Chapter 9

Is Coteaching an Effective Way of Including Children With Special Educational Needs?
Issues and Concerns

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ABSTRACT

Inclusive education is concerned with the effort to overcome barriers that prevent the participation and learning of all children, regardless of their ethnicity, gender, social background, sexuality, disability, or achievement. Inclusive education does not only focus on the barriers students face but focuses on the detailed development of educational cultures, policies, and practice systems as well as in educational institutions, so that they become capable of responding to the diversity of students and treat them equally. Co-teaching involves two or more certified professionals who contract to share instructional responsibility for a single group of students primarily in a single classroom or workspace for specific content or objectives with mutual ownership, pooled resources, and joint accountability. The aim of this chapter is to highlight the benefits of coteaching as an inclusive strategy.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, efforts have been made in many educational systems around the world to develop a more effective system of benefits for children who have special educational needs. Traditionally these children were educated in segregated environments, while more recently the trend is to attend their neighborhood school. This new trend has been influenced by the philosophy of inclusive education, which in recent years has been a key priority of the educational policy of many countries around the world. Inclusive education or total education is defined as the set of pedagogical and educational considerations and practices, which aim to respect and recognize the right of otherness, to remove prejudices and stereotypes against the different and to provide opportunities and possibilities to all citizens for equal and equal participation in political, social and educational development (Soulis, 2002). This education presupposes the inalienable right of every child to attend their neighborhood school and to have the same educational opportunities as every child of their age.

The consequence of this is that schools begin to organize themselves in such a way that they can provide equal opportunities in teaching and learning to all children. Through this, the recognition of the value of each person regardless of their physical, mental and intellectual condition is sought, the promotion of diversity, the development of social consciousness, the awareness of each person's responsibilities towards himself and others. Moreover, one of the most important concerns raised in education is the ways in which the school can offer inclusive practices aiming at school improvement. This chapter elaborates on the inclusive practices that teachers can implement during coteaching. These practices aim to reduce the academic and social marginalization of all children and to increase their participation in school activities. For example, academic marginalization relates to teaching, class participation and the curriculum, while social marginalization refers to the friendships and relationships children develop with each other. Thus, the need to adopt inclusion practices becomes imperative, since the implementation of inclusive education presupposes methodological choices that promote the flexibility and adaptation of teaching in the classroom to include all the students who attend it, laying the foundations for the development of a more inclusive society (Angelidis, 2011).

The abolition of the individual teaching style and the collective approach to planning and conducting teaching by specialists with knowledge in special education is a constant demand of pedagogy (Beninghof, 2020; Dyson, Howes, Roberts & Mitchell, 2005). The most effective approach for maximizing the potential of students with or without special educational needs is the existence of two teachers, one of whom may be a subject teacher and the other a special education teacher (Lofthouse

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