

Course Title: Teaching and Learning through Collaboration

Instructor: Cara Shores, Kim Chester, and Debbie Silver

Length: 10 hours

Course Description:

A successful collaborative classroom calls for a subtle and complex alliance between teachers, between teachers and students, and between students. Presenters Cara Shores and Kim Chester walk educators through the steps and strategies for developing collaborative and co-teaching teams to implement inclusive teaching practices in the classroom. Educators will learn to recognize the characteristics of effective teams, including how team members define their roles, share responsibilities, and leverage each other's strengths. They will also consider a variety of co-teaching models, including teaching/observing, station teaching, parallel teaching, and team teaching. Dr. Debbie Silver then demonstrates strategies for creating cooperative learning groups and facilitating interaction among students, including those with and those without disabilities. Teachers will learn to promote interpersonal communications by structuring classroom activities that develop active listening, consensus building, idea sharing, and summarizing skills, essential skills for all students to master. After completing this course, educators will be prepared to work collaboratively in teams and to structure the classroom environment for students to work successfully in collaborative groups.

Course Objective:

After completing this course, educators will know:

- Definitions of teams, co-teaching, and inclusion
- How teams can be effective
- What an effective co-taught classroom looks like
- The individual and shared roles and responsibilities of
 - Administrators
 - General educators
 - Special educators
 - Paraprofessionals
- Issues for co-teachers to address
- Definitions of different co-teaching models
- Attributes of effective planning
- How to assess inclusion students
- How to facilitate interaction of students with and without disabilities
- How to group students to form cooperative learning groups
- How to structure activities that focus on developing students' interpersonal skills such as active listening, building consensus, sharing, or restating

After completing this course, educators will be able to apply the following skills:

- Identify and develop strategies for successful co-teaching and team teaching by addressing:

- Roles and responsibilities
- Classroom routines and classroom management
- Instructional and non-instructional issues
- Communication and teaming issues
- Identify and develop strategies for students to work collaboratively. I.e.:
 - Develop activities using cooperative learning strategies
 - Assign and rotate roles among group members
 - Develop grading practices that hold all students accountable
 - Use flexible grouping strategies as needed

Session Topics (5):

1. Co-Teaching and Collaboration in Inclusive Settings
2. Preparation: Laying the Groundwork for an Effective Inclusion Program
3. Implementation & Organization: Designing and Implementing Instruction to Meet the Needs of All Learners
4. Planning & Evaluation: Planning Strategies and Assessing Student Progress in the Inclusion Classroom
5. Cooperative Learning: Groups that Really Work!

Instructor Overview:

Cara Shores, EdS, began her career as a special education teacher and taught children in both pullout and inclusive classrooms. She received her master's degree and educational specialist's degree from the University of West Georgia and has since served as Student Support Services Coordinator and District Director of Special Education. Mrs. Shores has trained thousands of teachers and administrators across the United States and Canada on practical strategies for inclusion, co-teaching, and increasing achievement for all students through differentiated instruction and RTI. She provides regional and national training for the Council for Exceptional Children. Mrs. Shores is author of *A Comprehensive Approach to RTI: Integrating Academic and Behavioral Interventions* (in press). She is co-author of *Response to Intervention: A Practical Guide for Every Teacher* and *Using RTI for School Improvement: Raising Every Student's Achievement Scores*. Mrs. Shores now serves as the President of Wesley Educational Services.

Kim Chester began as a regular education teacher in an inclusive classroom for many years. During this time, she implemented effective principles of co-teaching and differentiating instruction to meet the diverse needs in her classroom. After her youngest child was born with cerebral palsy, she went back to school to receive her M.Ed. in special education from Kennesaw State University. Currently, she works as a parent mentor in her local school system, as a region AYP consultant, and an educational consultant for Wesley Educational Services. In addition, Mrs. Chester serves on various committees, including the Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities in Georgia. She offers her range of perspectives to educators, parents, and administrators. Mrs. Chester enjoys working with students and teachers in classroom settings providing practical strategies for raising student achievement through inclusion, co-teaching, differentiated instruction, behavior management, and RTI.

Dr. Debbie Silver has 30 years experience as a classroom teacher, staff development instructor, and university professor. A Louisiana State Teacher of the Year, Dr. Silver has been an invited author for several educational journals and has given keynotes at state, national, and international conferences in 49 states, Canada, Europe, and Asia. A featured teacher for the PBS OnLine Teacher Chat, Silver has authored *Drumming to the Beat of Different Marchers: Finding the Rhythm for Teaching Differentiated Learning*, which has been updated and re-released by Incentive Publications. Songs she co-wrote with Monte Selby are featured on his CDs.

Methods of Instruction:

Methods of instruction will include

- Individual sections (5)
- Video lectures (5) (7.5 hours)
- Interactive study guide sessions (5)
- Discussion board interaction (5)
- PowerPoint presentations (5) (40 to 80 pages)
- Transcripts and handouts (100 pages)
- Graded post assessments (5)

Texts and/or Other Materials:

- Transcripts, handouts, and PowerPoint presentations (200 pages)

Assignments

- Interactive study guide Q&A sessions (5)
- Post assessment Q&A sessions (5)

All steps listed under each topic must be completed to receive credit for the course. No partial credit will be given.

Due dates of major assignments, projects, and examinations:

Online, self-running programs can be started and completed at participants' own leisure within two months from the day they begin the course.