Overview of Co-teaching Research

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Agenda

• Review of Empirical Literature on Co-teaching for Students with Disabilities (Cook et al. 2011)
  • Experimental Research
  • Non-experimental, Explanatory Research
  • Other Quantitative Research
  • Qualitative Research
How adequate is the research knowledge base?

- DLD/DR Alert: *Use with Caution*(2001)
- Most published literature is not empirical but “how to’s”
- Research is very difficult to conduct
- Rich description of co-teaching via interviews, observations, and focus groups
- Lacking evidence of effectiveness on academic and behavioral outcomes

Zigmond & Magiera, 2001; Zigmond, Magiera, Simmons, & Volonino, *in press*
Quantitative Research

- Meta-synthesis (Murawski & Swason, 2001)
- 89 articles reviewed
  - 6 provided sufficient quantitative information
  - Measured academic achievement, social and attitudinal outcomes.
- Results: 0.40 effect size
  - Moderate effect size
  - Interpret with caution
  - Potential for positive results
Experimental Research

• **Side Note:**
  - None of the studies reviewed by Murawski & Swanson (2001) are true group experimental studies. However one was considered quasi-experimental (Cook et al, 2011)

• Fontana (2005) examined the effect of CT on English and math grades for students with LD.
  - Students with LD were randomly assigned to CT ($n=17$) or NCT ($n=16$) English and math class and all students also received one period of resource room support
  - Grades for students in CT classes increased significantly but not for students in NCT classes
  - Effect size: $(d) = 0.81$ for English grades
    $(d) = 0.40$ for math grades
Experimental Research Cont.

- Murawski (2006)
  - 110 9th grade students (38 with LD)
  - Six English classes
  - Four conditions: (a) non-inclusive general education class, (b) two solo-taught inclusive classes, (c) two co-taught inclusive classes, and (d) one special education class.
  - Student placement based on student ability and family preference. However students with LD selected for an inclusive class were randomly assigned to inclusive co-taught ($n = 12$) or inclusive solo-taught ($n = 8$) class.
  - Results: No significant main effects
  - Cook et al. computed effect sizes on students with LD including $d = 1.15$ (spelling); 0.62 (reading comprehension); -0.49 (math); -0.51 (vocabulary); -0.95 (spontaneous writing)
Non-experimental, Explanatory Research

- *Side note:* Cook et al. (2011) considered five of the six studies in Murawski and Swanson’s (2001) meta-analysis to be explanatory.

- Rea et al. (2002) compared outcomes for middle school students with LD from two schools: (a) practiced co-teaching \((n = 22)\) and (b) used a pull-out model \((n = 36)\).

- Results: Significant findings for grades, ITBS scores in language and math, and attendance; No significant findings for proficiency tests and school suspensions
McDuffie et al. (2009) examined the differential effects of a peer tutoring intervention in co-taught and non-co-taught settings. In co-taught versus non co-taught classes, with and without classwide peer tutoring on science concepts and facts, 203 7th grade science students (62 of whom received special education services). Results: Significant main effects for co-teaching on unit and cumulative posttests. Effect size for students with disabilities: \( d = 0.35 \) for unit tests; 0.29 for cumulative test.
Other Quantitative Research

- Observational studies
  - Mageria & Zigmond (2005) observed instructional experiences of students with disabilities in 11 co-taught classrooms.
  - Conducted observations when both teachers were present and when only the general education teacher was present.
  - Results: students with disabilities interacted significantly less with the general education teacher but received significantly more individual instruction during co-teaching.
  - McDuffie et al. (2009) found the opposite to be true. Students in a solo-taught class interacted more with the teacher than students in co-taught classes.
Other Quantitative Research

• Magiera et al. (2005) conducted observations in 20 co-taught secondary math classes.
  • Results: Dominant instructional arrangements included (a) both teachers monitoring seatwork, and (b) one lead/one support model. Team teaching only occurred in 9 of the 49 observations.

• Harbort et al. (2007) found similar results. General education teacher leads the instruction; one lead/one support model used exclusively.

• Zigmond and Matta (2004) and Murawski (2006) reported similar results.
Qualitative Research

- Co-teaching Meta-Synthesis
  - (Scruggs, Mastropieri, & McDuffie, 2007)

- Research Questions:
  - How is co-teaching being implemented?
  - What are perceptions of teachers?
  - What problems are encountered?
  - What benefits are perceived?
  - What factors are needed to ensure success of co-teaching?
What do studies represent?

- Co-teachers represented a wide variety of geographical areas, locations (urban, rural, suburban), and grade levels
  - 454 co-teachers
  - 15 elem; 14 secondary

- Schools were chosen as “typical,” “representative,” or “outstanding” (10) in implementing co-teaching

- Present sample may be somewhat more successful than the overall co-teaching population.
Conclusions

• Co-teaching has great potential for promoting the effective inclusion of students with disabilities.

• Many teachers, students, and administrators report satisfaction with the efficacy of co-teaching.

• In many or most cases, special education teachers do not participate as full partners in the co-teaching enterprise, but function more as “support” personnel.
  • This difference is increased when there is a difference in content knowledge.

• In many or most cases, inclusive co-taught classes operate similarly to typical general education classes.
Conclusions cont.

• Students with disabilities receive additional attention, but do not receive instruction in specific academic and behavioral strategies more typical of special education classes.

• If present data are representative of co-taught classrooms, co-teaching is not generally being implemented as originally envisioned.

• Schools should re-double efforts to engage participation of both teachers as full partners in the co-teaching process.

• Administrative support, time for planning, and screening for co-teacher compatibility are important issues that should be carefully considered.
Summary of Research

• Co-teaching typically involves the use of one lead/one support model

• Special education teachers feel under-utilized

• Instruction is seldom individualized nor does it incorporate research-based practices

• Student-teacher interaction is not increased through co-teaching

• Mixed results on improvement for academic and behavioral outcomes
References


References cont.


