

Meeting the needs of students with special educational needs through team teaching.

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Aims

Rationale for teacher collaboration

**Guiding principles of teacher
collaboration in the form of team-
teaching**



Objectives

- Define team-teaching ;
- Define teachers' roles
- Outline benefits for schools, students and teachers;
- Potential challenges for schools;
- Importance of Co-planning/Model

Rationale for teacher collaboration

- ‘ Collaborative approaches to educating learners with special educational needs are becoming increasingly embedded in educational systems around the world. Although many aspects of collaboration are still to be researched there is sufficient empirical evidence in support of its underlying philosophy to justify its implementation’. D. Mitchell. (2008)

Rationale



The Guidelines on the provision of special education at post primary level (2007) and the N.C.C.A. documents on the same topic (2006) recommend the provision of support within the regular classroom.

Rationale

- 1970s: shared areas
- DES Circular 24/03: “wherever possible, schools should provide additional help for children in the mainstream classroom....”
- SEN teams
- EPSEN 2004: inclusion wherever possible, with caveats
- DES Circular 02/05: Co-teaching specifically recommended as inclusive model

Placing students with SEN in mainstream classes

- 'children with special needs cannot simply be placed in mainstream settings in the hope that normality will rub off on them' Mc Namara and Moreton (1993)
- Schools have to prepare
- The employment of team-teaching takes the stigma away from any one student and provides a better learning and teaching environment for all.

PROS of placing students with SEN in mainstream classes

- All children learn from each other
 - Typical children become more accepting of individual differences
 - Improved self-esteem
 - Acquire leadership skills/empathetic exposure to a variety of teaching styles
 - SEN students have role-models
- Can be cost effective
- Natural Environment-world is inclusive

Team Teaching

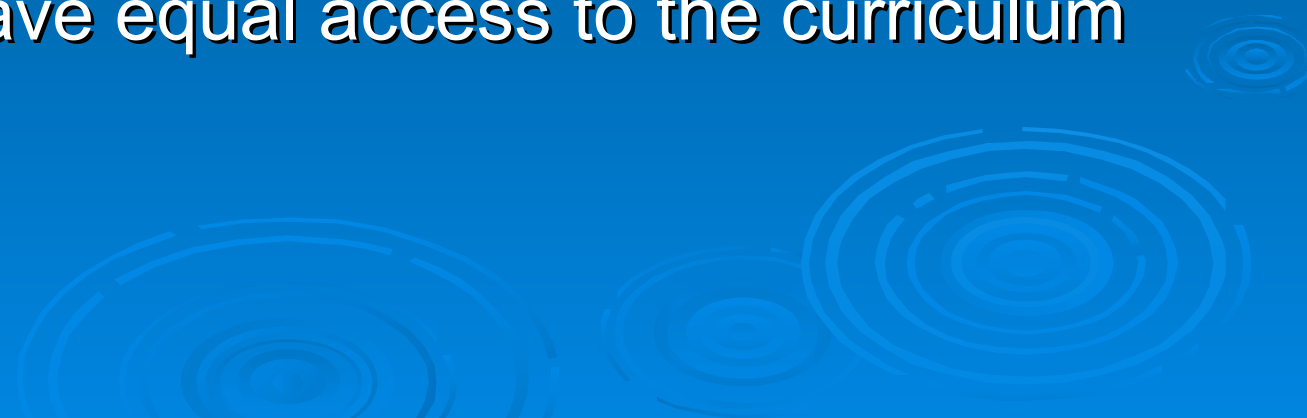
Team teaching occurs when two or more teachers jointly deliver instruction to a diverse group of students in a single physical space.

(Cook and Friend, 1995: 1)

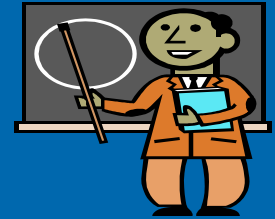
Team Teaching

- Teachers share responsibility for planning and instruction
- Teachers work collaboratively on delivering content, developing skills, clarifying information, facilitating learning and classroom management
- Requires mutual trust, respect and empathy between teachers.

Strengths of team-teaching at Post-primary level:

- Inclusiveness
 - Helpful academically, but not a substitution for any necessary modifications/accommodations
 - Raises issue of inclusion amongst general student populous
 - Offers a less fragmented education
 - All pupils have equal access to the curriculum
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Considerations

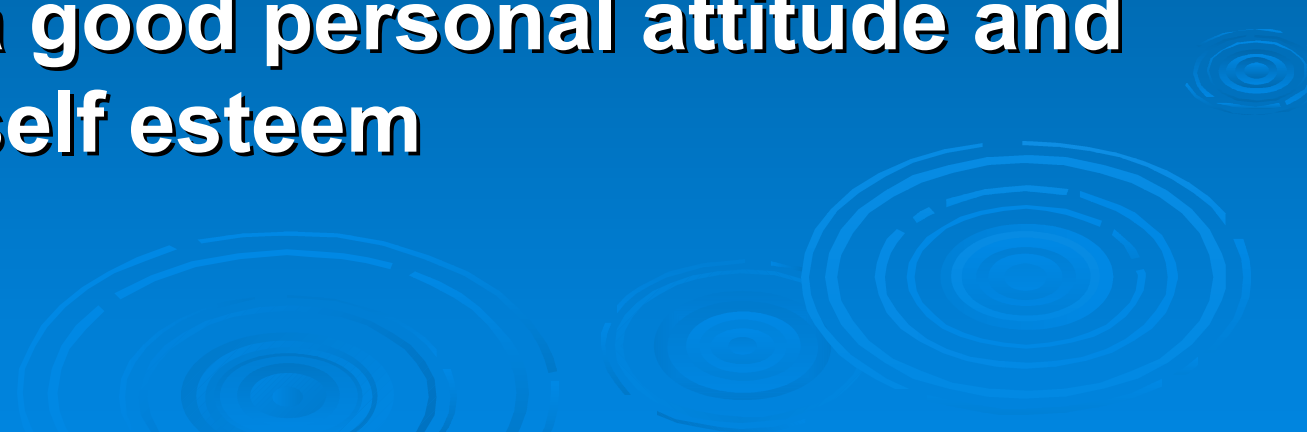


- Teachers need to volunteer and agree to team-teach
- Gradual implementation
- Attention needs to be given to planning to enable desired learning outcomes for all students to be achieved
- Continuity of scheduling
- Careful timetabling in advance
- Flexibility of teachers involved – compatibility
- Common approach to discipline

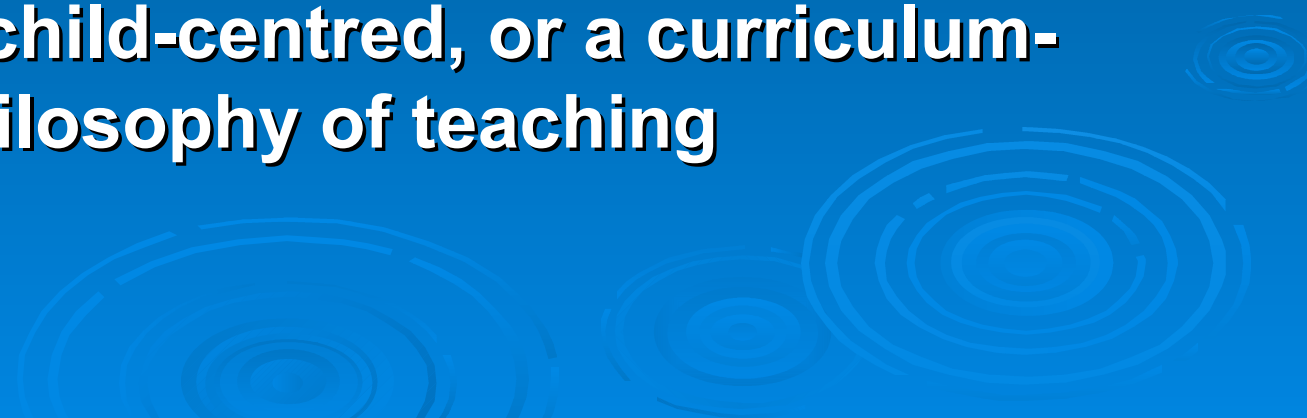
Guiding Principles for team-teaching

- **Teachers who are comfortable taking the initiative, self confident in their knowledge and in their abilities and who are committed to their profession fare well in this environment**
- **There needs to be some compatibility of the team-members educational philosophies and professional attitudes**
- **The teachers need to develop a working friendship but do not need to become 'buddies'**

Personal Attributes for team teaching I

- **To be trustworthy**
 - **To have a flexible, friendly personality**
 - **To be able to create a positive atmosphere in the classroom**
 - **To be able to negotiate**
 - **To have a good personal attitude and positive self esteem**
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Personal attributes II

- To have a sense of humour
 - To be able to promote equality and sharing
 - To be a facilitator, rather than an instructor
 - To have a dedication and a commitment to the job of teaching
 - To be willing to try and learn new things
 - To have a child-centred, or a curriculum-centred philosophy of teaching
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It need not be an “all-or-nothing” approach

- Teachers do not have to commit to only team-teaching as an approach;
- Team-teaching is not the only option for meeting the needs of SEN students;
- Team-teaching may not be appropriate in some subject areas;
- SEN students will typically be in a team-teaching classroom for only part of the day.

What are the benefits for the school?



1. Allows for greater inclusion of SEN students in the mainstream.
2. Allows for collaboration between all teachers.
3. Allows for the promotion of models of good practice.
4. Additional support is made available to a whole class group while monitoring and supporting individual students.
5. Promotes a positive relationship between student and teacher(s)
6. Allows for modelling of positive behaviour in classrooms.
7. Allows teachers to differentiate programmes of work and support initiatives within the school

What are the benefits for the student?



1. Increased teacher time for the students due to 2 adults working together either inside or outside the classroom.
2. Allows Target students to be grouped
3. Supports inclusion through access to the curriculum without stigma of withdrawal.
4. Provides differentiated learning experiences for all learning styles and abilities e.g. additional material etc.
5. Allows for greater variety – skills and modes of working.

What are the benefits for the teacher?



1. Allows for the Learning Support and Resource Teacher to deal with larger numbers of pupils than if they were working solely on their own.
2. Avoids teacher isolation.
3. Provides opportunities for shared decisions.
4. Planning is supported because it is shared.
5. May be a rewarding experience.
6. Sharing of workload and materials to be produced.
7. Behavioural problems may be more easily diffused.
8. Sharing 'good practice' ideas.

Potential Challenges

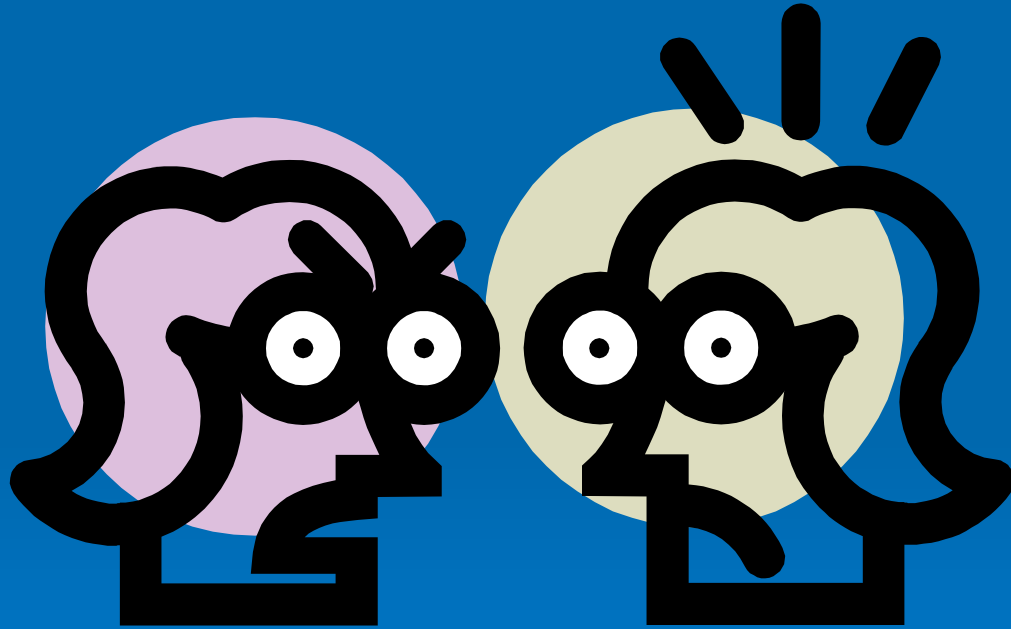
- Not easy to maintain in schools
- Teachers may not work well together
- May be a disproportionate no. of SEN students in co-operative taught classrooms
- SEN teachers can function as more of a SNA than a co-teacher.

Teachers' Reservations to team-teaching

- Specific subject knowledge
- Power relations
- Time-table issues
- Examinations
- Student preference
- Systemic approach?

What happens when team teaching doesn't work ?

- What do you do?



Collaboration on Curriculum

‘Moving the collaboration away from teachers problems (where it often is) to the curriculum has a positive impact on classroom instruction and generally improves the educational programme’

(Montague and Warner, 2001)

What happens when team teaching does not work ?

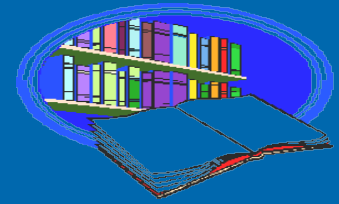
- Have an agreed mechanism for ending arrangements e.g. end of 1st term. This avoids bad feelings, feelings of failure/frustration.
- Be non-judgemental, sensitive and understanding.
- Problem usually *between people* rather than *within* any 1 individual.
- Take a professional approach

Final thoughts on what team-teaching can offer?



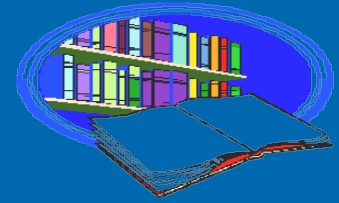
- Improve educational for the whole class;
- Share the load of classroom management;
- Provide specific expertise/knowledge to the mainstream teacher from the specialist teacher;
- Time can be devoted to modifying teaching materials/ differentiating;
- Facilitates the maintenance of detailed records and observations;
- Builds trusting relationships between colleagues.

References



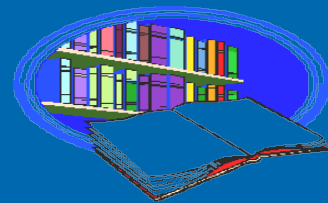
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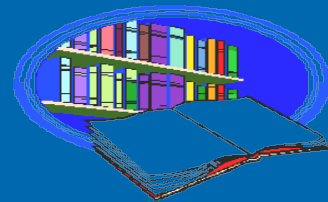
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