



# Co-Teaching ELLs: Strategies for Success

Co-teaching can be an exciting way to support English language learners' (ELL) success, but it can be challenging. Here are some tips for ELL educators and classroom educators on making their co-teaching partnership work.

For more ideas, see our related article with tips from ELL coach Katy Padilla: <https://www.colorincolorado.org/article/co-teach/ell>



## Co-Teaching ELLs: 8 Strategies for Success

### Observe your partner teacher.

Start by observing your partner teacher. ELL educators can visit their partner's classroom, while classroom teachers can observe the ELL educator in another co-teaching situation or small group lesson.

### Get to know each other's strengths.

Recognizing each other's strengths helps establish a partnership of equals. Talk about the strengths you notice in your partner after observation and then share some of your own strengths and areas of growth.

### Develop a shared understanding of the ELL educator's role and expertise.

Many classroom teachers don't have the chance to see what ELL educators do every day. Co-planning a lesson together and discussing questions related to ELL instruction are great ways to develop a shared understanding of how the ELL educator can support ELLs (and other students in the classroom).

### Establish clear communication procedures.

Be very specific about how and when you will communicate and how to handle changes to your lesson.

### If this is your first time co-teaching, start small.

Start with short activities and lessons at the beginning. Check in regularly to see what's working (or not).

### Be flexible with your co-teaching arrangements.

Keep in mind that each team is unique and that co-teaching can take a lot of different forms. Talk about some different options and prior experiences as you figure out what will work best for your partnership.

### Be ready to try new things — and fail.

It's important to be able to try new things together knowing that some of them won't work. Keep an open mind, avoid making judgments, and keep moving forward when the lesson doesn't go as planned.

### Share successes with colleagues!

Share your successes with your team (and with administrators) to build more support for co-teaching and collaboration. When others see what is possible, it can help collaboration grow more organically.