to understand the stakeholders' expectations, allowing them to allocate responsibilities and to collaborate more effectively. Even with the challenges that were brought about in terms of lengthy planning periods and overriding personal time (Pancsofar & Petroff, 2013), coteaching could only be successful if both teaching partners were committed to planning ahead and implementing those plans in an effective and productive manner.

### **Professional Learning Communities**

Improvement in the quality of teaching practice was a precursor to quality education (Sheldon, Arbreton, Hopkins, & Grossman, 2010). A study of the literature showed this era was supported strongly by schools restructuring as PLCs (Hunt & Luetkehan, 2013). One reason for the PLC approach was to bring schools and communities together to support students. With their implementation across different learning environment, PLCs had led to various definitions (Jackson, Stebleton, & Laanan, 2013). Among the pioneer scholar of PLC is Hord (2004), who defined a PLC as a school where the professionals (administrators and teachers) searched and shared information to help students learn. Other scholars had postulated the inclusion of the terms *continuous learning*, *behavior of teachers*, and *work ethics* to the overall goals of the school (Carson & Domangue, 2010). Hord (1996) summarized this definition by asserting that the

essential elements in a learning community were the practice of research by educational stakeholders who shared equal responsibilities in improving the teaching practices of all educators.

Martin-Kniep (2008) described the use of a PLC in schools and cited 11 different authors who explained the different structures of a PLC. Martin-Kniep (2008) defined PLC as a discussion activity participated by individuals who intended to learn from other professional experiences for themselves and for the organization. Huffman and Higgs (2003) described the process as a re-culturing of a school.

The structures, fundamentals, and specific practices of a PLC did not clearly function as one model to all, and there was confusion about the concept of collaboration between school contexts and building cultures. Eaker, DuFour, and DuFour (2002) explained that advancing from traditional to a PLC school would necessarily require changes in the school culture and structure. According to these authors, the process of using a professional learning community was always accompanied by shared learning and practice among professionals in a school, a similar concept to coteaching.

A review of the literature suggested there was no universal definition of a PLC, and that implementation of such would lead to interpreting the process in different contexts (Carson & Domangue, 2010; Jackson et al., 2013; So, & Kim, 2013). These contexts could take many forms across differences in schools, countries, cultures, teacher and student populations, and almost any other demographic or physical factors (So & Kim, 2013). Although the term professional learning community might solely conjure up visions of a team whose members learned together, the literature showed that this ideal

had taken on different shapes and scenarios (Bell, 2013; Campa, 2013). Therefore, the existence of PLC depended on the school's members' goals and the definition of PLC.

There are different theoretical models based on practitioners' experiences in their organization. Thus, various terms were used to describe PLCs, leading to confusion. According to Hord (1998), the terminology regarding PLCs should be simplified for those unfamiliar with the term. However, there were several terms associated with PLCs, for example, *dimensions* (Hord, 1996), *descriptors* (Fullan, 1999; Garvin, 2000), *characteristics* (DuFour, 2007; Louise & Kruse, 1995), and *dispositions* (Martin-Kniep, 2008). The term *shared* was used in different models regarding leadership and vision identifiers (Astuto, Clark, Read, McGree, & Fernandez, 1993; Eaker, et al., 2002; Hord, 1997). The shared term referred to those actions that a staff considered to be necessary for PLCs, which were emphasized within the organization. However, in coteaching, not all terms could be shared without difficulty, leading to problems in creating a PLC.

The plan for school reform usually covered improved students' performance through collaborative leadership and PLCs, which also included the vision, direction, and focus of the leaders, staff collaboration, and redefining the teacher's roles as a definition for their PLC (Bell, 2013; Campa, 2013). Liao, Ferdenzi, and Edlin (2012) discussed a needed transparent organization of leaders and members to share knowledge, communicate, interact, and enhance each member's potential. On the other hand, DuFour's (2004) theory gave directions for teachers and leaders by postulating that professional learning communities required teachers to focus on learning from others, applied this learning into the teaching practices, worked with others who also wanted to

learn, and took the accountability in all the results of these actions. When a group of like-minded professionals worked together toward capacity building for increasing student learning, then the shift towards an organizational wide PLC occurred. According to DuFour (2004), an academic community could be categorized as a PLC when teachers align their teaching practices with the essential elements of PLC. DuFour's (2004) definition also came with big ideas and core principles, as he called them, to give support to the philosophical, and more abstract, parts of the PLC in schools.

One of the most widely regarded designs for a PLC model came from Hord (1997), affiliated with the Southwestern Educational Developmental Labs (SEDL). Hord (1997), while working to improve low performing schools in the southern United States, noticed some trends that emerged as these schools focused on becoming more successful. Hord's previous work had included a vast array of studies and writings on improving schools. During this research period, she noticed a similarity among effective schools: Educators nurtured practice of professional collaboration in improving the school system.

### **Influences on Professional Learning Communities in Schools**

Scholars have claimed that the schools, which intended to generate and share knowledge, required teaching professionals who collaborated with other teachers in providing quality education (Carson & Domangue, 2010). Carson and Domangue (2010) postulated that changes and development were only applicable to organizations which desired to implement changes. Hord (1998) found this outcome in a study in the case of a school staff who had been committed in becoming an effective teacher and who valued the knowledge and skills of other colleagues for the improvement of the organizational

personnel. According to Hord (1998), the scholarly works on PLCs suggested the desire of educators in collaborating with other professionals in improving their teaching competencies. Professional learning communities provided many new ideas for best practices that resulted in school changes and procedures. Bell (2013) and Campa (2013) argued that these components of a PLC were needed in building student success. However, getting instructors to learn how to build up on what they knew best could be a challenge (Hord, 1997). The documentation of the success of these programs was even more problematic, and educators had difficulty in implementing school reforms using PLC (Huffman & Hipps, 2003). A contributing move to this problem was the lack of a common denominator, which was a concrete definition of PLC.

### **Collaboration**

Collaboration, as an instructional model, was an essential component in every successful coteaching program. According to Fenty and McDuffie-Landrum (2011) when used in coteaching, collaboration was particularly beneficial in delivering instruction to students enrolled in inclusion classes. Collaboration between the instructors responsible for teaching the same students in the same classrooms started with developing syllabus/lesson plans, making decisions pertaining to grading assignments, and determining how instructions would be delivered (Kalchman & Kozoll, 2012). Respect for, and confidence in each other's expertise and qualities, especially when teaching two different subjects simultaneously ensured coteaching as a positive experience for both the instructors and the students.



The results from research studies had shown that even the advanced students benefited from teacher collaboration. An individual student who had advanced knowledge could be provided with lessons that were more advanced than those of classmates or peers (Cook & Fink, 2012). The collaboration also provided the teachers the opportunity to identify those students who excelled the teaching approaches appropriate for students to learn and perform beyond their potential. Although there were many benefits of working with two instructors, students who were lacking initiative and were immature in making decisions struggled with this type of teaching (Cook & Fink, 2012). These students had not developed self-discipline in any type of initiatives.

Given that not all students could easily adapt their learning styles to this type of instruction, the teachers helped them gain maximum benefit by taking the time to know each student and his or her level of learning. By being sensitive to the individual needs, the collaborating instructors provided all their students with a positive learning experience. Teachers who had supported the implementation of coteaching program among the underprepared students positively contributed to the development of effective curriculum (Fenty, McDuffie-Landrum, & Fisher, 2012). Pancsofar and Petroff (2013) found that teachers who participated and received professional development training on coteaching developed positive attitudes and enhanced confidence. Similarly, Kalchman and Kozoll (2012) postulated that coteaching provided instructors a time to reflect on and identify the barriers to quality education based on their teaching practices. Kalchman and Kozoll (2012) concluded that instructors who participated in the study realized the importance of collaboration as they reflected on how they isolated themselves with the

other teaching workforce in their school. With the coteaching implementation, their lack of knowledge on certain subjects was augmented by their coteachers (Kalchman & Kozoll, 2012). The appreciation of the benefits of coteaching provided an increasing interest for other teachers (Hepner & Newman, 2010; Kalchman & Kozoll, 2012; Murawski & Lochner, 2010), especially if one of the benefits included student success.

Collaborative coteaching was highly beneficial in the classrooms where science and mathematics were taught. Engagement and supportive environment for students and children were essential in learning the discipline. Hadar and Brody (2012) examined the process and benefits associated with the implementation of professional development community (PDC) among science and mathematics teachers. The authors explored the context and the process underlying the collaboration relation of the sampled teachers. The study findings confirmed that participants who interacted with each other easily got involved in discussions, which resulted in sharing and improving teaching strategies. Thus, adopting of coteaching addressed issues of students' retention and the inability to collaborate with teaching professionals.

### **Coteaching Collaborative Issues**

Cooperative teaching (coteaching) was the partnership of teaching responsibilities between regular and special education teachers for all students in the classroom. The special education and regular classroom teachers theoretically worked together by managing the classroom, sharing, evaluating, planning, and presenting material in the classroom through differentiated instruction that met the needs of a diverse student population (Isherwood & Barger-Anderson, 2008). However, coteaching at the secondary

level brought about challenges and was not well embraced by many general education teachers (Keefe & Moore, 2004). The cooperative teaching model represented a classroom where both the general education and special education teachers teamed up to provide educational programs for all students in the classrooms. General education teachers at the middle school level had negative attitudes about the workload in cooperative teaching (Santoli, Sachs, Romey, & McClurg, 2008). Although the special education aide was present, the aide was more than likely not a certified teacher, and most of the time, the aide did not help prepare the lessons (Santoli et al., 2008). According to Hines (2001), special educators might be at a disadvantage in middle school general education classrooms if they were not content experts and could not be used more as consultants.

The special education teacher was directly involved with the implementation of inclusion and might have been unsupportive in some cases (Cook, Semmel, & Gerber, 1999; Ring & Reetz, 2000). The attitude of both the special education and general education teacher was vital to delivering accommodations to students with special needs. Another reason for the division between special education and regular education teachers was that general education teachers were not trained to accept the responsibilities for a student with special needs (Ritter, Michel, & Irby, 1999). Many special education teachers acquired these qualities through their degree program at the college or university level.

## **Professional Development**

Professional development was a continuous process of providing professional training and short-term educational endeavors to improve the abilities of educators in providing positive learning outcome for students (So & Kim, 2013). In their study on the effect of professional development to learners, Mathur et al., (2009) demonstrated a framework of professional development for employees of the juvenile justice system. The authors suggested that a comprehensive program design facilitated the targeting of learning outcomes desired by the leadership of the organization. Capacity-building activities required a structure, objectives, and components that were necessary in achieving professional development learning outcome (Mathur et al., 2009), for all involved.

Meng et al., (2013) justified the use of professional development in leveraging the 21<sup>st</sup> century skills requirement of teachers. In their study of the framework for Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL), the authors postulated that the effectiveness of professional development might not be guaranteed as implementation depending on the structure, objectives, components, and appropriateness of the activities to the target professionals. Meng et al., (2013) introduced a peer coaching model in the EFL professional development plans at a Chinese university. The authors evaluated the effects of peer coaching using instruments as tests, observations, teachers' logs, researchers' field notes, and questionnaires answered by the teachers and students. The results of the study suggested that peer coaching model provided positive contributions on the tertiary

EFL teachers' in-service professional development (Meng et al., 2013). Sharing ideas during professional development training provided a positive outcome.

A similar approach of peer coaching model was peer partnership. The literature on peer partnership suggested that the approach was a form of coteaching (Chester, 2012). Peer partnership encouraged instructors to promote quality learning by improving peer collaboration and interaction to learn from each other. Chester (2012) observed the effects of peer partnership among instructors in the same teaching field. He supported collegiality in the selection and pairing of the instructors who participated in the study (Chester, 2012). The results of the study showed that peer partnership allowed the instructors' reflection concerning their teaching skills, their intention to develop new skills, and their commitment to build relationships with their partner colleagues. An additional benefit of this initiative was that it enabled implementation of positive research projects based on peer partnership. This effort had led to generating tools for teacher appraisal evaluations and fostering their confidence in their teaching ability and practices (Chester, 2012). The findings of this study, based on professional development training, could be used to demonstrate that teacher appraisal evaluations could advance teaching strategies in the classrooms.

College instructors had considered coteaching as a way of assisting underprepared students, especially adult students with family responsibilities and limited time to learn everything they needed to know to perform well at a new job. However, Friend and Cook (2003) argued that this effort yielded success only if the instructors were provided with necessary training prior to being involved in coteaching. Friend explained that teachers

wishing to participate in collaborative instruction needed additional skills in coteaching, especially in cases where recruited and hired teachers had limited training experiences concerning adult education. Results from research studies confirmed that pre-service and in-service professional development activities could be used to instill learning concerning collaborative teaching with expert professors (Pancsofar & Petroff, 2013). Thus, mentoring could be used as part of collaboration during professional development training.

Teaching professionals who have been in the field of education for several years were valuable resource for training novice instructors. These professionals were observed to be more successful in collaborative work due to their abilities to work with people who had diverse type of personalities (Pancsofar & Petroff, 2013). Developing a collaborative working environment was beneficial, considering that customization of effective curriculum required consolidation of effective teaching strategies and best practices of the most effective instructors in respective fields. The next section covered in detail the effects of coteaching implementation in higher education institutions.

### **Effects of Coteaching**

Coteaching in higher education provided a valuable learning experience for all the students, leading to positive outcomes. The learning experience was of high importance, given that college graduates were expected to use their critical thinking skills when performing their jobs (Colburn et al., 2012; Murawski & Lochner, 2010; Ploessl et al., 2010; Pratt, 2014; Pugach & Winn, 2011). Furthermore, for those students who took active role in their studies, class performance in a team-taught course increased grade

point average (Colburn et al., 2012). In most articles on coteaching that were identified as a part of this literature review, the researchers implied that student success was a result of a nontraditional approach to teaching in the classrooms (Colburn et al., 2012; Kalchman & Kozoll, 2012). Similarly, Laughlin, Nelson, and Donaldson (2011) had previously confirmed that team teaching improved learning and enhanced critical thinking, while Clemens and McElroy (2011) used an integrative coteaching approach to transform the culture of a school community in a rural Appalachian high school. As such, while students gained relevant academic knowledge, the teachers in coteaching relationship continuously reassessed their teaching method to teach their subjects in the most effective manner (Hand & Payne, 2008). In the light of this study, the coteaching approach in the Set for Success Program was intended to support student learning while enhancing the teaching approaches of the teachers.

As the Texas higher education institutions relied on subsidies provided through state budget, accountability and adherence to achievement played an important role in student success. Hence, throughout the education and learning processes, instructors relied on coteaching as a strategy that assisted them in utilizing active leadership in promotion of student and personal learning and development (Laughlin et al., 2011; Murawski & Lochner, 2010; Ploessl et al., 2010; Pratt, 2014; Pugach & Winn, 2011). Most instructors carried many roles, which included those of learners, models, and leaders. When used appropriately and incorporated in many technological advances, such as the use of videoconferencing instructions across different campus locations, coteaching could become a valuable tool for providing a quality learning experience for

students. Moreover, when students were self-motivated and willing to initiate on their own, this method could be adopted when one instructor could not be present in the classroom (Laughlin et al., 2011). Using technology in reaching students' attention, such as online interaction, this approach was effective in replacing traditional classroom interaction. Much of these successes were culled from the studies confirming the effectiveness of online teaching.

There was a suggestion in the review of the literature that while coteaching was a nonconventional teaching practice in the higher education, its value and positive effects were widely recognized. Colburn et al. (2012) found that college instructors who participated in coteaching exercises received positive support from mentors that provided them with more motivation to improve their teaching skills and implemented teaching approaches that were more appropriate for their students. As a result, adult learners who had been under the class of instructors with supportive mentors had improvement in their grade point average (GPA), enhancement on their basic academic skills, and earned positive academic performance (Colburn et al., 2012). Many studies have confirmed that coteaching was a valuable instructional method for students trying to learn a foreign language, particularly students whose first language was not used in the classroom instruction. Sheldon et al., (2010) explored the effectiveness of the implementation of the after-school literacy activities in relation to the reading learning outcomes of students, coaching of staff, professional development, and coteaching influenced students' learning outcomes. These authors studied students in California to determine whether the strategies of the program improved the quality and consistency of students' ability to



read. The result of the study showed that positive correlation existed between the size of students reading gains and the quality of literacy programming implemented by the instructor (Sheldon et al., 2010).

### **Implications**

Data collection and analyses provided insights on finding ways to share insights and understanding about the experiences of the faculty members at Rex College in Texas. These data also provided an insight to a win-win situation where students were successful, instructors gained an understanding of coteaching experiences, and higher education institutions celebrated academic success all around, especially with a decrease in attrition.

On another level, the findings from this study could be used to develop or update shared information to educate all coteaching instructors who use outdated teaching material from the state. The updated information from the research could be delivered through teacher training sessions at education service centers throughout the state. Education courses for future teachers at a college or university level might also include the coteaching strategies.

### **Summary**

The practice of collaborative approach to teaching such as implementation of coteaching, professional learning community, team teaching among others had been widely recognized as means to improve education in the basic education program (Bell, 2013; Campa, 2013; Charalambous et al, 2014; DuFour et al., 2008; Laughlin et al., 2011; Lee & Nie, 2014; Wollner & Ginsborg, 2011). The review of studies confirmed

that the practices of these modes of teaching practice emerged because of the federal government's implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act on states and local school boards (Anastasiou & Kauffman, 2011). These practices motivated educators from higher education to emulate such practice among their faculty, particularly in a period with increasing number of adult students who had never attended higher education institutions and were enrolled in college courses. Many of such applicants were hindered in their learning due to their limited academic skills.

College learners who struggled with the traditional method of adult learning approach in higher education contributed to the detrimental issue of college retention (Colburn et al., 2012). Coteaching and other relevant professional development activities were found to be significant approaches in responding to the unique needs of these adult learners (Conderman & Hedin, 2013). Information sharing concerning the best practices and approaches among higher education instructors were applied among the most struggling adult learners (Colburn et al., 2012; Laughlin et al., 2011).

While coteaching has been effective in improving the quality of teaching in elementary and high schools, researchers have found significant drawbacks in the implementation of coteaching in higher education institutions (Chester, 2012; Murawski & Lochner, 2010; Ploessl et al., 2010; Pratt, 2014; Pugach & Winn, 2011). These challenges included collaboration issues between instructors and professors, communication, personality issues, and differing expectations among others (Forbes & Billet, 2012). Still, if motivated to succeed, individuals who volunteered to participate in coteaching program resolved some of the conflicts that arose from different personality

traits, backgrounds, or approach to teaching. The positive outcomes of this initiative had been directly visible through their improved classroom instruction and improved student learning. Although researchers who wrote on coteaching have recommended additional studies to focus on the effects of teacher interests, attitudes, and confidence on coteaching (Dyrud, 2010), this educational practice continues to serve students in diversified classrooms, even though it lacked information regarding teacher perceptions on faculty experiences.

## Section 2: The Methodology

With the advancement of technology and the increased postsecondary opportunities, more students have enrolled in college academic courses with the hope that a college degree would allow them to achieve their professional goals. Students attend community colleges and technical schools to learn new technical and trade skills. Some adult students who dropped out of high school took a GED course before they can enroll in college courses. Other students have been out of school for a long period or are academically underprepared, leaving the faculty with the task of preparing such students to be able to move forward.

Most instructors at Rex College used the traditional format of teaching, a lecture, whereas a small number of instructors used coteaching strategies, targeting underprepared students to be successful in their academic learning. As compared with the traditional model, coteaching requires planning, collaboration, and professional relationships. In this study, the experiences of the faculty members who used the coteaching method in Set for Success program at Rex College in Texas provided additional information about effective instructional strategies especially where the process of coteaching were explored. The methodology process, which I present in Section 2 includes the qualitative research design and approach, the rationale for research design, participants, establishing a researcher/participant relationship, protection and confidentiality of the participants, data collection, data analyses and interpretation plan, and the researcher's role.

## **Qualitative Research Design and Approach**

In this qualitative case study, the focus was on understanding the experiences of the faculty members who taught the students enrolled in the Set for Success program at Rex College in Texas. Several studies were conducted to document students' performance in a coteaching setting (Chester, 2012; Dyrud, 2010; Pugach & Winn, 2011); however, limited research in higher education institutions is available to explain the instructors' lack of understanding about the coteaching experience, especially those who do coteach. For this study, the faculty members who cotaught provided primary information through face-to-face interviews and observations. In accordance with Hatch (2002), the coteaching instructors were the participants and the ones who provided the responses to the interview questions. The instructors whom I observed during their hours of collaboration at their respective work places, and the findings from data collections provided me with information for a narrative format. Qualitative researchers, as Stake (1995) explained, think of the importance of their cases and contexts as crucial to understanding their studies. The narrative format afforded the participants an occasion to share their experiences in a coteaching environment. The data collected from this study offered other educators who worked with a diverse adult population or any group of underprepared students to understand the coteaching experiences to help their students by using coteaching strategies.

### **Rationale for Research Design**

The qualitative research approach for this phenomenon helped me to explain the participants' responses in their coteaching experiences. Qualitative researchers have

postulated that subjectivity and biases can never be separated from the generation of knowledge (Cordner, Klein, & Baiocchi, 2012). In fact, biases in a fact-finding situation can generate a more logical and coherent result. As such, researchers who use a qualitative approach recognize their biases and judgment; they use these biases to prove the transferability of their opinions to that of their subject (Glesne, 2011). The corroborative experiences of the individual and group provide learning ideas that are beneficial in strengthening the teaching practices of a higher education institution. Furthermore, the use of qualitative data from the experiences of the faculty members who practiced coteaching generated themes for analysis.

The theories that could be used for qualitative studies included phenomenological theory, grounded theory, ethnographic theory, and case study (Creswell, 2009; Hatch 2002). For this study, a case study was appropriate because the use of constructivist theory such as that of Piaget's theory included individual interviews and observations of college instructors in the manner of how they cotaught, how they collaborated with each other, and how their experiences were shared in professional development trainings. The approach of using an ethnography study came to mind; however, such a study would have required for me to focus on cultural groups in a natural setting for a longer time. The grounded theory required a theoretical sampling of different groups in terms of using multiple "stages of data collection" (Creswell, 2009, p. 13), while Hatch's (2002) explanation of grounded theory included the detailed analytic processes, continuous confirmation of descriptive patterns, and a constant check of categories were used to

determine validation of data. Given the time and funds available, the case study approach was the best approach for this study.

A quantitative research required a hypothesis statement before one could begin the study. This design also called for interpretation of graphs to explain the results and a narrative interpretation of the data (Lodico, Spaulding, & Voegtle, 2010). An interpreter generated his or her conclusion based on personal knowledge and the experiences of the individual (Hatch, 2002; Yin, 2014). The qualitative design was a better choice for this study because it called for a natural setting during the data collection and for a thick description of a narration at the end of the study.

### **Participants**

To select the research participants for this study, I used a purposeful sampling method to identify each participant who met the required criteria. This form of sampling is important in getting first-hand information from key informants (Hatch, 2002; Lodico et al., 2010). Hatch (2002) stated that any information the participants found relevant is important to the study. In qualitative research, according to Creswell (2009), the larger the number of participants in a study, the more data would be collected, and the more time would be needed to analyze the data. Therefore, the data collections for the interviews and observations provided concrete information for the study. Also, Creswell (2009) recommended the number of the research participants to range from one to 40, so that a detailed report is taken from each individual participant and that the fewer the participants, the more intense the inquiry was expected of the researcher. Hatch (2002) stated that the number of participants depended on the purpose of the study, the type of

study, and the type of question or questions generated for the study. Thus, a total of 15 college instructors participated in this study, based on their roles in a coteaching program at Rex College.

After the approval from the Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB) to start collecting data in November of 2016, another IRB application was completed at Rex College IRB office, requesting for permission to collect data for this study. This request was approved in December of 2016. The new dean in the Department of Student Success was consulted and a background to the study was provided to her. The dean provided 23 names of purposely selected instructors who were coteaching or had been instructors for the Set for Success program but were coteaching at a different campus for the same college. In 2011, the Set for Success program was housed at one campus. Six years later, the program was expanded, and the original instructors were placed at different campuses and departments and continued to use coteaching strategies.

### **Establishing a Researcher/Participant Relationship**

Glesne (2011) and Hatch (2002) stated that the consent form should be designed to inform the participants in the language they could understand about the purpose of the study. This was important in establishing a relationship between the participant and the researcher. Creswell (2009) and Hatch (2002) recommended that researchers should explain to the invited participants the purpose of the study and the importance of signing the consent papers before data collections could take place. Individual invitation and consent form were emailed to each of the 23 participants. I explained the selection of each person, which was based on purposeful sampling criteria. The participants received



background information about the research, procedures, and an explanation of risks and benefits. Seven full-time and seven part-time instructors responded positively, three instructors indicated that they would not participate, and six never responded even after I made an additional attempt to contact them. For those who were not able to participate, I sent each an email and thanked him/her for responding and informed each one that the door was still opened, and anyone could still contact me in case there was an interest. Weeks later, one person did change her mind and contacted me and asked if she could still participate. She became the 15<sup>th</sup> participant.

### **Protection and Confidentiality of the Participants**

The ethical procedure for educational research in making sure that all participants were free of harm, both emotionally and physically was followed. My certificate of completion, "Protecting Human Research Participants," through the National Institute of Health (NIH) was renewed. Permission from the local campus institutional review board (IRB) and the Walden University IRB to have instructors participate in this study was granted. The purpose of having an IRB involved in the research study was to protect the participants and to ensure the researcher followed the ethical requirements of the study. In addition, IRB approval confirmed there was no conflict of interest, which could create biases when selecting participants or collecting data (Glesne, 2011; Lodico et al., 2010; Stake, 1995). In the consent letter, the participants were informed that their participation was voluntary, and confidentiality was maintained by my issuing an assigned code to identify each pseudonym after the interviews. The participants could leave the study at any time. There were no incentives for participating in the study. Respect to all

participants was shown. A copy of the consent form was available to each participant through the original email.

### **The Researcher's Role**

My role as a researcher was to identify the topic and to generate ideas to compose a problem statement, the purpose of the study, and to create a research question based in part on the literature review (Lodico et al., 2010; Stake, 1995). I have generated original questions for interviewing the participants. Prior to this study, Set for Success courses were taught at one campus. As different courses and programs were created, some of the original coteachers were assigned to different campuses; thus, an expansion of the coteaching strategies continued. By the time the interviews were scheduled, I realized that my study would take place at three different campuses.

I did not have a supervisory role over the participants. The participants were reminded about the study and that their participation was voluntary. I also mentioned to the participants that I would conduct the interview, observe them during their collaboration sessions, transcribe and analyze the data, and that the results would be presented in a project study.

Listening attentively and staying open-minded were two tasks that kept me still on my chair. In addition to using the audio-tape recorder, additional notes were handwritten on a yellow pad. Each participant received my full attention during the face-to-face interviews.

### **Data Collection Procedures**

There were 15 college instructors who participated in the study. Two types of data were collected: (1) personal interviews – individual face-to-face interviews, and (2) observations during collaboration, planning, and assessing with participants who were involved in the coteaching Set for Success program. A total of 47 years of experience in coteaching had been completed by 10 participants prior to coming to Rex College, two participants had collaborated for a total of 19 years; and three participants had just completed the first semester of coteaching. The interviews and observations took place at a natural setting (college campuses in classroom, open writing labs, and instructor's office). The interview data collection consisted of nine unstructured, open-ended questions and one statement, which the participants received in advance. The audio-taped interviews provided information about coteaching interactions, teachers' experiences, coteaching impact, professional development training, general education preparation, teaching strategies, and additional coteaching information (See Appendix B). Open-ended questions, as suggested by Hatch (2002), provided more than the yes/no responses. Each audio-taped interview session lasted approximately 35 to 50 minutes. I asked for each participant to provide a convenient date and time for the interviews. Since coteaching classes were taught in the mornings, all interviews were scheduled in the afternoons. Scheduling the face-to-face interviews at the participants' respective campuses minimized traveling challenges, such as traffic and parking spaces.

A qualitative case study included additional sources of data collections beyond interviews (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006; Hatch, 2002; Stake, 1995). For this study, I

used an observation strategy as a second source to collect data. The observation strategy, according to Hatch (2002), provided the researcher with an opportunity to discover, to learn, and to understand first-hand information in a social setting. Possible observation activities included data from collaboration, professional development training, and/or coteaching in the classroom. Each observation lasted between 45-60 minutes. Two observations were held in the afternoon, and one took place on a Friday morning. Hatch's (2002) eight contextual dimensions were used to guide me during the observations (See Appendix C). Permission to use Hatch's guideline was granted by the State University of New York Press in the summer of 2015 (See Appendix D).

The data collection lasted for three months. Some of the interviews were postponed, especially when the meeting dates were close to the closing of the semester. Other than the 15% of the courses that were still on 16-weeks semester, the 85% of the courses at Rex College were on eight-weeks semester. The participants needed time to give semester exams, grade the exams and researched papers, and then prepare for the following semester; therefore, the interview appointments that were scheduled around the last week of the semester were cancelled or postponed by the participants.

### **Data Interpretation Plan and Analyses**

Creswell (2009) and Hatch (2002) suggested that researchers should first organize the data by participants' pseudonym, the dates of data collection, and the location of the field notes before documenting the interview or field notes. Organizing and transcribing data should be done immediately after each data collection (Creswell, 2009; Hatch, 2002; Yin, 2014). Right after each participant was interviewed, the data from each participant

was transcribed by formatting the responses in complete sentences, based on the questions asked.

After transcribing the interviews, the typed data had to be checked for sentence structure and meaning and to check for formatting into a word document and into a report by setting up margins, font size, and spacing. To come up with themes from the data collected, I analyzed the data and created a matrix grid to code key words or repetitious phrases from each participant's responses. The key words and phrases were linked to the interview questions, and using constructivist approach, the findings were interpreted, which later became themes.

All instructors who cotaught were scheduled to teach only in the mornings so that they could be available to provide the students with tutorial sessions or to clarify information about the coursework. During the time of member checking at the scheduled campus, I was at each campus on Monday through Thursday, from noon to 5:00 p.m. Creswell (2009) and Yin (2014) recommended that the research participants check for accuracy and fairness on the interpretation of their given information. To avoid discrepancy in the report, the participants could clarify the information but could not alter any previous information during member checking period. Each participant received a hard copy of the transcribed notes and was asked to check for clarity on his/her responses. According to Stake (1995), to have accuracy and to be able to reconstruct the information, an interviewer needs to allow the participant to see his/her responses to make sure that the meaning of the message intended was there. Also, the evidence of quality can be evaluated through the steps taken in conducting a research project instead

of only relying on research studies that have been conducted by others (Yin, 2014). The participants were told that I would be available at the campus the entire week and that I would answer any questions or concerns about the responses regarding the interviews. I also shared with the participants the key words and phrases that would be used as themes based on the interview responses.

After meeting with the participants to clarify their responses to the interview questions, I returned to the transcribed notes and combined both the interview notes with the observation notes based on the similarities of responses/activities where meaningful ideas were constructed to make sense; thus, the meaningful themes were created. All handwritten and transcribed notes from the data collection were filed in a folder and put in a locked safe. Also, the data were entered and saved on a personal, computer's hard disk drive under a protected password. At the end of this study, all data information will be saved on a flash drive and put in a locked safe for a period of five years.

There were four participants who were not pleased with their responses. This was a discrepant situation. The participants felt that their responses were not detailed enough. I was able to visit with two participants that afternoon, and the other two were scheduled for the next day in the afternoon. After meeting with the participants and having discussed the additional information, I told each participant that the additional information dealt more with the students rather than the program or the instructors' experiences in a coteaching class.

There was also another discrepant case which took place during the data collection. The Chair at Walden University and the community partners, the interim vice

president and the dean from the department of student success at Rex College were continuously kept updated about my task. The Chair and the community partners were first contacted when a key person of contact, whose name was provided by the dean of student success, chose not to follow through to provide me with additional names of coteachers at her campus. I sent a positive, professional e-mail to the community partners and copied the email to the person of contact.

The data analysis for the interview method consisted of inductive analysis of data from specific to general approach. In-depth descriptions of the participants' experiences pertaining to coteaching experiences were discussed in Section 3. The term *in-depth description* is also known as *thick description*, a detailed description of the study. For the observation data, a typological analysis, which was based on formed themes was applied. Hatch's (2002) steps for typological analysis was implemented for the observation data (see Appendix D). After categorizing the extensive data, the new information was constructed through a constructivist point of view into knowledge that could be understood and used in higher education institutions.

### **Research Results**

Piaget's theory of constructivism based on Ewing and Ewing (1996) explains that children construct information through "physical, social, and logico-mathematical knowledge" (p. 3). The physical knowledge is gained by observation, which Piaget would consider external reality. The social knowledge is received through written and spoken languages, and logico-mathematical knowledge is gained through relationships formed by each person (Kamil & Ewing, 1996). By forming relationships, a person can interpret and

construct information by using knowledge and experience. Ackermann (2001) explained that children's cognitive tools are formed because of knowledge and personal experience, information received from external realities. Both the knowledge and the experience are constructed into "deeper understanding about themselves and their environment" (Ackermann, 2001, p. 7). For this, an individual's vision and values of himself make him unique in his own environment.

Looking through a constructivist's glasses, the conceptual framework for this study was connected to the qualitative case study research. I analyzed the data that were collected from 15 college instructors who participated in the study. Two types of data included (1) personal interviews and (2) observation during collaboration, planning, and assessing. The purpose of the study was to examine the coteaching strategies used at Rex College so that a teaching guide or a professional development training may be implemented to provide consistency in the Set for Success program. Facing educational challenges like many higher education institutions was not new to Rex College. Its problem was the need to educate the adult population whose needs could not be addressed through traditional instructions. Thus, the question was raised: What were the experiences of the faculty members at Rex College in Texas, regarding coteaching of a diverse student population in a Set for Success program?

Through the responses of the participants, three themes emerged from the coded, repetitious words and phrases: (1) Coteaching positively influences students' academic performance, (2) Teaching special courses for adult learners require teacher training and



preparation, and (3) The success of a special program to meet the needs of an adult population requires support from the administrators.

**Finding 1: Coteaching Positively Influences Students' Academic Performance.**

The participants' responses based on the interview questions 1 and 2 indicated that they all knew the research definition of coteaching. The instructors in coteaching classes were assigned to a group of students in the same classroom, at the same time, shared academic responsibilities, and had formal knowledge in the subject they were hired to teach (Simpson, Thurston, & James, 2014). The cooperating teacher during student teaching was in a supervisory position.

The research participants confirmed that the coteaching approach did influence the students' academic performance. According to Participant 4,

The impact of coteaching had been positive. I have had students who have received their GED to getting a certificate, such as the ones in the automotive field to even getting an Associate Degree. Coteaching is very positive; I think for most classrooms, it is a good idea.

Prizeman (2015) confirmed that the advantage to coteaching for all students “. . . increased self-esteem and social interaction, and improved learning opportunities . . .” (p. 44). Although Rex College only had coteaching designated to a specific group of students, the literature read indicated that coteaching would benefit all students. As stated by Participant 5,

I really think that coteaching does help the students, and one of the things that we do is sharing information and collaborating. Our students come from a wide variety of backgrounds. They are not the type of students we were in school. We didn't have the type of technology our students have today. Coteaching helps -- for me because if my teaching strategy doesn't work, my coteacher may come up with a different strategy. Some of my students cannot read much less expect them to comprehend when they read. It is sad, but many times I must read everything to them even the simplest instructions for the day's work.

For students who were academically challenged, the coteaching approach was set up so that the teachers could provide the students with one-on-one teacher attention.

Chanmugam and Gerlach (2013) reported that the benefits of coteaching were not only for instructors in terms of "increased teaching competence and skills" (p. 114), but also in building relationships between teacher and teacher and between student and teacher. Another participant confirmed,

The students may not realize this, but when there are two instructors in the classroom and they don't know what is going on, it is so much easier for the second instructor to explain to them whatever concept the other instructor was explaining. The students' frustrations are so minimized because of the immediate feedback. Our classes are very long (four hours), so the students must be attentive always. There is lecture, group work, and projects going on all the time. We try to keep the classes smaller in size due to the number of equipment that are available.  
(Participant 11)

Although Participant 8 commented that coteaching was not for everyone, the other 14 participants felt that coteaching was effective on how their students learned. Simpson, et al., (2014) confirmed that coteaching does not only provide instructors with opportunities such as support and learning from each other, but it also provided different learning opportunities for students. The participants shared equal role in teaching, and each participant was not afraid to allow the other to answer the students' questions. Pettit (2017) affirmed that when coteachers work together, the quality of student learning was improved. Participant 14 added that she had students who had been out of school for too long, who were nervous, and there were those who would have liked to work in the hospitals, and of course, the students would transfer to another college to earn a bachelor's degree. Coteaching approach had helped all these students to be able to move forward without thinking about dropping a course. The two teachers worked very closely with students to meet their goals.

When instructors coteach, they also model to the students the acceptable behavior in public. The students see how two people can work together respectfully. Participant 9 indicated that the effect of coteaching was that the students saw how dedicated the teachers were to teach their subjects and how important it was for the students to learn the materials to be successful. Equally agreeable was Participant 10 who said coteaching helped her students learn the materials better because there were two teachers with different teaching styles, and the students learned better in that type of atmosphere.

For the students who were in a language learning classes, coteaching could provide "the students with rich visions of the world and relevant learning experiences"

(Laborda, 2013, p. E102). Participant 6 confirmed that the linked courses influence deepened on students' understanding of content and knowledge retention. Scaffolding content provided a meaningful, learning experience. The assignments were interconnected, and the students developed an understanding of the importance of the skills learned in the academic realm, as well as in real world situations.

**Finding 2: Teaching Special Courses for Adult Learners Require Teacher Training and Preparation Time for Collaboration.**

All the participants understood the concept of coteaching and have had teaching experiences in their assigned subjects. However, when the participants were assigned to coteach at the college level, the challenges that they encountered included the absence of coteaching professional training sessions and the lack of time to collaborate.

**Teacher training.**

Ten of the 15 participants had not received any type of professional development training. Participant 2 stated, "I did not have any type of professional development training before I was assigned to this job, but I have been given opportunities to attend some type of a workshop or training on coteaching." The participants who did not receive professional development training in coteaching at Rex College received opportunities to sign up for webinar sessions, attend a workshop out of town, or attend one during the summer. Had the 10 participants received coteaching professional training, they would have learned to plan, teach, and assess a diverse population of adult college students (Prizeman, 2015). The participants would have also received information on how to handle conflicts between the co-teachers. Participant 3 stated, "Nothing very serious in

terms of challenges, but being professionals, we could settle our differences.” In addition, Participant 3, said, “There is so much to learn and to teach the modern student; any type of training that deals with our modern students can really enhance the classroom atmosphere.”

Participant 5 reiterated, “Yes, I wish I had additional training for coteaching at this level. I am relying more on my past coteaching experiences, and I am bringing those into the classroom.” One element that could have benefitted the participants during coteaching training would be sharing the power in the classroom (Chanmugam & Gerlach, 2013). Participant 7 said, “I have always been in control, but keeping my mouth shut has been a challenge for me. Some teachers are territorial, but we understand that we must look for the outcome for the students.” Another participant expressed, “My challenges exist because I am a control freak, but I have learned to respect others. I have noticed the students accepting the fact that there is more than one way to accomplish our daily tasks” (Participant 14). Through personal experiences, the participants learned how to get along and to consider the needs of the students.

### **Preparation Time for Collaboration.**

Collaboration is one of the key elements for coteaching. When two instructors collaborate, they interact with each other (Kariuki, 2013). Time is a critical essence in this case because the instructors must have additional time to plan lessons, plan how they will present information to students, and how they will assess the students’ work. Having collaborative skills are important for success, especially for educators and those who work in school settings (Chanmugam & Gerlach, 2013). Some participants at one of the

campuses at Rex College had the time to collaborate; for others, due to additional responsibilities, they briefly met between classes or before school.

For the first few days before the beginning of the semester, the Rex College instructors met and planned the syllabi for the entire semester. The Texas House Bill 2504 mandated that (1) instructors were required to provide one-click access to the Course Syllabus from every page in the course; (2) a week-by-week calendar must be included in the syllabus; and (3) the week-by-week calendar must let students know what exams (excluding “pop quizzes”) and assignments were due each week (Texas Accountability System, 2016). Even when the syllabi were already posted, the coteachers at Rex College continued to meet to collaborate due to the diverse group of adult population they were assigned to teach.

Participant 4 commented, “Over the years from teaching experience, you think of something and you say, ‘Let’s try this or that.’ But being given the ability or permission to work together, that has made all the difference.” During the observation of collaboration, the two participants reviewed the sequence of activities for the next day. The participants decided that the students would receive a list of vocabulary, the class would define the words, and then the students would use the words in sentences by working in groups. Each student would then use the vocabulary list in a short-composed paragraph. The vocabulary list consisted of terms taken out of an auto-mechanic textbook.

One coteacher specialized in ESL and the other coteacher specialized in technical writing. According to Bauml (2016), even experienced teachers can benefit from

collaboration. The intended accomplishment for the lessons was that students would be familiar with the vocabulary, and they were to use them in the automotive classroom.

Even if the students were already aware of the assignments for each course, Participant 7 said, “We try to ask each other questions on how to improve our presentations.”

Collaboration can only be effective only when instructors work together (Chanmugam & Gerlach, 2013; Laborda, 2013; Petrick, 2014). When the instructors work together, they need collaboration time. As commented, “Most of the additional coteaching strategies come from sharing our experiences with other instructors. When my coteacher attended a seminar online, he shared the new information with me” (Participant 11).

Another group of nine coteachers met to discuss the upcoming course redesign. They had some ideas that needed to be included in the fall semester curriculum. The group also discussed on how to serve the students who had completed ESL and developmental courses and had chosen to sign up for academic courses even though some of the students had been certified in technical training and were ready for employment, but they had chosen to continue their studies in regular academic classes. Although teachers are required to update their skills by attending meetings or professional development courses, when given an opportunity to work in groups, teachers are always eager to share their experiences (Bauml, 2016). Collaboration seemed time consuming for the nine coteachers, but they reached a consensus to help the students.

Another collaboration activity took place when three participants met to discuss about the students who were in their classrooms and were reading below grade level. One of the coteachers had attended a workshop on “reading.” Instructions on reading

improvement and how to help the students become active readers were shared. One participant who came in looking disappointed because “I am supposed to be teaching college students, who should know how to read” left smiling with a comment, “I now have the tools.” Ferguson and Wilson (2011) agreed that coteaching permitted teachers to expand their horizons through growth, reflection, and to make the necessary changes to improve their teaching skills. The coteaching approach provided many benefits for both instructors and students; however, having time for collaboration must be a commitment.

**Finding 3: The Success of a Special Program to Meet the Needs of an Adult Population Requires Support From the Administrators.**

Having two instructors in one classroom could be costly; however, when the stakeholders (Board of Regents) and administrators (deans and department chair persons) schedule coteaching courses, they also need to consider teacher training and collaboration time as part of the package. In her study, Pettit (2017) confirmed that if educators are to increase student performance, then a quality coteaching training and building relationships for the coteachers must be in place. When asked if additional teaching strategies were available to enhance coteaching interactions at the college level, Participant 11 said that having additional teaching strategies would provide some insight. Most of the additional coteaching strategies came from teachers sharing their experiences.

Because the college students were already adults and they all came from a diversified cultural background, Participant 3 felt that additional coteaching strategies on diversity would be helpful. An emphasis on providing instructors with time to dialogue



before teaching a lesson and to reflect afterwards was recommended throughout the literature on coteaching. Seymore and Seymore (2014) confirmed, “. . . time for common planning is still something that should be carefully considered” (p. 49) at the time when instructors were assigned to coteach. Participant 5 recommended on the need to focus more on learner centered strategies to help the teachers deal with the type of students who were coming to school.

Coteaching strategies have worked for K-12 grade levels. For the limited literature available on higher education institutions, coteaching has increased student success and decreased student and instructor attritions. College administrators and support groups could encourage non-coteaching instructors to explore the possibilities of coteaching approach in their classrooms (Chanmugan & Gerlach, 2013), especially for the instructors with low student performance and high attritions.

### **Conclusion**

Although qualitative research calls for a specific research setting, such as a natural setting, this method also calls for various types of data collection. When the researcher used more than one type of data collection, fewer participants were required for the study (Creswell, 2009; Hancock & Algozzine, 2006). By using a qualitative case study approach with emphasis on constructivist theory for this study, I examined the case study with an insight into an issue or redrew a generalization.

Coteaching method has always been used for inclusion classrooms for students with special needs, mainly for special education students in elementary and high school levels. There were no modification courses at Rex College. The faculty members at Rex

College in Texas used the coteaching concept to assist students who did not have a GED and were earning minimum wages, were academically underprepared, or had refugee status. The emphasized goal at Rex College was to enrich the lives of the students and the communities by helping learners identify and achieve their educational goals. As students attended GED classes at a small college in Texas, they were also enrolled in job training skills, such as a CNA, or technical classes, such as auto technician. With a coteaching approach, more than one instructor worked with the same group of students in the same classroom. The purpose of this study was to examine the coteaching strategies used at Rex College so that a teaching guide or a professional development training may be implemented to provide consistency in the Set for Success program. The results of this study could be published in the educational databases in the hope of creating a social change in communities, in students' lives, and in teacher education programs.

### Section 3: The Project

I used a qualitative study approach for this study; its purpose was to examine the coteaching strategies used at Rex College so that a teaching guide or a professional development training may be implemented to provide consistency in the Set for Success program. The participants in the study were all college instructors, and the data collected through interviews and observations provided the rich narrative descriptions.

As previously mentioned, coteaching strategies have been used in inclusion classes from K-12 grade levels in both public and private schools. There are some higher education institutions that have used coteaching in the classrooms because a diversified group of students were enrolled in adult school populations. The project study in this section was based on the research findings that could be used to prepare instructors who wish to learn and practice coteaching strategies to help their students and to improve their teaching skills.

A description of goals, rationale, project description, implementation, project evaluation, social change, and the most current review of literature were included in this section. Suggestions on how to implement coteaching strategies will also be included here.

#### **Description and Goals**

Higher education institutions, especially community colleges in Texas, were held accountable for student performance and program completion, and the state funding were based on the state's accountability system. The Rex College serves a group of diverse adult students who are underprepared academically due to various reasons, including but

not limited to those who had dropped out of high school, those whose primary language was not English, and those who held refugee status. The students received accommodations through Student Academic Success programs, such as Set for Success at Rex College. The students were enrolled in academic and technical courses, and their instructors were coteachers. Research studies on coteaching in higher educational institutions have been conducted on the success of coteaching, and the studies indicated students' successes. The purpose of this study was to examine the coteaching strategies used at Rex College so that a teaching guide or a professional development training may be implemented to provide consistency in the Set for Success program.

After literature reviews and gathering data, the findings of the study summoned for a 2-day professional development training for instructors whose courses required more than one instructor in the classroom or for those instructors who needed to look at other avenues to improve or change their teaching styles. The third day of professional development training was designed for the stakeholders such as college board members, administrators, and/or community members.

### **Rationale**

From generation to generation, educators and psychologists have conducted research, including improving learning in schools, students' success, how children learn or fail, college student attrition, and instructor attrition. Many positive and negative traits have been shared and documented through educational research. The coteaching strategies have been shared with the intentions to make teaching better, not only from K-12 levels, but also for those in higher education institutions or technical schools.

In the State of Texas, the stakes are higher for those in higher education. Funding from the state is based on the state's accountability performance system. In some schools, the teacher evaluation was measured on students' performance and success (Isenberg & Walsh, 2015). The experienced and non-experienced instructors must find ways to implement a program that can help students be successful, especially with the advancement of technology. A mentoring program can be of a benefit to a school or a department, and so is a "buddy teacher" system where the experienced instructor is available to answer questions and to provide suggestions to the inexperienced one. However, mentors, too, must maintain their classroom instructions when they assist other instructors (Grady, Cayton, Sinicrope, Preston, & Funsch, 2016), a challenge that many instructors do not anticipate until they juggle their personal and professional schedules with commitments. The results from data collections of interviews and observations of the instructors involved in coteaching were the road map in designing and sharing teachers' perceptions of coteaching. A professional development training is the genre that was chosen for the project study.

Coteaching is not a panacea to solve the problems that are encountered in education, but it is a means to have teachers who have been assigned to teach with another instructor. Teachers will always find ways to participate in additional teaching strategies to help students such as academically underprepared students, students who do not speak English as their first language at home, and the diversity that comes with students who are relocating from other parts of the world. Preparing one's self to help others is not unusual for today's classroom teachers.

## **Review of the Literature**

The conceptual framework for this project study was based on a constructivist theory with emphasis that man learns, thinks, and evaluates his learning experiences by developing his knowledge and meaning (Liu, et al., 2010). As the instructors share their personal experiences about coteaching, those who listen or read about the experiences can construct and develop ideas and meanings from the experiences to evaluate their own methods of teaching. By providing professional development trainings, teachers who have never cotaught can understand how teachers work together to educate students in the same classroom.

The research review included library research at Walden University Library. The subjects for the search terms were *coteaching*, *teacher collaboration*, *mentors*, *school administrators*, *instructional systems design*, *teaching approaches*, and *interpersonal relations*. The database sources used were Education Source, ERIC, Google Scholar, ProQuest, and SAGE. The Walden University webinar trainings on Education Research for the Capstone and APA documentation style were very helpful in providing information on Boolean search and the Google Scholar website.

### **Project Genre**

The genre chosen for this project study is a professional development training for instructors who have been assigned to coteach. The literature review and the data analyses collected from the interviews and field observations highlighted the need for a professional training approach.

## **Common Ground**

The current literature on coteaching confirmed that coteaching is when two instructors or more provide instructions to a group of the same students in the same classroom (Simpson, et al., 2014; Wilson & VanBerschot, 2014). Both instructors share the same philosophy of improving the quality of learning and teaching (Chester, 2012). Pettit (2017) stated that coteaching strategy is more than helping students do well academically. Instead, coteaching promotes “equal access to learning for both the professionals and their students” (Pettit, 2017, p. 16). As teachers collaborate, they build a professional relationship of caring for students and for themselves. As both instructors share the same students, they model for students, showing them how adults work together. Both instructors may present lessons that require debates or role playing in a positive atmosphere (Grady, et al., 2016). Additional models of coteaching can take place in the classroom when two instructors are present. Such models may include but not limited to one-lead, one-assist; parity; or team teach (Brown, et al., 2013; Friend & Cook, 2003; Kalchman & Kozoll, 2012; Kariuki, 2013; Sweigart & Landrum, 2015). Whichever model was used, both instructors must reflect, collaborate, plan, and decide on which lessons worked well and which ones did not so that changes or modifications may be made for the next lessons.

The importance of having coteachers know each other well was emphasized throughout the coteaching literature. Arshavskaya (2013)) explained that to have effective coteaching results, the coteachers must possess “. . . knowledge . . . high level design, and planning skills” (p. E102), especially when the contexts are in another

language or diversity is present. When the coteachers work together because they understand each other, collaboration during coteaching becomes easier (Chanmugam & Gerlach, 2013; Petrick, 2014; Wilson & VanBerschot 2014). Providing clarity so others would understand was also important in coteaching. Seymour and Seymour (2014) compared a coteaching relationship to that of a marriage. Both instructors must “make informed decisions regarding the implementation of co-teaching . . .” (p. 39). Both instructors must keep their common goals in mind as they shared their ideas of meeting the students’ needs.

### **Challenges of Coteaching**

One factor that may cause a challenge if the coteachers are not compatible is power relationships (Arshavskaya, 2013). The power struggle might happen when teachers do not share responsibilities in preparing lessons, grading, and assessing students, or even teaching together (Ramirez, 2017; Sweigart & Landrum, 2015). By having the coteachers meet before the first day of school and requiring them to attend a professional development training, many of the unforeseen situations could be eliminated. Simpson, et al., (2014) suggested that administrators, such as department chairs could collect data on personality traits to avoid personality conflicts before assigning teachers to coteach.

Another challenge in coteaching is the lack of time to collaborate. Prizeman (2015) conducted a participatory action research (PAR) study in Dublin and found out that when school administrators do not support, such as allocating time for teachers to



prepare lessons and poor clarity on teachers' roles, co-teachers tended to suffer as well as the purpose of the coteaching program.

If time for collaboration is limited, how can coplanning be effective? According to Pratt, Imbody, Wolf, and Patterson (2017), whether coteachers are preparing students for major exams, a simple quiz, or a daily lesson plan, they must work together so that students can be successful academically. Teachers can divide into small major units into small ones, and then work on specific lessons. This approach, according to Pratt, et al. (2017), will allow coteachers to meet frequently in short segments of time so that they can also build an effective relationship with each other and with their students.

In a classroom where English as a Foreign Language (EFL) was taught, the native English-speaking and the non-native English-speaking instructors had some difficulties in terms of cultural backgrounds or due to a language barrier. In a study completed by Park (2014), the non-native English instructor was considered the lead instructor while the native instructor would be considered the secondary one. In a coteaching class, both instructors must be considered equal and should share the same load of work. Park (2014) said that to have a successful collaboration, teachers must be willing to work together and interact with students in the classroom, especially when teaching a language course. Both teachers took turns to teach each activity.

Cobb and Sharma (2015) explained that the lack of feedback and trust exemplified by the coteachers can contribute to a problematic relationship. The coteachers should establish their relationship through collaboration at the beginning of

the semester. Petrick (2014) confirmed that coteachers should believe in each other and foster trust, the essence of teamwork.

**Coteaching is Not:**

- *Collaboration*: According to Kariuki (2013), when instructors collaborate, they communicate ideas or make connections, but they do not participate in an activity or teach a group of students together. For example, college instructors who collaborate on research projects also end up teaching their own courses individually (Ferguson & Wilson, 2011; Kariuki, 2013).
- *Mentoring*: Daloz (1999) stated, “mentors are guides” (p.18). When an experienced instructor is assigned to guide a new instructor on the block, the two people will communicate, collaborate, and get to know each other well. However, the mentor (experienced instructor) and the mentee (inexperienced instructor) will not be in the classroom teaching the same students. Thus, mentoring and coteaching are not the same.
- *Performing classroom duties*: Coteaching is not one instructor teaching while the other instructor is grading papers.
- *Two adults in the classroom*: Having two adults in the classroom does not mean both instructors are coteaching. One adult might be observing or evaluating the other.

The available literature emphasized the benefits of coteaching. The coteaching research have been conducted mostly for K-12 grade levels as researchers determined the effectiveness and benefits of coteaching for students who were in inclusion classes,

especially the special education students in the general education classrooms. Also, with the demand from the federal government requiring students with disabilities to be served in general education course, the rebirth of coteaching surfaced (Conderman & Hedin, 2017). The qualitative research approach has been the format for most of the coteaching research. The results emphasized the students' success and classroom performance in inclusion classrooms and with benefits to students with and without disabilities (Seymour & Seymour, 2014). A limited study on coteaching has been conducted for higher education institutions with emphasis on student performance, especially in the classrooms of language study and with mathematics and science courses. According to Seymore and Seymore (2014), and Sweigart and Landrum (2015) additional studies should be devoted for higher education institutions, especially with a focus on quantitative study approaches.

### **Trending Movement on Coteaching**

An emerging term for coteaching has been known as a service delivery for students with special needs. Friend, Embury, and Clarke (2014), have considered coteaching as an alternative approach to student teaching; thus, a new term, 'apprentice teaching' is used. Apprentice teaching has always been referred to student teaching. For the college student who is preparing to teach as a career, he must teach for a designated time before a teaching certificate can be granted.

The teachers who are involved in coteaching share equal responsibilities to the students that are assigned to them. Both teachers collaborate, plan, and assess at the same time when preparing for class, and they both have power in the classroom. On the other

hand, apprentice teaching is not the same as coteaching. Apprentice teaching is where one teacher has completed teacher training while the other teacher is still under training; one gets a paycheck while the other receives college credit; and one teacher (master) supervises the other (apprentice). Of course, the apprentice is always considered a learner (Friend, et al., 2014), an individual in training.

In some college education courses, a student teacher was required to observe the respective supervising teacher in the classroom for at least two weeks. After that, the student teacher would start teaching and would continue to do so until the end of his term. However, some college educators have started to require each student teacher to start teaching as soon as possible, requiring the student teacher to become an apprentice teacher, but using the term coteacher. According to Friend, et al. (2014), “Treating these two options [coteaching and apprentice teaching] as though . . . same – and using the same term to refer to each – can lead to a variety of misunderstandings and communication issues” (84). Although both the coteacher and the apprentice teacher collaborate and prepare the lessons, the faculty members in the department of education must clarify these two terms to their students. Public school administrators must never consider the apprentice teacher or the student teacher as the coteacher in the classroom; this is an accountability issue. Scruggs and Mastropieri (2017) agreed that “managing . . . responsibilities while collaborating seamlessly in a single classroom of diverse group of students can require a great deal of skill, commitment, and trust” (p. 285). These are the skills that the master teacher has accomplished while the apprentice teacher needs time and practice to achieve them.

### **Embedded Professional Training**

Mandatory requirements for the public-school students with disabilities have been required to be included in some classes with the general education students at least 80% of school day (United States Department of Education, 2012). On the other hand, state funding in the State of Texas is based on accountability system for community colleges. Thus, student success must be a priority for educators to show improvement in what they do. Coteaching is a teaching model that has met the demand of alternative teaching for both public schools and higher education teachers. Teachers must attend professional development training to update their teaching skills if changes are to be made in the classrooms. A Job embedded Professional Development (JEPD) is a different type of traditional professional development. According to Shaffer and Thomas-Brown (2015), classroom teachers can learn if involved in JEPD. They can work with professionals through collaborations in research. For teachers to improve their teaching strategies, they are asked to share their lesson plans, tests, and notes. Something different with the coteaching professional development (CoPD) model as compared to the traditional professional development is the amount of time required in training. In some cases, a participant could spend a half day at the traditional professional development training with no follow-up participation. While with the embedded professional development (EPD), the strategic planning is a long-term approach (Shaffer & Thomas-Brown). Some of the tasks the co-teachers were asked to do were to “debrief, plan, and modify instruction on an ongoing basis” (Shaffer & Thomas-Brown, 2015, p. 117). The CoPD model does provide coteachers with ample opportunities to work together – team work if

this is what both teachers want. Shaffer and Thomas-Brown (2015) also confirmed that for students who are on the verge of dropping out or facing academic failure, the presence of an additional instructor in the classroom provides additional time for intervention.

At St. Cloud University in Minnesota, a coteaching model was developed for student teachers. The university instructors and members from the certification office were part of the team that needed to make sure that the coteaching model followed the education programs at the university. The pilot program consisted of cooperating teachers, teacher candidates, and P-12 students. Hartnett, Weed, McCoy, Theiss, and Nickens (2013) confirmed that at the end of the study, the faculty were convinced that using the coteaching model would serve the students best. Some of the student teachers were given opportunities to continue with coteaching or to return to the traditional student teaching model. The students continued to pick coteaching. Because communication is the key to a successful program such as coteaching, the group dialogue and implementing coteaching through school districts will continue at a college/university level to use coteaching strategies in education methods courses. The research team will continue to collect data using the qualitative and quantitative methods for evaluation.

### Summary

The coteaching approach requires that teachers work together collaboratively to form a relationship of trust and harmony. Lock, Claney, Lisella, Rosenau, Ferreira, and Rainsbury (2016) stressed the need of the collaborative co-teachers in “Cultivating mutual trust and respect [that] enables instructors to be authentic and to navigate fluidly

through the complex uncertainty of working in the moment with each other, with the students, with the curriculum, and with the knowledge that is co-created” (p. 33). The beneficiaries of the positive outcome are both the instructors and the students. The current literature research on coteaching is expanding from K-12 grade levels to college level teaching. Higher education institutions have started to emphasize using the coteaching model in teacher education courses due to the increase of a diverse adult population. When teachers learn from each other and they share their teaching experiences, they spread opportunities for others to enhance their teaching and learning abilities.

### **Project Description**

Each semester for the cotaught courses at Rex College is eight weeks long. The scheduled training for the instructors would best be held two weeks before the beginning of the fall semester (in August). When new instructors are hired in the middle of the school year, an additional training, perhaps, two weeks before the spring semester (in January) will provide the instructors with some tools to ease into their new positions. The first day training will focus on the instructors who will be working together. The second day focus will be on collaboration and planning. The professional training for the stakeholders could be scheduled during the early spring or the summer months so that as the budget is set up for the new academic school year, a budget for may be considered at that time and to also have some funds allocated for the program. All participants will be asked to complete an evaluation form at the end of the day’s training.

## Implementation

The training is for instructors who have not cotaught before and for those who are inquisitive about coteaching. Instructors who coteach are usually those who will volunteer to work with another instructor to help or find ways in helping students become successful. However, there are some instructors who find themselves at the beginning of the semester that their teaching assignments include coteaching. The training is designed for such instructors (See Table 1).

The first activity on Day 1 on *building relations* should be about *getting to know one another*. From the literature review reading, coteachers must have some type of common traits, such as trust, respect, mutuality, and collaboration (Lock et al, 2016). These are valuable traits in decision-making. A formal list of names of coteachers will be provided by the dean or department chair, and the coteachers will be introduced to each other and to the group of coteachers. The coteachers will have five to 10 minutes briefly to start getting acquainted.

The participants will be asked to get in groups of 4-5 people. They will share/discuss on the topic about their most influential educator. As the participants share the information, they will write down key words or characteristics of the influential educator(s). This list will be like the terms that are used when referring to others as “trustworthy.” Then, the participants will use the list and compare to the next definition of “What is trust?” “What is your personal definition of trust?” If time allows, have coteachers, who are assigned to each other, discuss different types of traits on trust.



Otherwise, have each group share the list of character traits for trustworthy people to the entire group of participants.

The activities on building trust will provide some comfort as participants get back to their seats. With permission from co-teachers, department chair, and the dean, a video may be presented showing teachers working together in the classroom. The video will provide actual teachers using different teaching strategies to convey different types of coteaching approaches. The presentation will emphasize different types of terms and strategies used as coteaching, the components of coteaching, and what makes coteaching approach helpful to students who are academically challenged.

At least six coteaching instructors will be invited and asked to share their classroom experiences. Prior to the training, I will contact the participants and set up an appointment to discuss the agenda. The coteachers will also be asked to be available to answer questions during the three days of training. A list of available current resources on coteaching will be given to the participants and will be asked to read a segment and to share their findings in a group the next day. The participating instructors will need to bring their teaching resources (textbooks, computers, curriculum, etc.) for collaboration and planning lessons.

The Day 2 professional development training will begin with *attention to details* skills. Listening to each other with respect to what each coteacher has to offer is a component of good communication skills. The participants will get in groups of five, and they will line-up in a straight vertical line. The participant at the end of the line will whisper something to the participant in the front. That participant will also whisper the

same information to the next person in the front and so on. The last person in the front should say out loud what was whispered to him/her. If the participants were paying attention, the true message would have been received; otherwise, have the participants repeat the same exercise. Perhaps, this time, everyone will be paying attention.

A similar exercise can also be used. Instead of whispering, the last person in a vertical line, using his/her finger, draws something (like a round circle with a triangle inside the circle) on the back of the person in the front. That participant makes a similar drawing on the back of the participant in the front. At end of the line, the person in the front draws the message received on a piece of paper. If the participants ended up with the correct drawing, then the members of the group would be aware of their interpretation of being able to deal with detailed information and paying attention to details. These are components of collaboration.

With permission to video tape instructors while coteaching, a video/or a PowerPoint presentation will be presented on “collaboration,” showing an emphasis on communication, planning, and assessment. The discussion of the presentation as a group will follow immediately.

Then, the participants will work in groups of five. Based on the article that each participant read the previous day, each person will join other participants with the same title and have group discussions. One person from each group will be asked to share the group’s discussion points. This activity will enforce different types of coteaching strategies.

The coteachers will be asked to collaborate and to share ideas with each other and to start their lesson plans for the first week of school. Experienced coteachers will be available for support and to answer questions. Time for questions and answers will be provided, and the participants will be reminded to complete an evaluation form before leaving the premises.

For Day 3 of professional development training, information (video and/or PowerPoint presentation) on coteaching will be presented to the stakeholders who are college administrators (deans and department chair persons) and the College Board members. The presentation will be scheduled during the months of April or May shortly before the participants meet to discuss the allocation of funds for the upcoming school year (See Table 2).

The Rex College students completed a survey during the spring 2018 for the Center for Community College Student Engagement. A new report will be available during the summer of 2018, and the data comparison of that study to the one completed in 2010 will be used to share information to the stakeholders. Permission to use student data outside Rex College must be granted by the IRB office of the local college. The data from the study will be used to compare information of classes that were taught by single instructors and those taught by co-teachers. Another data will have a comparison, showing the numbers/percentages of students who were academically successful and those who withdrew the courses from both the traditional instructor and the coteachers. Rex College stakeholders are data-driven when new programs are recommended or when the programs are due for reviews. A discussion with the participants will follow,

indicating the positive and negative attributes of coteaching at Rex College. This segment of the training will be presented by the college data manager because of his expertise in dealing with numbers.

A short PowerPoint/video will be presented on what is coteaching (See Appendix A). A group of experienced coteachers will be invited to share their classroom experiences with the stakeholders. Shortly before this event, I will invite the coteachers and request for their participation. Participant 4 said during the interview segment, “The administrators must buy into the program when it comes to coteaching. They must support the teachers.” A discussion of what is *not* coteaching will also be presented. Some stakeholders think that anytime there are two adults in the classroom, both teachers are teaching. Participant 5 commented,

Class scheduling often impedes a true linked course experience. Other challenges have occurred as leadership at my institution change[d]. Some do not fully understand the linked course concept with integrated course content, and they operate from a stance that ‘linked’ courses entail the scheduling of one class followed by another with the same student cohort. The integrated learning experience is lost.

Emphasis on what coteaching is *not* will be a focused point that must be shared to the stakeholders at this time.

A discussion of questions and answers will follow with how support by the stakeholders can be provided to continue the coteaching program for future coteachers. The main points should include but not limited to:

1. Allow interested instructors to explore the discussion possibilities of executing a coteaching model in their classrooms (Chanmugam & Gerlach, 2013).
2. Allow funds in the budget to purchase coteaching resources.
3. Allow funds in the budget to provide instructors with collaboration time for planning, discussion, and reflection (Prizeman, 2015).
4. Allow funds to hire two instructors per classroom; it is expensive, but the outcome is priceless.
5. Allow first-time coteachers to be trained and to use evidence-based practices (Sweigart & Landrum, 2015).
6. Provide (a mandatory) professional development training to all coteachers.
7. Provide an outlet such as a department chair or dean where a conflict can be resolved for the coteachers.

Ample time will be allowed so that the participants may have question/answer opportunity before evaluation forms are given out.

### **Potential Barriers**

Scheduling the coteaching professional development days at Rex College may present some challenges due to the diverse training schedule of all new teachers at the beginning of the semester. However, if coteaching training is mandatory for those who will coteach, then the Thursday and Friday before the beginning of the semester will be designated for the coteaching training. Another solution would be to have coteaching training in small groups by departments. The training can be scheduled around the department meetings on Wednesday and Thursday before the beginning of the school

year. Three sessions have been provided to a small group of new coteachers (four participants), for one hour during the lunch time this semester. The participants who have never cotaught were familiar with the concept of coteaching and by the third day (three hours), they felt comfortable with collaboration and planning.

The major potential challenge would be the availability of funds for the coteachers. A stipend should be arranged if teachers were expected to attend training two weeks before the beginning of the semester.

### **Proposal for Implementation and Timetable**

The professional development plan includes a daily description of professional training. Planning for the training to take place in August of 2018 will require continuous reminders to ensure that the dates and places of meetings are on the school calendar. Before the end of spring 2018 semesters (There are two 8-weeks semesters), a meeting with the president of the college will be requested because the Rex College president recommended for the study on coteaching a few years ago. A detailed explanation of how the study was handled and the results will be shared and discussed. The purpose of the study was to examine the coteaching strategies used at Rex College so that a teaching guide or a professional development training may be completed to provide consistency in the Set for Success program. Based on the 2010 SENSE results of a survey that was conducted by the Center for Community Student Engagement, there were instructors at Rex College who were using the traditional teaching approach (lecture based), and the results indicated low student performance.

After applying for a grant in 2011, the administrators at Rex College implemented a few courses that would require for the instructors to use coteaching strategies. During the spring and fall semesters of 2018, the Center for Community Student Engagement conducted another survey. The results from the survey will be available during the summer months of 2018. A comparison of data from 2011-2018 will provide a clear picture on the best practices of teaching, especially with schools that have a diverse population of adult students.

Table 1.

*Professional Development Training for Coteachers*

Presenters	Schedule for professional development	Tentative agenda
Dean of education: Theresa Da Costa	Fall semester --- Day 1 (August)	Introduction  Activities: Building relationship Activities: Building Trust What is coteaching?
Coteachers: Theresa Da Costa		Coteachers share experiences  -Open floor for questions
Department chair Theresa Da Costa	Fall semester ---Day 2  Video/PowerPoint	Introduce coteachers  Activities: Listening skills What is collaboration?
Coteachers Theresa Da Costa		Teachers collaborating and planning  Open floor for questions
Theresa Da Costa	Closing remarks	Evaluation
Theresa Da Costa	Repeat this training with new coteachers before the spring semester begins in January.	
Coteachers:		



Table 2.

*Professional Development Training for Administrators and Board Members*

Presenters	Schedule for professional	Tentative agenda
Theresa Da Costa	Between April and May	Meet with college administrators (department chair persons, deans, and college board members)
College data manager	PowerPoint Presentation (When data is available in Summer 2018)	Show data collection of student success: a comparison of classes that were taught by single instructors and those taught by coteachers
Theresa Da Costa	PowerPoint Presentation	What is coteaching? What is not coteaching?
Coteachers	Share experiences	Instructors who have taught for more than 1 year Instructors who have taught 1 year
Theresa Da Costa	Discussion	Discuss ways the stakeholders can support the coteaching instructors
Theresa Da Costa	Closing remarks	Evaluation

### **Roles and Responsibilities of Student and Others**

At Rex College, the dean of academic affairs will also be informed about the professional development training so that the staff members from Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) will be notified to help contact the participants, arrange snacks and lunch, print handouts, provide computer and digital camera projector (overhead), and design PowerPoint and/or video presentations.

The participants will be the new coteachers (mandatory training) and anyone who voluntarily is curious about coteaching. An estimated number of participants will be between 20-30. A group of six experienced coteachers will be asked to share their experiences, and two to three members from CTL will be asked to standby to assist with technology and refreshments. On Day 1, the dean and/or the department chair will be asked to speak to the participants – welcoming them and emphasizing the importance of the training.

As the facilitator, I will also be the main presenter. The participants will be assigned to complete the reading materials before the training, and they will also be encouraged to be active participants.

On Day 3 of the training, the department chairs, the deans (from various departments), the vice president, the college president, and any available College Board members will be invited to attend the professional development training/workshop. These are the stakeholders, the decision makers, who have information or know where to find the means to provide funds to improve learning for both students and instructors. The

day's plan is to provide information to the stakeholders and to persuade them to offer monetary support for the coteaching program.

### **Project Evaluation**

After each professional development day, each participant will be asked to complete an evaluation form. The results from the evaluation will be recorded, and I will compare the scores/tallies after five completed professional training sessions. The results will provide information for summative evaluation. According to Vella (2002), a summative evaluation, when used throughout the existence of the program by participants (instructors, administrators, and stakeholders) provides valuable feedback. The participants, who attended the training, will be asked, on a voluntary basis, to provide any type of information that they would deem important. That information could be used on future proposals when asking for funding. Vella (2002) stated, positive outcomes may be applied to teaching and learning where funding is concerned. Also, as the participants share their experiences, knowledge, and skills after each semester, the information will be used for formative evaluation.

Any time a participant is asked to complete some type of a summative evaluation after a training or workshop, that evaluation provides the presenter with immediate feedback that can be used to improve the next presentation. Upon collecting and assessing the evaluations, the results will be included in a report or proposal to be shared to stakeholders for the continuation of the program and for monetary support. The stakeholders are the decision makers who decide which programs should be added to the curriculum, how long the program will last, and how much money should be designated

for the program. The stakeholders who are involved with the coteaching program include the department chair, the dean, the vice-president of academic affairs, and the college board members.

With the upcoming state accreditation, the students' evaluations will be used to compare to the course evaluations which are completed at the end of each semester. There are six on-going semesters in each school year, and all the evaluations completed during the school year will provide information needed for summative and formative evaluations.

### **Implications Including Social Change**

#### **Local Community**

Rex College has a diverse adult population of underprepared academic students. Some of the underprepared students do not have high school diploma, others came from a family where English was not the main language spoken at home, or the students have been out of school for some time. When the coteachers attend professional development training, they will collaborate to meet the students' needs. The instructors will accommodate the students with different teaching styles, clarify information for the students, and increase the students' achievement levels of learning in the community.

The coteaching courses at Rex College were designed to provide academic and technical assistance to the adult students. At the end of the program training, the students can choose to go to work or to continue their education with a 4-year degree as their goal. Preparing students to be ready with job offer is not only an added value for Rex College

but as well as for the community as qualified students will be poised to assume economic and social roles in the surrounding communities.

Beyond Rex College, I will reach out to the local education center and offer to provide the most current information on coteaching. The local education center provides professional development training to all public and private school coteachers. During the summer of 2018, I will send in a proposal offering my assistance to train instructors for the upcoming school year. The success of the coteaching program depends on the preparation of instructors.

Locally, there is a 4-year university which produces teachers for the West Texas schools. The university also has the department of education, the oldest in the state. I will propose for an implementation of a methods course for coteaching as part of the required education course for future teachers because of the increased number of the diverse population of adult learners who, in most cases, are academically underprepared.

### **Far-Reaching**

Sharing the coteaching strategies with the members of the Texas Education Agency (TEA) in Austin, Texas, will also benefit the students of Texas. TEA provides the coteaching materials for teachers and students to all schools in the State of Texas. The current “Co-Teaching: A-How to Guide: Guidelines for Co-Teaching in Texas” consists of research references from 2001-2008. I will offer my assistance to update the guidelines for the students of Texas.

By completing the project study and my doctoral studies, I will help the teachers and the students of Uganda. This will be my contribution to a society that needs

educating its educators. By teaching teachers how to teach, I will provide a lifetime knowledge that will last from generation to generation. By creating or revising a language arts curriculum from K-12 grade levels and train future coteachers through professional development training sessions, I will complete my major contribution to society. The overseas trainings will take place from late May through early August of 2018.

### **Conclusion**

By linking the data to the available literature study, a detailed description of a project study is available in Section 3 to provide professional training development sessions to higher education institutions. The project study is designed for instructors at all grade levels, especially those in higher education institutions. A discussion on how to integrate coteaching beyond the local level is also discussed. Section 3 has information on possible barriers and the aspects of social change. Section 4 concludes the study with emphasis on reflection and conclusion.

#### Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

Section 4 is the final section with emphasis on strength and limitations, on growth as a scholar, practitioner, and as a project designer for Higher Education Adult Learner (HEAL) program. In this section, I have included additional discussions on recommendations, scholarship, implications, and directions for future research.

##### **Project Strengths**

The project's strengths in addressing the problem are evidenced in the responses provided by the participants who were involved in the coteaching program at Rex College. Pettit (2017) stated that coteaching relationship is more than a strategy. When instructors use coteaching strategies, they promote learning for the professionals and the students. Although both instructors are equals in terms of having the knowledge to teach, they both must plan to have effective lessons for student success. Participant 4 explained:

For student who have learning needs, coteaching is very positive . . . for most classrooms, it is a good idea [because] the universal design deals with the concept to make sure that every student has an opportunity to receive information . . . in any possible modality.

The coteaching model served well for students whose first language was not English. Participant 5 mentioned:

I have students who have ESL issues, some have been out of school for a long time, and others have learning disabilities who took special courses, such as special education courses in high school. We try to help to provide them with

instructions to bring them up to the college level, especially those who are still struggling with written expression.

The diverse population of adult students at Rex College continue to be served using coteaching strategies. In addition, during the collaboration, the participants were very involved in finding ways to help students and to provide information that would help the students learn the materials in the contextualized curriculum.

### **Recommendations for Remediation of Limitations**

Since Set for Success program at Rex College had already documented student success, the project's limitation was not to collect data on (adult) students. Collecting data from students who were in coteaching classes and those in lecture formatted classrooms would have enhanced the project's results. However, this type of data collection will be available in the summer of 2018 when the Center for Community College Student Engagement report is released.

The students' feedback about their experiences in coteaching classrooms would benefit the coteachers in having that knowledge during collaboration. This knowledge will help to inform their collaborative engagement and any form of instructional decision making. According to Seymour and Seymour (2014), "While faculty and student perceptions of coteaching are not definitive proof, they are additional evidence and at least suggest that this is an area where more investigation should be focused" (p. 42). Written recommendations or suggestions usually provide insights to future researchers. The foremost recommendation for future studies is to allow the student-researcher to



include both the instructors' and the students' perceptions on coteaching. The research findings will authentic the positive or negative findings on coteaching model.

### **Scholarship**

By participating in the doctoral program, I have managed to appreciate my colleagues who have completed the journey. Time management and the ability to read and decipher chunks of information are not the only qualities of scholarships. Being a competent and an effective practitioner is also a hallmark of scholarships. During my teaching years in public schools, I relied on *action research*. When my students did not perform well, I researched for immediate feedback to help them. At Rex College, making changes or improvements in classroom instructions must be data-driven by researched evidence and information. This instructional goal led me to this research journey.

Levasseur's (2006) concept of 4 Ps: planning, persistence, patience, and participation were the road map for my scholarship. Surviving in the 21<sup>st</sup> century required me to plan for everything, especially when planning to pursue a post-graduate degree. For persistence, he said, "Bumps in the road can take an infinite variety of forms" (Levasseur, 2006, p. 19). His references on bumps included but not limited to dealing with administrators, balancing personal, professional issues with doctoral program, and of course, technology challenges. His persistence were challenges for me, and I promised myself to not allow anything to stop me. There were too many people (personal and professional) who depended on me, including a small village in Africa.

Having patience calls for deep personal understanding. During the doctoral journey, I learned that there were others who were in the same position as me: to learn as

much as possible. My participation and diverse experience in the doctoral journey has provided me with the scholar-practitioner wisdom to challenge my adult students in the classroom and to have a more focused perspective on my potential contribution to the educational community.

### **Project Development and Evaluation**

Because of my personal journey to take post graduate courses, completing a project study made sense for me to share my knowledge and to make a difference in the classroom. When Rex College received funds for course redesign, I volunteered and joined my department members to make changes in the curriculum and to accommodate a diverse population of adult students.

The project study process helped me understand the concepts of research, data collection, data analyses, and project design. Reading a variety of research articles brought insights on how to convey the researched results and understanding the importance of accuracy and integrity. The professional development training/workshop is my contribution to educators to provide them with the most available information in making changes and improving the quality of learning/teaching in diverse classrooms, especially when the students are academically unprepared. By evaluating the project study, as an educator, I understand how educational theories become learning outcomes.

### **Leadership and Change**

Now that I am older, wiser, and more open minded, I know that somewhere in my younger years, someone had planted a seed in me that I would educate others. Being a leader is being able to help and lead others and thus help them to make changes in their

lives for a better tomorrow. As I approach the end of this journey, my next goal will be to connect with others – make some sort of connections with other leaders – where I can continue to share my findings to educators so that they can help each other and their students in the classrooms.

Previously, I had been a department chair for 10 years in middle school and nine years in high school. I am a mentor and a facilitator, and my leadership skills have been confirmed through the completion of this study project. In addition, my energy level has been elevated because now, I can devote my time to sharing knowledge and to helping teachers become better in the classrooms. Also, I have learned that if I am going to lead and make changes in whatever crosses my path, I must become a good listener and be aware of my surroundings so that I can be in tune with the universe.

### **Analysis of Self as Scholar**

During the time when I participated in a course redesign at Rex College, I realized that my contributions about best practices came from taking the time to read educational research articles. I became a scholar when I was exposed to a variety of reading assignments in the HEAL program. Because I have in my classroom a group of diverse population of adult students, I need for them to understand, to learn, and to think critically as they move forward in life. Freire (2007) suggested that educators should try not to impose their views on the students and others but to allow a constructivist's view that students should think for themselves. Because of the doctoral program, I have become very gentle, respectful, and polite in a scholarly manner when I talk to others.

### **Analysis of Self as Practitioner**

As a practitioner, I now keep all my avenues open. I have always had my ways of accomplishing a task in a specific way because that was the only way, or it has always worked this way. For the last six years, I have learned different ways of completing tasks because I have allowed myself to try other means. I have learned to listen very attentively and at times ask questions when I need clarification with information. After having persevered in post-graduate school, the project study was the highlight of this analysis.

### **Analysis of Self as Project Developer**

As a project developer, I realized that the participants needed to know specific information so that they, too, would continue to pass the knowledge gained here to others. I questioned my professional values and commitments to the learning generations. In the end, I knew that if there were changes that needed to be made in education, then I was in the right place at the right time to make those changes.

The knowledge gained from taking the doctoral courses and reflecting on the participants' responses during the data collections reminded me of the position I was in: *to act locally and to think globally*. This time, I was a walking encyclopedia and needed to share my talents, information, and to make connections with those who needed to make a difference. I knew that the research participants were going to work together, to provide encouragement, and to pass on learning opportunities to their students; therefore, by modeling positive behavior and providing them the tools to help the students become successful and for the teachers to work together, my goal in life as an educator would be accomplished.

### **The Project's Potential Impact on Social Change**

The project study was the beginning of what I would like to accomplish in the field of research. I remembered when I went to visit then the vice-president of Rex College (He is now the president of the college), I told him that I wanted to contribute something to the college and in the field of education and if he had any ideas of what I could do. He used a famous quote from Mahatma Gandhi: "Become the change you wish to see." He continued, "Look around the campus, talk to people, ask questions." As an advocate of student success, it was a matter of time before I could narrow the topic of my project.

The project's potential outcome on social change at the local level may include but not limited to:

1. Providing individual instructors who have never cotaught by trying the coteaching as a model to improve teaching and the way instructions are conveyed to students.
2. Reviewing of coteaching strategies to the experienced instructors who do use coteaching strategies, emphasizing on collaboration.
3. Providing professional development training for instructors, ranging from Level K through college years at the local educational center.
4. Introducing coteaching through the department of education at the local university to students who will become future teachers. As stated by Ferguson and Wilson (2011), "The lack of experience with co-teaching causes a misalignment between professors' beliefs about its positive impact and their

personal instructional practices which result in beginning teachers entering a classroom with only a conceptual understanding of what it means to co-teach” (p. 53). The coteaching approach would alleviate fears and lack of confidence, experienced by beginning teachers.

The project’s potential effect on social change beyond the local level may also include:

1. Teaming up with the Texas Education Agency in updating the current training materials on coteaching.
2. Introducing or sharing the coteaching strategies with the teachers in a small village in Uganda on teaching a diverse group of adult population. As I plan to visit the country in the early summer of 2018, I will be contacting the Ministry of Education to request for an appointment.
3. Working with the local education center to train public school teachers during the summer on improving student success through coteaching.

### **Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research**

The coteaching model requires two or more teachers to work together to improve or to increase student learning. One of the elements in coteaching is collaboration, which has become *a cornerstone* in the field of education. Participant 7 stated, “You delve in the classroom when you have two instructors teaching, and the students love it. They enjoy and learn more.” The saying, *two heads is better than one* is implied to coteaching. The students are exposed to additional information, they get attention from two instructors, and they learn how adults work together. The project’s implications for future research would include data collections from the instructors and students who are in

cotaught courses. A clear perception from students and instructors would provide insights as seen from a whole picture in a cotaught classroom.

There are multiple ways on applying the knowledge gained from the project study to the educational field. The coteaching strategies may be shared with schools that:

1. Have experienced a decrease in student success.
2. Have experienced an increase in attrition for both students and teachers.
3. Have underprepared students in a diverse population.
4. Have students with ESL issues.
5. Have students who needed preparedness in academics and job training.

The directions for future research study should include additional studies on coteaching at higher education institutions. Limited coteaching research have been conducted at the college and university levels, thus creating a gap in practice. Also, because the literature reviews were qualitative research approach, future coteaching research studies should include quantitative research approach, providing statistics in the findings. Finally, the IRB applications at colleges and universities should allow doctoral candidates to include data collections of students when their instructors are part of a research study.

### **Conclusion**

The study project's strengths, recommendations for remediation of limitations, scholarships, and project development and evaluation were discussed in Section 4 with limited analysis on the available literature review. Also included are the reflection on self as a scholar, as a practitioner, as a project developer, and the project's potential outcome

on social change. Reflective moments tend to provide individuals with opportunities for self-evaluation and what changes should be considered in the future. Additional suggestions on the project's social change, implications, applications, and the directions for future research are offered in this section to provide a roadway for insights and outlooks for future research approaches.

As an educator, I want my students to be successful academically, to be financially able to care for their families, and to contribute to society, but as a scholar-practitioner, in the words of Freire (2007):

We must never merely discourse on the present situation, must never provide the people with programs which have little or nothing to do with their own preoccupations, doubts, hopes, and fears--- programs which at times in fact increase the fears of the oppressed consciousness. It is not our role to speak to the people about our own view of the world, nor to attempt to impose that view on them, but rather to dialogue with the people about their view and ours. (p. 96)

Students should be taught to think critically so that they can make constructive decisions and choices as they build and support their communities.



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## Appendix A: Professional Development Training

### Learning Activities – First Time Coteachers

8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

**Purpose:** The purpose for today’s training is to build relationship skills and to introduce the concept of coteaching.

**Goals:** Coteachers should have a compatible relationship with superior communication skills to form professional relationships and to make informed decisions when implementing coteaching program.

**Learning Outcomes:** By the end of the day, the participants will be able to work in groups and to be able to identify coteaching skills/strategies.

**Target Audience:** College instructors in Coteaching classrooms.

8:00 a.m. – 8:55 a.m. Continental Breakfast

9:00 a.m. – 9:15 a.m. Welcome—Dean of Student Success

9:16 a.m. – 10:15 a.m. Activity: Building Relations:

Who was the most influential educator when you were in school?

- Have participants get in groups of 4-5 people in each group.
- Have individuals share about the selected influential educator.
- Write down key words or characteristics of each influential educator.

10:15 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. Break

10:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. Activity: Building Trust:

Establish trust before teacher collaboration. Ask the participants to review the list of characteristics and consider if the list would have vocabulary that would fall under “trust.” In each group, discuss: What do you look in a person in terms of trust?

- Have someone write down the traits as they are being shared: Possible traits may include but not limited to authentic, smart, cared, consistent, understands, resourceful, etc.
- Have groups discuss these traits and ask them if there are any of the traits they could eliminate from the list, and why?
- Have a speaker from each group share the choices.

Suggestion: Tell the participants that the list of characteristics that they have written down relate to the characteristics of trustworthy people. The co-teachers need to be able to get along to work together. Ask: Do these characteristics pertain to you? (The participants who provide negative responses will need to visit with the dean of student success, who will provide additional information on the importance of being able to work with another instructor and the success of the coteaching program).

11:45 a.m. – 12:45 p.m.      Lunch

12:45 p.m.- 1:45 p.m. PowerPoint/video Presentation:

- What is Coteaching? Show video highlighting teachers from different campuses at Rex College who have been coteaching.
- Provide characteristics of coteaching and definitions using a PowerPoint format.

1:45 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.      Share Experiences:

- Six coteachers who have been teaching will share their teaching experiences and perceptions on the subject.

3:00 p.m. – 3:15 p.m.            Break

3:15 p.m. – 3:45 p.m.            Questions and Answers

- Allow participants to ask questions.

3:45 p.m. – 3:55 p.m.            Literature Reading

- Provide participants with four different literature articles to be read by the next day.

3:33 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.            Closing remarks and evaluation

Professional Development Training  
Learning Activities – First Time Coteachers

8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

**Purpose:** The purpose for today's training is to improve listening skills by paying attention to details

**Goal:** Communication is key to collaboration. Listening is essential to any type of successful relationship.

**Learning Outcomes:** By the end of the day, the participants will be able to work in groups and to collaborate with the co-teachers.

**Target Audience:** College instructors in coteaching classrooms.

8:00 a.m. -8:55 a.m. Continental Breakfast

8:55 a.m. – 9:30 a.m. Welcome and Introduce co-teachers – Department Chair

9:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. Listening Skills

- Have participants get in groups of five.
- Lineup the participants and have one whisper something to the person in front. The person in front should whisper the same information to the next person and so on. When everyone has received a message, ask individuals in the group to repeat the information. If the individuals were paying attention, then the exact message will be conveyed. Repeat this exercise again. This time, everyone will be paying attention.

**Attention to Details**

- To save time, allow the same group of people to complete this activity.

- Have the participants make a vertical line.
- The last person in line is going to use his finger to draw a circle with a triangle inside on the back of the person in front. The person in the front is going to make the same drawing on the back of the person in front of him/her, and so on.
- The last person in the front is going to interpret what he perceived the other person drew on his back. He will draw on a piece of paper and have the rest of the group discuss if the drawing is the initial one. Again, if the individuals ended up with the correct drawing, then the members of the group would be aware of being able to deal with detailed information.

10:30 a.m. -10:45 a.m.      Break

10:45 a.m. – 11: 45 a.m.      PowerPoint/video Presentation

What is Collaboration?

- Provide a video or a PowerPoint presentation on coteachers while they are in the classroom and during collaboration.

11:45 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.      Lunch

12:30 a.m. -1:00 p.m.      Group Activity

- Have participants in groups of five to discuss and share the articles read yesterday for today.

1:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. Collaboration and Planning

- Have coteachers work together as they plan their lessons for the new school year. Get help from experienced coteachers for support when needed.

3:30 p.m. – 3:45 p.m.	Break
3:45 p.m. -3:55 p.m.	Questions & Answers
3:55 p.m. -4:00 p.m.	Closing remarks and thank the participants for attending and to complete an evaluation form.



Professional Development Training  
Administrators & Board Members

8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

**Purpose:** The purpose for today's training is to share information regarding the Set for Success Program

**Goal:** To seek for funding in the Department of Student Success for the coteaching program

**Learning Outcomes:** By the end of the day, the participants will have information to determine the funding and continuation of the Set for Success Program.

**Target Audience:** Vice-President of Academic Affairs, Dean of Student Success Program, Set for Success Program department chairpersons from each campus, and two College Board members.

8:00 a.m. – 8:55 a.m. Continental Breakfast

9:00 a.m. – 9:15 a.m. Welcome – Dean of Student Success Program

9:15 a.m. – 10:15 a.m. PowerPoint Presentation: To be presented by college data collection person

- Present a table of statistics with data that was collected, indicating students' success from courses that were taught by coteachers.
- Present a table of statistics with data that was collected, indicating students' success from courses that were taught by a single teacher.
- Discuss the comparison of the data.

10:15 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. Break

10:30 a.m. – 11:45 a.m. PowerPoint/video Presentation:

What is coteaching?

- Present information on coteaching, definitions, and strategies

What is not coteaching?

- Present information on what is not coteaching

10:45 a.m. – Noon Discussion: Questions & Answers

Noon – 1:00 p.m. Lunch

1:00 p.m. – 2:15 p.m. Speakers: Two coteachers who have taught more than one year

Speakers: Two coteachers who have taught for one year

2:15 p.m. – 2:45 p.m. Discussion: Questions & Answers

2:45 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. Break

3:00 p.m. – 3:45 p.m. Facilitator: Discuss ways the stakeholders can support the

instructors of coteaching. Possible ideas include:

- Provide monetary to support interested instructors to explore the possibilities of executing a coteaching model in their classrooms (Chanmugam & Gerlach, 2013).
- Allow funds in the budget to purchase coteaching resources (professional library).
- Provide funds in the budget for instructors with collaboration time for planning, discussion, and reflection (Prizeman, 2015).

- Provide funds for hiring two instructors per classroom; it is expensive, but the outcome is priceless.
- Allow first-time coteachers to be trained and to use evidence-based practices (Sweigart & Landrum, 2015).
- Provide (a mandatory) funds for professional development training to all coteachers.
- Provide an outlet such as a department chair or dean where a conflict can be resolved for the coteachers.

3:45 p.m.- 4:00 p.m. Questions and Answers

Closing remarks and pass out evaluation form

## Faculty Evaluation of Instruction

1. Overall, how satisfied were you with professional development training?

(Not satisfied) 1 2 3 4 5 (Very satisfied)

Please comment:

2. Overall, how satisfied were you with the activities?

(Not satisfied) 1 2 3 4 5 (Very satisfied)

Please comment:

3. Please comment on what you think was done well in the instruction.

Please comment on aspects of the instruction that could be done differently to provide more help.

Workshop Agenda – Day 1  
Professional Development Training  
First Year Coteachers

8:00 – 8:55	Continental Breakfast
9:00 – 10:15	Welcome and Building Relations – activities
10:15 – 10:30	Break
10:30 – 11:30	Building Trust
11:30 – 11:45	Questions and Answers
11:45 – 12:45	Lunch
12:45 – 1:45	What is Coteaching?
1:45 – 3:00	Coteachers share experiences
3:00 – 3:15	Break
3:15 – 3:45	Questions and Answers
3:45 – 4:00	Literature Reading
4:00	Closing Remarks

Workshop Agenda – Day 2  
Professional Development Training  
First Year Coteachers

8:00 – 8:55	Continental Breakfast
9:00 – 10:15	Attention to Details – Listening Skills
10:15 – 10:30	Break
10:30 – 11:00	Introduce Coteachers
11:00 – 12:00	What is Collaboration?
12:00 – 1:00	Lunch
1:00 – 2:15	Discuss Literature Readings
2:15 – 2:30	Break
2:30 – 3:45	Teachers Collaborating and Planning/Journals
3:45 – 4:00	Questions and Answers
4:00	Closing Remarks
	Evaluation

Workshop Agenda – Day 3  
Professional Development Training  
Administrators & Board Members

8:00 – 8:55	Continental Breakfast
9:00 – 10:15	Welcome  Data Collection of Student Success  Data Comparisons
10:15 – 10:30	Break
10:30 – 11:45	What is Coteaching?  What is not Coteaching
11:45 – 12:00	Questions and Answers: Discussion
12:00 – 1:00	Lunch
1:00 – 2:15	Instructors who have taught for more than one year  Instructors who have taught one year
2:15 – 2:45	Questions and Answers
2:45 – 3:30	Discussion: Ways to support coteaching
3:30 – 4:00	Closing Remarks

## PowerPoint Slides Notes: What Is Coteaching

### Coteaching is

- An effective strategy in achieving quality education.
- An accepted teaching model where students need additional assistance to be successful in the academic arena.
- An establishment of trust, communication, and working creatively and constructively.
- When there is a presence of coordination and shared goals.
- A similar belief system that members of the team needed expertise.
- Engagement in both teaching and learning activities.
- A demonstrated leadership in group members.
- includes face-to-face interaction, interdependence with expert individuals, engaged in monitoring interpersonal skills.
- When two or more professional jointly deliver substantive instruction to diverse, or blended, groups of students in a single physical space.

### Coteaching Models

The six coteaching models implemented in cotaught classrooms are:

- One teach/One observe
- One teach/One assist
- Station teaching
- Parallel teaching
- Alternative teaching
- Team teaching

### Important Findings:



Students prefer the following coteaching models because

- the students' learning was significantly improved with
  - Station teaching
  - Parallel teaching
  - Team teaching

Collaboration:

- Is an instructional model for coteaching.
- Requires instructors to develop syllabus/lesson plans, make decisions pertaining to grading assignments, and how instructions will be delivered.
- Provides instructors with opportunities to identify students who excelled appropriately through learning and performing beyond their potential.

Coteaching Is Not:

- Collaboration.
- Mentoring.
- Performing classroom duties.
- Two adults in the classroom.

The Benefits of Coteaching:

- When teachers meet regularly, they learn from one another, feel less isolated and more empowered to design better lessons.
- Professional learning leads to teacher learning. It provides teachers with new ways of thinking about pedagogy, materials, standards, assessments, and classroom management.
- Experienced teachers attend seminars, read articles in professional journals, take graduate courses, or learn to use instructional technology.

- When teachers plan with colleagues, they receive opportunities to share what they have learned from their experiences.
- When teachers collaborate on lesson planning, they contribute to teacher retention by helping novice teachers feel more confident and fulfilled in their careers.
- Teachers who worked at high levels of collaboration reported higher levels of job satisfaction.
- When teachers work together in teams, they feel less stressed and isolation can be reduced.

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## Appendix B: Interview Questions

1. What is your understanding of coteaching?
2. What are your experiences on coteaching?
3. How long have you been planning and collaborating with another teacher when preparing for lessons?
4. What is the impact of coteaching for your students?
5. What type of professional development training did you receive as you prepared to teach with another instructor?
6. What challenges have you encountered in your coteaching experience?
7. Do you wish you had had additional training in coteaching?
8. What additional teaching strategies are available for you to enhance coteaching interactions at the college level?
9. Please share any additional information about coteaching.

### Appendix C: Observations—Framed Questions

1. What are the places where social activity occurs?
2. Who are the people involved in the social action?
3. What individual activities are people engaged in?
4. What group activities are people engaged in?
5. What are the objects people use?
6. What is the sequence of activity that takes place over time?
7. What things are people trying to accomplish?
8. What emotions are expressed?

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## Appendix D: Observations—Steps in Typological Analysis

1. Identify typologies to be analyzed.
2. Read the data, marking entries related to your typologies.
3. Read entries by typology, recording the main ideas in entries on a summary sheet.
4. Look for patterns, relationships, themes within typologies.
5. Read data, coding entries according to patterns identified and keeping a record of what entries go with which elements of your patterns.
6. Decide if your patterns are supported by the data and search the data for nonexamples of your patterns.
7. Look for relationships among the patterns identified.
8. Write your patterns as one-sentence generalizations.
9. Select data excerpts that support your generalizations.

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## Appendix E: Permission From Publisher

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Thank you for your email. You have our permission to use the two pages noted in your request for your research. We do ask that you source our book in your research.

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Dear Editor,

I am a student at Walden University, seeking a doctoral degree. I have been reading, *Doing Qualitative Research in Education Settings* by J. Amos Hatch (2002). I am writing to ask for permission to use page 79 (guideline for early observation) and page 153 (steps in typological analysis) for my research. The topic of my research is on coteaching, and when permission is granted by the IRB office, I will collect data from college instructors.

Please let me know if you will need additional information.

Thank you in advance,