HLP 1: Collaborate with Professionals to Increase Student Success

High-Leverage Practices for Students with Disabilities

It is very easy for professionals working in schools to take collaboration for granted. Obviously, teachers and other staff see and speak to one another on a regular basis, which can give the illusion that collaboration is happening. However, as noted by Friend and Barron (2019), interaction alone does not constitute collaboration. True collaboration requires intention, effort, and skill on the part of professionals, and results in positive outcomes for all parties – especially students with disabilities and others who struggle. HLP 1 is one of the most essential practices to master because it is one of the HLPs used every single day regardless of grade level, content area, or disability status of students. The effective special educator who collaborates well with their colleagues will then be in a strong position to also collaborate with families (HLP 3) and run effective meetings so quality programming can be decided upon and then implemented (HLP 2). In addition, collaboration is essential to implementing essentially all of the social/ behavioral and instruction HLPs as well. In sum, this is HLP 1 for a very good reason.

This resource is intended to support school leaders looking to embed the HLPs in professional development, implementation, teacher observation and feedback efforts at their school site.

The major source for content within this resource is the chapter by Marilyn Friend and Tammy Barron in *High-Leverage Practices in the Inclusive Classroom*; the book *High-Leverage Practices in Special Education: The Final Report of the HLP Writing Team*, and content on www.highleveragepractices.org.

Teachers Who Effectively Collaborate with Other Professionals

Demonstrate Communication Skills
- Demonstrate verbal active listening skills (e.g., paraphrasing).
- Demonstrate nonverbal active listening skills (e.g., facial expressions).
- Use open-ended questioning to encourage active participation and sharing of information from other professionals.
- Use statements that are accurate and descriptive rather than vague and evaluative.
- Carefully blend the above communication skills to foster partnership among professionals.

Co-Teaching & Working with Paraprofessionals
- Co-teaching partners have a strong commitment to their shared work.
- Co-teaching partners communicate and plan with each other regularly.
- Co-teaching partners share resources, decision-making, and accountability.
- Co-teaching partners (and in some cases, paraprofessionals) plan for and use a variety of co-teaching approaches to meet students' needs.
- Clearly establish and agree upon roles and responsibilities between co-teaching partners and paraprofessionals.

Follow Interaction Processes
- Follow the steps to shared problem solving to manage conflicts or disagreements.
- Rely upon student data to support viewpoints when managing conflicts or disagreements.
- Seek additional help from school leaders to facilitate further discussion If unable to come to an agreement on a problem

Tips for School Leaders to Support Teachers
- Ensure sufficient, common time is provided for team planning and co-planning.
- Communicate that co-teachers (and other collaborators) are of equal value and are expected to make equal contributions to planning and instruction.
- Take co-teaching needs into account when creating the school master schedule.
- Support all professionals in implementation of specially designed instruction and supports noted in IEPs.
- Set up data systems to guide teachers' work and communicate shared accountability in using/maintaining these data systems.
- Be proactive in monitoring collaborators' communication and planning – provide guidance to individuals as needed, to help move their communication and planning in a positive direction.

Questions to Prompt Discussion, Self-Reflection, and Observer Feedback

- How can you show individuals with whom you collaborate with that you are actively listening to them?
- What role does collaboration play in establishing a partnership and avoiding conflict when co-teaching?
- How can you rephrase questions to encourage thoughtful and informative responses from collaborators?
- In what ways can you try to ensure that your communicative messages are received as intended?
- If conflict/disagreement arises, what strategies can you use to mend the situation?
- How can you ensure that the interactions and goals are focused on improved student outcomes?

Online Resources

High-Leverage Practices in Georgia Webinar Series | CEEDAR
This series is a 7-part webinar that creates awareness of High-Leverage Practices and how these practices align within Georgia's Tiered System of Support for Students. This series provides information and resources that are applicable to stakeholders in various settings. Webinar 1 covers Collaboration, Assessment, and Social/Emotional/Behavioral HLPs; Webinar 3 covers HLPs 1 and 4.

High-Leverage Practices: A Professional Development Guide for School Leaders
A downloadable online guide providing school leaders, including administrators, principals, mentors and coaches, with practical tools for engaging staff members in learning about how high-leverage practices can enhance student learning in the school and district.

Books

Friend, M. (2019). *Co-teach! : Building and sustaining effective classroom partnerships in inclusive schools*. Marilyn Friend, Inc.

Friend, M., & Cook, L. (2017). *Interactions : Collaboration skills for school professionals*. Pearson.

Journal Articles

Charles, K. J., & Dickens, V. (2012). Closing the communication gap: Web 2.0 tools for enhanced planning and collaboration. *TEACHING Exceptional Children, 45*(2), 24–32. https://doi.org/10.1177/004005991204500203

Cook, S. C., & McDuffie-Landrum, K. (2019). Integrating effective practices into co-teaching: Increasing outcomes for students with disabilities. *Intervention in School and Clinic, 55*(4), 221–229. https://doi.org/10.1177/1053451219855739

Friend, M. (2015). Welcome to Co-Teaching 2.0. *Educational Leadership, 73*(4), 16–22.

Ploessl, D. M., Rock, M. L., Schoenfeld, N., & Blanks, B. (2009). On the same page: Practical techniques to enhance co-teaching interactions. *Intervention in School and Clinic, 45*(3), 158–168. https://doi.org/10.1177/1053451209349529

Satterlee Vizenor, A., & Matuska, J. (2018). Actualizing characteristics of successful schools for young adolescents through co-teaching. *Middle School Journal, 49*(3), 17–25. https://doi.org/10.1080/00940771.2018.1439666

Torres, C., Farley, C. A., & Cook, B. G. (2014). A special educator's guide to successfully implementing evidence-based practices. *TEACHING Exceptional Children, 47*(2), 85–93. https://doi.org/10.1177/0040059914553209

Zirkel, P. A. (2011). What does the law say? *TEACHING Exceptional Children, 43*(3), 65–67. https://doi.org/10.1177/004005991104300308