

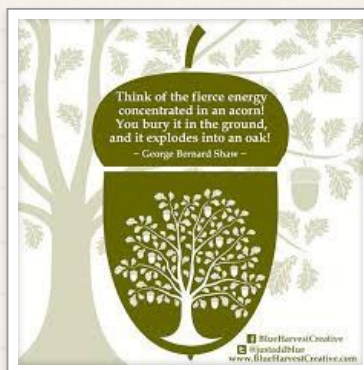
The Acorn

A Newsletter for CSB/SJU Cooperating Teachers

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Growing, Nurturing, Developing, and Supporting

"The Acorn" is a newsletter for the cooperating teachers working with student teachers from the College of St. Benedict and St. John's University. This publication is intended to help our cooperating teachers understand their roles and responsibilities as well as provide them with current research and best practice on working with student teachers.



Handing Over the Keys--Gradual Release for Student Teachers

Charlotte Danielson (1996) wrote, "the complexity of teaching can be daunting for those new to the profession. Teaching is one of the few professions in which novices must assume the same responsibilities as veterans in the field" (p. 55). While these words shared almost 25 years ago, reality hasn't changed. New teachers still enter classrooms with the same expectations as their veteran peers did a couple of decades ago. With that in mind, student teaching is designed to bridge the staged experiences of education coursework with the 'real-world' classroom. And, as cooperating teachers and supporters of student teachers, we can apply our own teaching strategies to help ease that transition.

When we introduce a new skill-based concept to our students, we do not expect immediate mastery or success. Consider the example of learning to drive. We wisely don't hand our five-

year-olds our car keys and have them drive to school. There are considerations for preparedness and a process to developing that responsibility. The children watch us drive over a period of time, having modeling from experienced drivers; they learn the 'rules of the road' through direct instruction and guided practice with corrective feedback. Eventually, they take the wheel, receiving suggestive feedback as they gain the independence to prove their capabilities on their own. We do this on a smaller scale in our classrooms with the gradual release of responsibility (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983; See *Gradual Release of Responsibility Diagram* below).

And, this same process can be used in working with student teachers. In the first few weeks of student teaching, student teachers can and should be observing teachers in the assigned classroom and throughout the school. The focused instruction serves as the material presentation where the student teacher is provided with access to new concepts and skills of teaching. With the cooperating teacher, the student teacher can then move into the guided instruction through co-teaching models (Cook & Friend, 1995). To begin, the cooperating teacher could help the student teacher master smaller parts of the teaching process using the "one teach, one assist" model (See *Co-Teaching Approaches* chart below).

As the student teacher's skills and confidence grow, collaborative practice could include station teaching, parallel teaching, alternative/differentiated teaching, and team teaching. During this time, opportunities to provide feedback can be authentic and timely (Podsen & Denmark, 2000; p. 75, 95). Although the co-teaching strategies are powerful teaching and learning models, we want our student teacher to be able to demonstrate independent practice; so, there should be a time where they solo teach and learn to traverse the complexities of the classroom on their own. Knowing there are moments where support is needed, cooperating teachers now serve as coaches and mentors providing suggestive feedback toward improvement (Henry & Weber, 2016; p. 16).

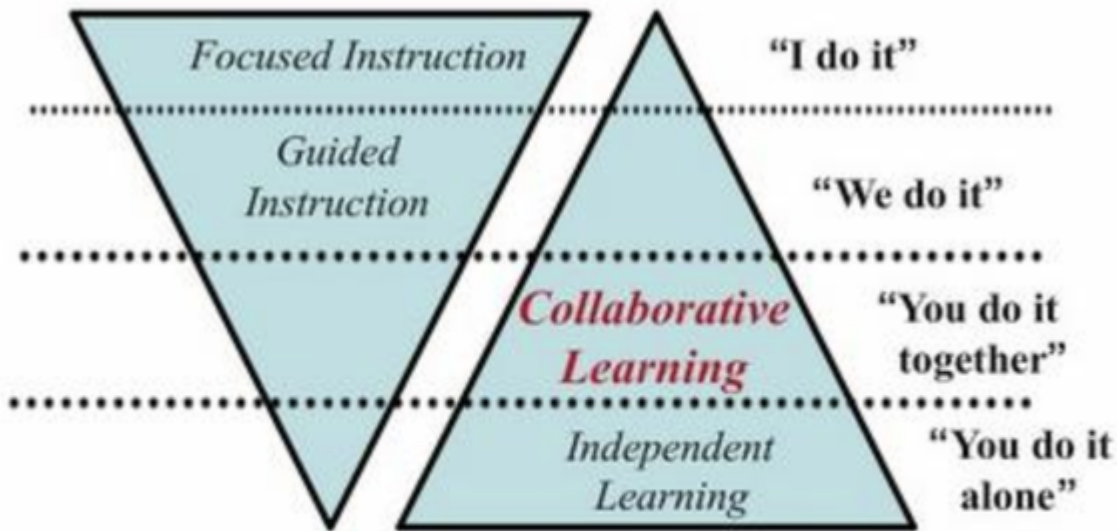
The excitement of the new school year and of our student teachers might incite us to be liberal in handing over the keys. Be encouraged to enjoy the drive together for a while as the student teacher develops a better understanding of the expectations and landscapes of this journey into the greater responsibilities of teaching.

References:

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- Pearson, P. D. & Gallagher, M. C. (1983). The Instruction of reading comprehension. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 8. pp. 317-344.
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GRADUAL RELEASE OF RESPONSIBILITY DIAGRAM

TEACHER RESPONSIBILITY



STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY

A Model for Success for All Students

Fisher, D., & Frey, N. (2013). *Better learning through structured teaching: A framework for the gradual release of responsibility* (2nd ed.). Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Co-Teaching Approaches

- **One Teach, One Observe** – Co-teachers decide in advance what types of specific observational information to gather during instruction and can agree on a system for gathering the data. Afterward, the teachers should analyze the information together. The teachers should take turns teaching and gathering data, rather than assuming that the special educator is the only person who should observe.
- **Station Teaching** – Co-teachers divide content and students. Each teacher then teaches the content to one group and subsequently repeats the instruction for the other group. If appropriate, a third "station" could give students an opportunity to work independently. As co-teachers become comfortable with their partnership, they may add groups or otherwise create variations of this model.
- **Parallel Teaching** – Co-teachers are both teaching the same information, but they do so to a divided class group. Parallel also may be used to vary learning experiences, for example, by providing manipulatives to one group but not the other or by having the groups read about the same topic but at different levels of difficulty.
- **Alternative Teaching** – one teacher takes responsibility for the large group while the other works with a smaller group. These smaller groups could be used for remediation, pre-teaching, to help students who have been absent catch up on key instruction, assessment, and so on.
- **Teaming** – both teachers share delivery of the same instruction to a whole student group. Some teachers refer to this as having "one brain in two bodies." Others call it "tag team teaching." Most co-teachers consider this approach the most complex but satisfying way to co-teach, but it is the approach that is most dependent on teachers' styles.
- **One Teach, One Assist** – one teacher keeps primary responsibility for teaching while the other professional circulated through the room providing unobtrusive assistance to students as needed. This should be the least often employed co-teaching approach.

What to Do During Weeks 2 & 3

Remember that helpful information can be found in our handbooks: [cooperating teacher handbook](#) and [student teaching handbook](#)

Please fill out the [cooperating teacher information](#) page if not done so already.

For Weeks 2-3:

- Work with the student teacher in planning, preparation of lessons and materials, monitoring student work.
- Review the student teacher's lesson plans (CSB/SJU approved lesson plans should be used for the first two-three weeks of teaching).
- Co-teach lessons throughout the day (Consider the Co-Teaching Approaches above)
- Informally observe and provide feedback
- Elementary:
 - Allow the student teacher to solo teach 30-40 minutes per day ONLY in the subject chosen for edTPA and lead morning meetings/classroom routines. Add on time for week 3, and begin with other areas, if appropriate
 - Conduct informal observations of the lessons taught and provide feedback.
- Secondary:
 - Allow the student teacher to begin teaching in the edTPA-related course (at least one section); add on an additional section as appropriate
 - Conduct informal observations of the lessons taught and provide feedback

At the end of each day of those first few weeks, visit with the student teacher about how they are doing, what plans you have, how they can contribute, and deliver any feedback you have about the day. It is best to be transparent, upfront, and clear! Student teachers appreciate honestly knowing how they are doing. It helps calm their nerves and assists in building communication.

Cultural Competency and Culturally Relevant Teaching

A perspective from NEA

Cultural Competence: What Does It Mean For Educators?



Should Educators Be Culturally Competent?



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