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Increasing Student Engagement Through the Co-Teaching Model

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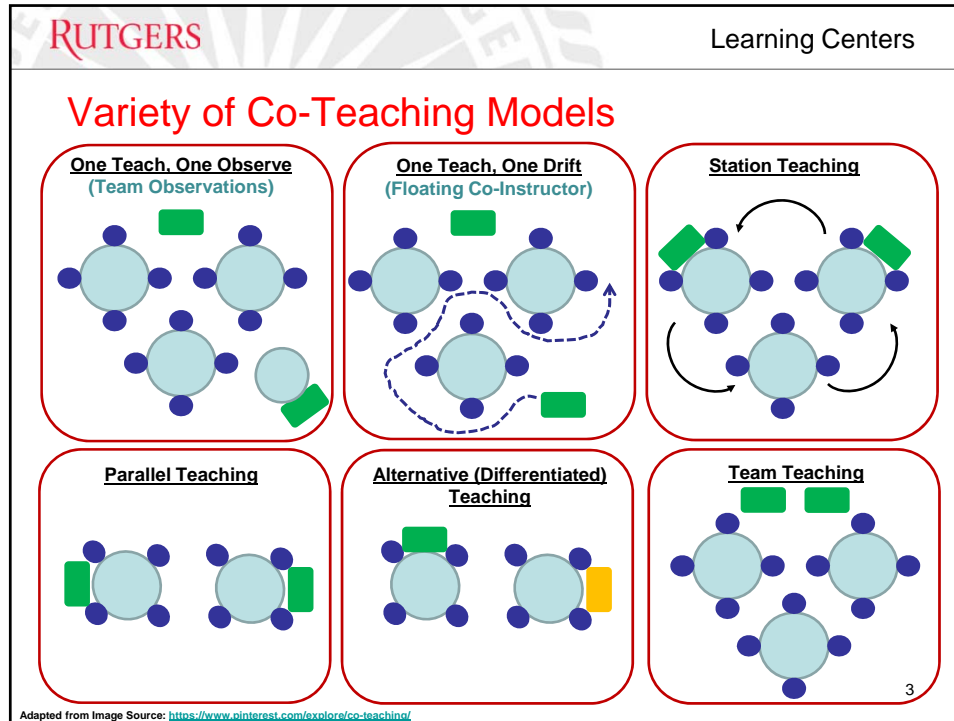
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Co-Teaching: Traditional Model

- Traditionally, co-teaching involves two individuals jointly instructing a class session (Cook & Friend, 1995)
- Different established models of co-teaching (Bacharach *et al.*, 2008)
 - One Teach, One Observe
 - One Teach, One Drift (Floating Co-Instructor)
 - Station Teaching
 - Parallel Teaching
 - Alternative (Differentiated) Teaching
 - Team Teaching

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Background of Peer Instructor Education Course (PIE)

- Co-teaching implemented into Peer Instructor Education course since Fall 2011 (first year)
 - Offered through the Learning Centers
 - 300-level, 3-credit, 3-hour course
 - Began with two sections taught only in fall
 - Required for Learning Assistants (undergraduate peer leaders)

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Background of PIE Course

- Pedagogy Dynamics
 - Active learning environment and flipped classroom
 - Advantageous for co-instructors

- Flipped classroom
 - Students read articles outside of class each week
 - In-class group activities based on readings
 - Reading guides for quizzes

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Feedback on Active Learning Components

- 21 of 25 students from Spring 2018 “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that the reading guides helped them to more fully understand the content and to prepare for in-class discussions.

- “I learned that instructors are not the center of the class, instead **students are expected to be the center**. Additionally, **group activities** should be thought highly of due to their **effectiveness in enhancing students' exchange ideas** & constructing proper mental models & facilitating conceptual changes. Also, I **valued the group discussion** during this course...”

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Background of PIE Course

- Structure and curriculum changed over last seven years
 - Up to 7 sections offered in fall and up to 2 sections in spring
 - Now open to all peer leaders at Rutgers and students interested in peer education

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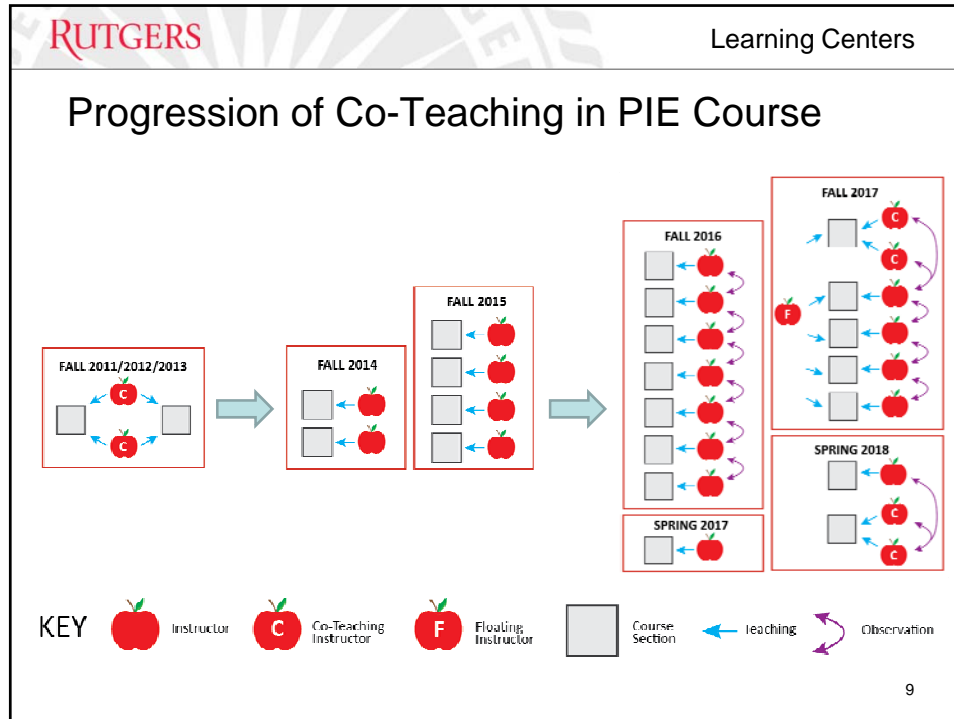
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First Semester of PIE Course

FALL 2011/2012/2013

KEY Instructor Co-teaching instructor Floating Instructor Course Section Teaching Observation

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Identifying Teaching Strategies Activity

- Brainstorm at least 1 – 2 different teaching strategies that you currently use in class.
- How could your strategies be implemented with two co-teaching instructors? What co-teaching model would you use?
- What would be the benefits of having two co-teaching instructors? Limitations?

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Student PIE Course Evaluations

- Fall 2017
 - 1 team-teaching section (consistent each week)
 - 4 single-instructor sections (floating co-instructor in class once during semester)
 - New question added to student evaluation: *Specifically for the weeks that were co-taught (by two or more teachers), describe the benefits and drawbacks of this form of instruction.*
- Spring 2018
 - 1 team-teaching section and 1 single-instructor section

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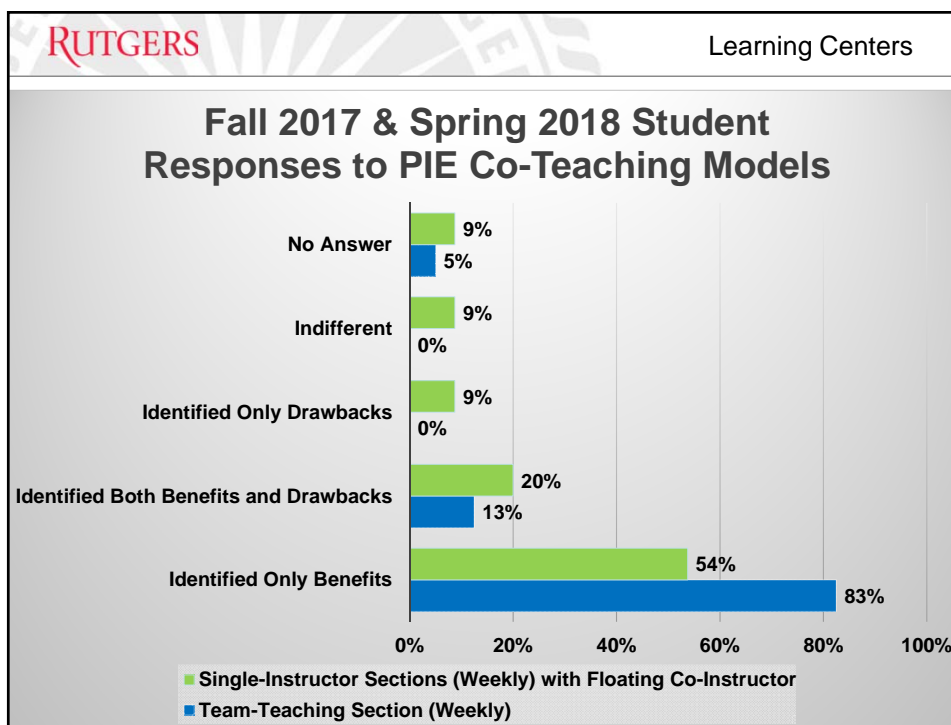
Fall 2017 & Spring 2018 Student Evaluations

	Fall 2017 Students	Spring 2018 Students
Completed Course	107	26
Completed Course Evaluations	104	25
Team-Teaching Sections	24	16
Single-Instructor Sections with Floating Co-Instructor	80	N/A
Single-Instructor Sections	N/A	9

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Fall 2017 & Spring 2018 Student Evaluations						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Question: <i>Specifically for the weeks that were co-taught (by two or more teachers), describe the benefits and drawbacks of this form of instruction.</i> 						
	Total Number of Students	Identified Only Benefits	Identified Both Benefits and Drawbacks	Identified Only Drawbacks	Indifferent	No Answer
Team-Teaching Section	40	33	5	0	0	2
Single-Instructor Sections with Floating Co-Instructor	80	43	16	7	7	7

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Positive Feedback for Fall 2017 & Spring 2018 Team-Teaching Sections

- Overall positive experience
- Multiple instructor perspectives and increased student engagement
- More stability in having same co-instructors week-to-week and time for connections to deepen

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- “Both instructors **kept each other on track, offered different ideas and interpretations, and were able to effectively help the small groups.**”
- “Because the co-teachers worked together with a lot of synergy, co-taught sessions **felt more cohesive, comprehensive, and complete**, co-teaching also helped to **model how LAs might coordinate with instructors.**”

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Constructive Feedback for Fall 2017 & Spring 2018 Team-Teaching Sections

- Having two instructors may take more time to share same material but in different ways
- Floating co-instructor felt more chaotic since there were three instructors in the room at once

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Feedback for Fall 2017 Single-Instructor Sections with Floating Co-Instructor

- Positive
 - Different instructor perspectives and varied class pace
 - More attention given to students with at least 2 instructors in room
- Constructive
 - Felt disjointed or unorganized when new instructor joined; unsure of what to expect

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- “Having the instructors was nice because we got **more time with an instructor in our small group discussions**. The drawbacks is sometimes the instructors **operate differently** and its weird to have two instructors **with very different styles or sometimes contradict.**”

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Advantages & Cautions of Co-Teaching

	Students	Instructors	Coordinators
Advantages	More interaction with instructors	More support in classroom	More instructors to call upon in case of emergency
	Exposed to varying perspectives among instructors	Can more closely monitor student engagement	Instructors can provide more specific feedback about students
	Experience different teaching styles		
	Breaks up a long class		
Cautions	Must adjust to different teaching styles	Important to coordinate lesson ahead of time	Need a deep talent pool to staff course
	Potential for mixed messages	Need compatible working styles	More instructors to coordinate
		Not in total control of lesson	Increased staffing costs

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Future Thoughts & Suggested Improvements

- Informal observations conducted in Fall 2016 & Fall 2017
 - Using a feedback form may help to standardize what elements of the classroom environment and dynamics we are focusing on
 - Identify strengths & areas of improvement of instructor's teaching
 - Observe student responses and reactions
 - Analyze the structure of activities, group structures and outcomes
 - Need to consider if course coordinators will view team observation reports

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Future Thoughts & Suggested Improvements

- Student evaluations (at the start and end of the course)
 - More targeted questions related to the co-teaching experience & to the presence of a floating co-instructor
 - Specifically for co-taught sections: *“What is your definition of co-teaching? Provide an example.”*
- Integration of the floating co-instructor
 - Examining most beneficial co-teaching model to use during class sessions

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References

- Bacharach, N., Heck, T. W., & Dahlberg, K. (2008). Co-teaching in higher education. *Journal of College Teaching & Learning*, 5(3), 9–16.
- Cook, L. & Friend, M. (1995). Co-Teaching: Guidelines for creating effective practices. *Focus on Exceptional Children*, 28(3).

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–First co-instructor for Peer Instructor Education

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Questions?

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