

CO-TEACHING PARTNERS AND THEIR EXPERIENCES WITH A PUSH-IN

CO-TEACHING MODEL

by

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Abstract

The aim of this capstone research study was to explore the experiences of two co-teaching dyads that participated in the push-in co-teaching support model. Co-teaching has been an increasingly popular approach to creating an inclusive class environment for all students (Friend et al., 2010). The current study examined the experiences of co-teaching dyads using an interpretative phenomenological approach and analysis. Teachers participated in semi-structured focus-group interviews with their co-teaching partners, which aimed to answer the central research question: “What were the experiences of General Education (GE) teachers and Learning Support Services (LSS) teachers as they engaged in a co-teaching support model?” and the sub-question: “How did a push-in co-teaching model influence teachers and their classes?” Findings demonstrate how the classroom learning environment was influenced by co-teacher relationships, collaboration time, and knowledge of the models, providing insight to stakeholders for how to support the implementation of a positive co-taught learning environment.

Keywords: co-teaching, inclusive education, class community, teacher relationships, collaboration

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Dedication

To all those who inspired and encouraged me to be the teacher that I am today, to value every moment with the people around me, and to strive for equity and inclusion.

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Glossary

- i. *Adapt* To provide adaptations or supports in order to support student learning. For example, the use of a calculator in math class.
- ii. *Collaboration* Two or more teachers working together or discussing students and/or lessons.
- iii. *Co-Teaching Dyads* For the purpose of this study, co-teaching dyads are defined as one classroom teacher and one LSS-trained teacher working together to plan and deliver instruction to a diverse group of students, including those with exceptionalities, in a single classroom.
- iv. *Differentiation* Differentiating the learning materials to be at the reading level of the student. For example, providing a student with a leveled-book in a novel-study, while still assessing the curricular competencies.
- v. *General Education Teacher* For the purpose of this study, a general education teacher or classroom teacher is defined as a teacher who specializes in teaching curricular and core competencies for the subject area being taught.
- vi. *Inclusive Environment* An environment that supports the needs of all students, including SWE, such that all students have equitable access to the experience or learning opportunity being provided.
- vii. *Intervention* The application of a strategy to support student growth. For example, implementation of adaptations, differentiated instructions, etc.
- viii. *Learning Support Services* For the purpose of this study, LSS includes all staff that case-manage students with exceptionalities, and/or teach modified courses. This includes

counsellors, administrators, and teachers, and may also include youth care workers and indigenous support workers.

ix. *LSS Teacher* For the purpose of this study, an LSS teacher is defined as a teacher who specializes in differentiating, adapting, and modifying curriculum to best suit students with a wide range of learning, intellectual, behavioral, and physical disabilities. In addition, their expertise also provides them insight in identifying learning barriers in students who may not be designated with learning exceptionalities.

x. *Modify* Modifying work incorporates the modification of the learning outcomes and curriculum to best suit the student's abilities and needs.

xi. *School-Based Team* School Based Teams include counsellors, administrators, youth care workers, aboriginal support workers, LSS teachers, and any staff members connected to the students being discussed.

xii. *Social Emotional Learning* SEL involves knowledge, skills, and attitudes around the development of healthy relationships, self-identity and self-worth, management of emotions, and personal goal-setting.

xiii. *Students with Exceptionalities* For the purpose of this study, students with exceptionalities may be defined as students who face barriers to learning and need supports or interventions to be successful. Typically, these students are those defined as having learning, behavioral, or intellectual disabilities, and have an individualized education plan in place.

Acronyms

i. COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
ii. EA	Educational Assistant
iii. GE	General Education
iv. IP	Interpretative Phenomenological
v. LSS	Learning Support Services
vi. MSS	Mainland Secondary School
vii. SBT	School-Based Team
viii. SEL	Social Emotional Learning
ix. SWE	Students with Exceptionalities
x. UFV	University of the Fraser Valley

Chapter 1: Introduction

Context

In my first few years of teaching, I found myself observing and becoming curious about how Learning Support Services (LSS) programs ran at different schools. I had experience working as a classroom teacher and as an LSS teacher within a high school setting. I regularly took part in problem-solving efforts at School-Based Team (SBT) meetings, reviewing student failure lists (e.g., list of students who failed one or more courses), case-managing, and teaching Students with Exceptionalities (SWE). This role included collaborating with General Education (GE) teachers to differentiate, adapt, and modify curriculum to best suit SWE. Over the years, my experiences created an awareness of the discrepancies between teachers' and schools' approaches to supporting students, whether they were struggling to perform academically or had been identified for behavioral concerns. I began to wonder about the assumptions being made about students; I questioned why some students were brought up to SBT meetings, while others were simply placed on student failure lists. I wondered how LSS teams could support staff and students with identifying and overcoming barriers to student learning. I thought about how discussions amongst staff members who were trained in different areas, had different viewpoints on topics, or represented different ethnic backgrounds, might create shifts in teaching practices and assumptions. I became curious about how these courageous and difficult conversations, in combination with the continuous practice of teacher reflection, might provide teachers with a well-rounded understanding of how to identify and implement appropriate interventions and support strategies for all students.

My curiosity spiked when the LSS team at a small high school within the Lower Mainland, with the pseudonym Mainland Secondary School (MSS), decided to try a push-in co-

teaching model rather than the commonly used pull-out support model for SWE, given that research demonstrates the effectiveness of a push-in model (Bauler et al., 2019; Cobb & Sharma, 2015; Friend & Cook, 1995; Hackett et al., 2019; Murawski & Swanson, 2001; Pickard, 2009).

Push-in Teaching Model

The push-in co-teaching model is defined as two or more teachers planning and delivering instruction to a diverse group of students, including SWE, within a single classroom (Friend & Cook, 1995). There are six distinct models of co-teaching including one-teach-one-assist, parallel teaching, alternative teaching, station teaching, team teaching, and one-teach-one-observe teaching (Friend & Cook, 1995).

The push-in co-teaching model chosen at MSS incorporated teaching dyads between one GE teacher and one LSS-trained teacher. Within this model, the LSS teacher's role was to provide the expertise in determining appropriate differentiation strategies and interventions for students underperforming in the coursework or disconnecting with the school community, whereas the GE teacher's role was to provide expertise in the subject area, teaching strategies for the content being taught, and curricular competencies for the course.

Within MSS, the involvement of the LSS-trained teacher varied from co-teaching dyad to co-teaching dyad based on the co-teaching model that the pair decided on, in addition to the individual circumstances that they faced. Some LSS teachers were given additional duties such as administering school-based testing, organizing psych-ed testing, organizing counselling sessions with outside agencies, and more, which affected their participation and model of co-teaching for which they participated. Diverse co-teaching styles, individual circumstances of teachers participating in co-teaching dyads, and the time-schedule changes as a result of COVID-19 uniquely influenced the experience of co-teaching dyads. For this reason, I became interested

in the qualitative findings, focusing on teachers' personal reflections about their individualized and unique experiences with the push-in co-teaching model. Given the constructivist viewpoint that I held, I was curious about the co-teaching relationship that teaching dyads constructed, the challenges that they faced, their perceptions on the effectiveness of it, and in what ways both teachers grew throughout their experience. I was also curious about co-teachers' perceptions around if and how the model affected the sense of community built within the classroom and their perceptions on student achievement.

Aim of the Study and Scholarly Significance

The intent of this research was to study the teacher dyads at MSS, to understand their unique and personal experiences, and to assess the perceptions held by teacher dyads on the value of push-in co-teaching model of support to themselves and their classes. The research findings shed light on the impact implementing a push-in co-teaching model of support throughout MSS may have, which may also be used to inform how MSS's LSS team will run in future years. The findings may also provide recommendations to the district LSS team for schools with similar contexts. The central research question that guided this research was: what are the experiences of GE teachers and LSS teachers as they engage in a co-teaching support model? The sub-question was: how does a push-in co-teaching model influence teachers and their classes?

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The intent of this study was to explore co-teaching as a method for supporting SWE. The first section includes a brief description of what co-teaching is within the school setting. The second section describes the rationale for implementing and using co-teaching. Finally, the last section discusses the different models of co-teaching and their uses.

What is Co-Teaching?

As early as the late 1980s, co-teaching was described as a means for special education teachers to meet the needs of students in general education classrooms (Friend & Cook, 1995). The idea was that “two or more professionals [delivered] substantive instruction to a diverse, or blended, group of students in a single physical space” (Friend & Cook, 1995, p. 2). In this study, co-teaching involved a classroom or GE teacher, and an LSS-trained teacher, both working together to deliver instruction to all students within a classroom. The GE teacher’s specialization was in understanding, structuring, and pacing the curriculum and core competencies, whereas the LSS-trained teacher was specialized in differentiating, adapting, and enhancing the curriculum to the unique learning needs of all students, especially those with barriers to learning (Friend & Cook, 1995).

Rationale for Co-Teaching

Co-teaching has gained a lot of attention over the years as a way of supporting an inclusive education environment that promotes accessible educational opportunities for all students, including those with exceptionalities. The goals of co-teaching are to increase educational opportunities for all students, increase inclusion and acceptance of SWE, reduce stigma for SWE, increase the amount of support students receive, and increase metacognition of teacher practice.

Improvement of Program

Co-teaching can be thought of as a means of increasing instructional opportunities for all students. Bauler et al. (2019) found that co-teaching in an inclusive environment with one classroom and one language teacher provided students with more hands-on experiences, increased student engagement and talk through authentic experiences, and improved the learning environment to be accessible to all students. Walther-Thomas' (1997) findings also supported this idea. She found that having two teachers allowed for an increase in enrichment activities, guided practice activities, and re-teaching opportunities for students. In addition, she described how co-taught classrooms were often active learning environments with students and teachers actively engaged in the learning process (Walther-Thomas, 1997).

Increased Inclusivity for Students with Exceptionalities

Researchers have determined that co-teaching classrooms provide a space for students to develop friendships and social skills, as well as an appreciation and acceptance for all people (Pickard, 2009; Walther-Thomas, 1997). Pickard (2009) found that co-teaching in an inclusive elementary classroom provided increased student interactions between SWE and their classmates; teachers observed typical students demonstrating an increased empathy for peers and willingness to help others. In addition, co-taught classes have also reported increased peer relationships both inside and outside the classroom. Walther-Thomas (1997) reported that SWE developed friendships, visited peers' homes, played with classmates, and attended parties hosted by their peers in classes that were co-taught.

Reduced Stigma for Students

There is often a stigma associated with leaving the general education classroom to receive special services such as LSS or English language learner supports (Friend & Cook,

1995). Implementing a co-teaching approach can alleviate this stigma by creating an inclusive classroom environment that decreases the need for students to leave the classroom (Friend & Cook, 1995). Friend & Cook (1995) caution, however, that co-teaching using a ‘pull aside’ approach, where SWE are pulled to the side to receive their instruction, separate from the rest of the class, can constitute great stigmatization of students and is, in essence still a pull-out model.

In addition to decreasing the need for pull-out approaches, Walther-Thomas (1997), found that students felt less critical or defensive about their learning needs when in co-taught classroom environments. She found that students developed better attitudes about themselves and others while gaining the ability to consider their strengths and weaknesses objectively (Walther-Thomas, 1997). Walther-Thomas (1997) reported that SWE felt that they had ‘lost’ their labels and were more motivated in co-taught classrooms.

Strogolis and King-Sears (2018) also noted that students in inclusive classrooms, where co-teachers shared responsibilities, rarely linked co-teachers to LSS, or used terms such as GE teacher and LSS-trained teacher. In classrooms where there the LSS-trained teacher was acting as an assistant, students were more aware of the difference in power and status as compared to classrooms where the LSS teacher took on an active instructional role. Strogolis and King-Sears’ (2018) research suggests that it is important to share responsibilities and roles and create an active classroom environment for stigma to be reduced.

Increased Professional Support for all Students

A significant advantage of co-teaching is its ability to increase professional support for students within a class. Bauler et al. (2019) found that the teachers were able to support all students academically and emotionally through creating a positive community for all learners, where students were able to take risks, practice using academic language, and accomplish

writing tasks. They found that throughout their experiences co-teaching, teachers collaborated to identify students' strengths and challenges, which helped them to create targeted support systems for students (Bauler et al., 2019). In addition to supporting SWE, co-teaching also supports students who struggle but have never been identified as having special needs (Friend, 2007; Walther-Thomas, 1997). Unidentified or undesignated students who did not qualify for LSS performed better and were more successful in co-taught classes than in GE classes (Walther-Thomas, 1997). This may be attributed to the presence of an additional teacher providing increased individual attention for lower-performing students (Walther-Thomas, 1997).

In addition to the ratio of student-to-teacher providing support for student learning, researchers have confirmed that specialized LSS-trained teachers, also provide benefits to the classroom. LSS-trained teachers help to create inclusive learning environments that effectively decrease the educational opportunity gap faced by students with diverse backgrounds, including those with exceptionalities (Rossiter & Rossiter, 2009; Spear et al., 2018). Spear et al. (2018) determined that LSS-trained teachers, in general, have higher Social Emotional Learning (SEL) knowledge than that of GE teachers, which helps them to support students with social and emotional development, and that this may be due to higher level of training and credentials required.

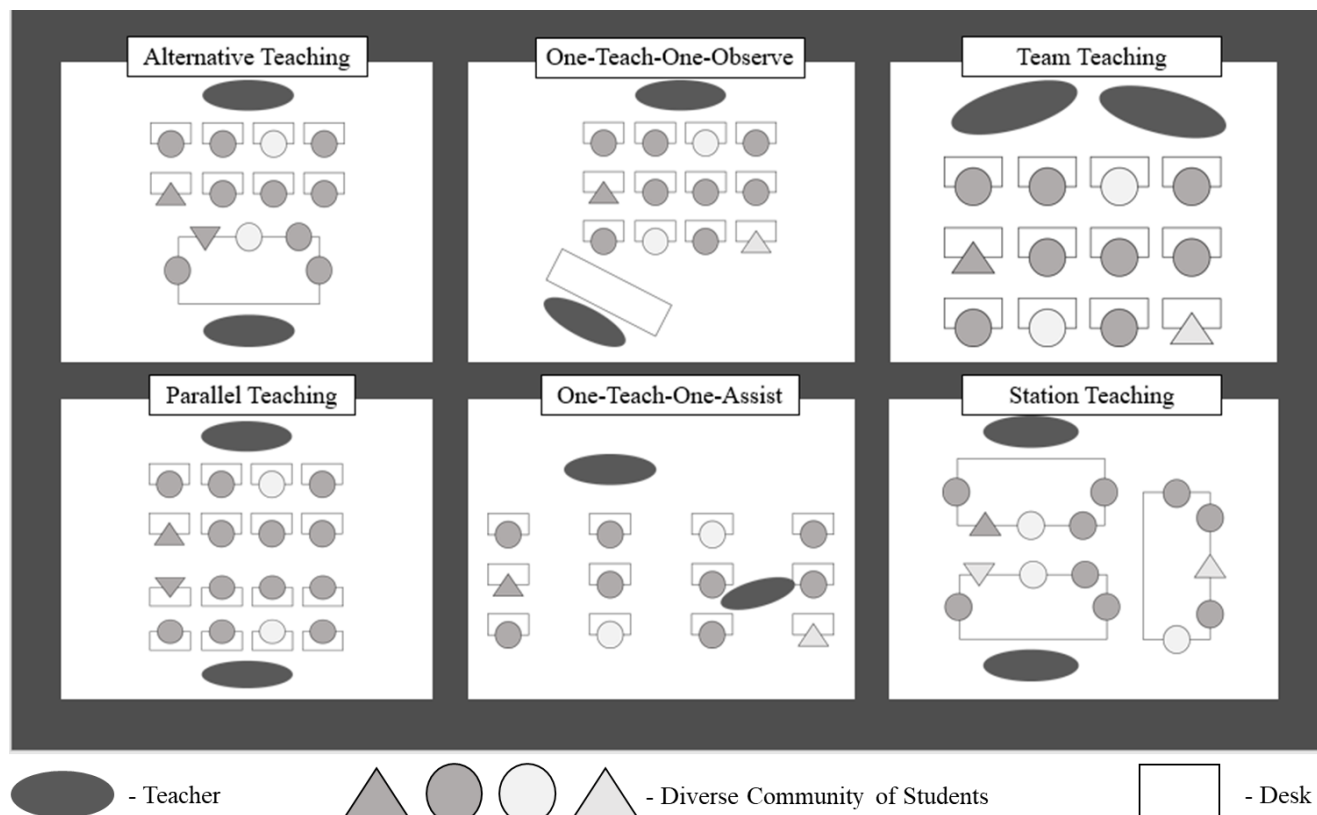
Increased Professional Development of Teachers

Lastly, a significant rationale for co-teaching is increased professional development and support for teachers. Research has reported that co-teachers often viewed the experience of co-teaching with another teacher, enhanced their own professional growth (Bauler et al., 2019; Hackett et al., 2019; Walther-Thomas, 1997). Bauler et al. (2019) found that teachers felt their co-teaching experiences enhanced their abilities to scaffold teaching practices to better support

their students' writing development, demonstrating the continuous growth of their practice through co-teaching. Hackett's et al. (2019) research also supported this. They found that teachers were regularly addressing and reflecting on conscious and unconscious assumptions, which increased their metacognition of practice and co-teaching to improve inclusivity, deliver instruction in dynamic ways, and incorporate diverse social and cultural aspects of learning in their classes. It should be noted that in both studies, it is unclear what caused this increased metacognition and reflection of practice, it was understood to be a result of the co-teaching experience, suggesting that it may be due to an increased accountability to their co-teaching partners, or the dialogue between co-teaching partners (Bauler et al., 2019; Hackett et al., 2019). Walther-Thomas (1997) also reported that co-teaching allowed teachers to work closely with other professional educators, who had unique knowledge bases and professional skills to themselves, which allowed teachers to share, explore, expand, and experiment with innovative ideas and content areas. Through their relationships with their co-teaching partners, teachers were able to expand their professional skill repertoires (Walther-Thomas, 1997). This suggests that the relationship between co-teachers, and the expertise that each brings to the table, play an integral role in the professional development opportunities of co-teaching dyads.

Models of Co-Teaching

There are six widely agreed on models of co-teaching (Friend & Bursuck, 2011; Friend & Cook, 1995; Johnson & King-Sears, 2020; Murawski & Swanson, 2001). These co-teaching models are: (1) Alternative Teaching, (2) One-Teach-One-Observe Teaching, (2) Team Teaching, (4) Parallel Teaching, (5) One-Teach-One-Assist Teaching, and (6) Station Teaching. See Figure 1.

Figure 1*Illustration of Co-Teaching Models*

Note. Each diagram depicts a different co-teaching model as described by Friend & Bursuck

(2011). Image adapted from Friend & Bursuck, 2011, p. 77.

Alternative Teaching

This model of co-teaching involves one teacher providing small group instruction, enrichment, assessment, or pre-teaching opportunities, while the other students remain with the other teacher (Friend, 2015; Friend & Cook, 1995; Friend et al., 2010), see figure 1 (1). This method is useful to provide students with differentiated approaches to learning and assessing. The risk of this approach, however, is that it can further stigmatize SWE if they are placed in the alternative teaching group on an on-going basis (Friend & Cook, 1995). To circumvent this,

Friend and Cook (1995) advised that teachers rotate students through alternative teaching groups periodically.

One-Teach-One-Observe

In this model of co-teaching, one teacher leads the lesson, while the other teacher observes and gathers observational data on one student, a small group of students, or the entire class (Friend, 2015; Friend et al., 2010), see figure 1 (2).

Team Teaching

Team teaching or teaming encompasses teachers co-instructing and integrating contributions throughout the lesson (Friend & Cook, 1995; Friend, 2015; Friend et al., 2010), see figure 1 (3). Both teachers are actively involved in the instructional process, where they are both leading and providing multiple perspectives (Friend, 2015; Friend & Cook, 1995; Friend et al., 2010). This approach allows teachers to model and role play appropriate ways to ask questions for students, but it does require a high level of mutual trust and commitment (Friend & Cook, 1995). It has been demonstrated to engage students and teachers by prompting new and fresh ideas (Friend & Cook, 1995).

Parallel Teaching

In this model, the two teachers divide the class, each working with one group, providing instruction and work to their group (Friend, 2015; Friend & Cook, 1995; Friend et al., 2010), see figure 1 (4). The goal of this method is to increase student participation and allow for differentiated instruction as needed, based on a lower student-teacher ratio (Friend, 2015; Friend & Cook, 1995; Friend et al., 2010). This style of co-teaching requires teachers to coordinate their efforts to be timed with each other, and is often used with drills, discussion activities, and projects requiring a lot of teacher support and supervision (Friend & Cook, 1995).

One-Teach-One-Assist

In this model of co-teaching, one teacher leads the instruction, while the other assists students as they circulate the classroom (Friend, 2015; Friend & Cook, 1995; Friend et al., 2010), see figure 1 (5). In this model, students are able to receive individual help in a timely manner, however, this model allows for students to question the assisting teacher's role in the classroom (Friend & Cook, 1995). Friend and Cook (1995) advise teachers to alternate lead and supportive roles to circumvent this concern.

Station Teaching

In station teaching, students are divided into groups, where teachers provide instruction at one station each, and additional stations are for independent work (Friend, 2015; Friend & Cook, 1995; Friend et al., 2010), see figure 1 (6). Students then rotate through all stations, allowing students to interact with both teachers in small group sessions, with smaller student-teacher ratios. Each teacher has specific content to be taught to one group and then repeats teaching the content to the second group (Friend, 2015; Friend & Cook, 1995; Friend et al., 2010). The third station is where students work on their own (Friend, 2015; Friend & Cook, 1995; Friend et al., 2010). The benefit of using this model is that students can be integrated into all groups without feeling singled out, there are smaller student-teacher ratios, allowing students more teacher time, and it provides a co-teaching opportunity that allows both teachers to be equals, but is also at a comfort0level for inexperienced co-teachers (Friend & Cook, 1995).

The Gap

There is a large amount of research literature supporting the perceived effectiveness and rationale for implementing co-teaching models of support, especially at the elementary and middle school level. Most research focuses on teacher perceptions, however, there is emerging

research on student perspectives and quantitative data of the efficacy of the model. Further, there is growing literature focusing on factors which support effective implementation of the co-teaching models across grade levels. It is worth noting that gaps in the literature remain, specifically, the unique relationship between co-teaching partners, and how this relationship affects the perceived impacts of the models, see figure 1. With this gap in mind, the current study explores how the experiences of co-teaching dyads impact teachers' teaching practices and philosophies, and the learning environment.

Research Question

The aim of this study was to explore the experience of co-teaching dyads at MSS to better understand the impact co-teaching had on MSS's community. The central research question and sub-question which guide this research were:

- 1) What are the experiences of GE teachers and LSS teachers as they engage in a co-teaching support model?
 - a. How does a push-in co-teaching model influence teachers and their classes?

To answer these questions, I conducted two focus-group interviews with two teacher dyads from MSS. The goal of this research was to better understand the experience of the teaching dyads in MSS to determine how this support model impacted teachers and their classes.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction

My experiences as a secondary special education teacher prompted my interest in how schools can implement and run their LSS program to better support students. My curiosity spiked when the LSS team at MSS decided to try a push-in co-teaching model rather than the pull-out model that is commonly used at the high school level, as research has demonstrated the effectiveness of a push-in model (Bauler et al., 2019; Cobb & Sharma, 2015; Hackett et al., 2019; Pickard, 2009). The push-in co-teaching model chosen by MSS incorporated teaching dyads between one classroom teacher and one LSS trained teacher. The LSS teacher's role was to provide the expertise in determining appropriate differentiation strategies and interventions for students underperforming in the coursework or disconnecting with the school community, whereas the classroom teacher's role was to provide expertise in the subject area, teaching strategies for the content being taught, and curricular competencies for the course.

Due to the fact I had never experienced the push-in co-teaching model of support, I was very interested in the experiences of teachers who were participating in the support model. I became curious about their perceptions of the co-teaching model and how it influenced the class environment. I realized that the purpose of my question was to investigate and explore the unique experiences and perceptions of teacher dyads as they participated in a co-teaching experience; this meant that I was interested in the qualitative findings rather than quantitative ones.

This retrospective study utilized a qualitative research approach to examine the unique experiences and reflections of co-teaching dyads. This study was situated in the constructivist paradigm. The constructivist paradigm is concerned with how the world is interpreted (Creswell, 2002), which in this study, was based on co-teaching dyads' interpretations and reflections of

their co-teaching experiences. More specifically, I was interested in understanding teacher perceptions of the impact the push-in co-teaching model had on student learning, student sense of belonging, teacher practice, and teacher's teaching philosophies at MSS.

The aim of this research was to understand the unique and personal experiences of two sets of teacher dyads at MSS, to provide insight on the impact that this support model may have on teachers and their classes. The central research question that guided this research was: what are the experiences of GE teachers and LSS teachers as they engage in a co-teaching support model? The sub-question was: how does a push-in co-teaching model influence teachers and their classes? The research study explored the experiences of teachers implementing a push-in co-teaching model of support and demonstrated the impact the model may bring. The findings provide recommendations to stakeholders for how to support the implementation of a push-in co-teaching model of support.

Research Design

This capstone research project was designed as an Interpretative Phenomenological (IP) study that examined the experiences and perceptions of co-teaching dyads at MSS through semi-structured focus-group interviews between co-teaching partners and the researcher. Interviews were analyzed using an IP approach to make meaning of the reflections of the participants, followed by member checks from participants and an expert peer review.

Research Method

The current qualitative study used an Interpretative Phenomenological (IP) approach and analysis (Alase, 2017; Chapman & Smith, 2002; Smith & Osborn, 2008) to examine the experiences of two co-teaching dyads, as they reflected on their experiences in a focus-group interview with their co-teaching partner. IP is often used when the focus of the study is on the

broad picture that explores and learns about an area of concern rather than applying a hypothesis (Smith & Osborn, 2008). In this study, the broad picture came from an in-depth understanding of the participants' experiences.

The aim of IP is to help the researcher and participants collectively make sense of the experience or phenomenon being studied, while understanding the role that the researcher's own experiences and beliefs play in the process of making sense of the participants' experiences (Chapman & Smith, 2002). In this study, I, as the researcher, had previous experience working as an LSS teacher and had a close connection to the participants themselves, recognizing how subjectivity might play a role in this study. Therefore, an IP approach, which includes an awareness of the researcher's role in the research was deemed an appropriate method. "The researcher... gains direct knowledge of the feelings and images of the research participant or subject so that the first conceptualization is as close to the experience as technically possible" (Bentz & Shapiro, 1998, p. 96).

Context of the School

This study was conducted at MSS, a small high school within the Lower Mainland region with a high English Language Learner population and a high population of SWE. The school population was also predominantly students who identified as persons of color and were primarily first- or second-generation immigrants. This unique school makeup, as well as the time frame of teaching and learning during a COVID-19 pandemic, created unique challenges for teachers and student learning. In particular, student failure rates were of concern to staff at MSS.

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, classes were taught using a blended-learning style within a quarter system. This meant that students were attending in-person and online, and teachers utilized blended-learning opportunities to support all students with their learning. Most

students attended in-person school during one portion of the day and attended online schooling during the other portion. Due to concerns around COVID-19, some parents chose to keep their children home, even during in-person instruction. This required teachers to plan differentiated lessons to support all students in-person and online. For many students, learning online proved to be a challenge during the first quarter, and for many staff, the stress of the pandemic in addition to changing to a quarter system proved to be overwhelming. As such, the MSS focus team and administrative team provided collaboration and school learning opportunities that focused on blended learning, differentiation for all students, and SEL. In addition, the implementation of a push-in model of support, through co-teaching dyads between LSS teachers and GE teachers, was introduced to help staff and students during in-person instruction.

Sampling and Participants

This study utilized purposeful sampling to select participants that used in the push-in co-teaching model of support at MSS. The study used a small sample size of four participants, as the aim of IP is to describe and make meaning of, the perceptions of participants rather than make more general claims (Smith & Osborn, 2008). Prior to recruitment of participants for this study, ethical approval was granted through the University of the Fraser Valley's (UFV) research ethics board, and consent was obtained by the school district of MSS (approval number 100590).

Potential participants were emailed an invitation to participate. The sampling criteria were:

- 1) Participants were teachers at MSS.
- 2) Participants were currently participating within a co-teaching dyad partnership between one LSS teacher and one GE teacher.

The co-teaching dyads' emails were provided by the SBT of MSS.

Data Sources

This IP study incorporated two semi-structured online focus group interviews between co-teaching dyads and the researcher. Interviews were held in focus-groups between their co-teaching partners and the researcher to respect the British Columbia Teachers' Federation code of ethics, as teachers are expected to practice person-first principles when speaking about each other's teaching performance or work-related concerns. The interviews were video recorded via MS Teams and took approximately one hour to conduct. Participants were provided with the interview questions ahead of the interview to allow for reflection prior to the interview.

The semi-structured interviews involved open-ended questions that provided space for participants to share their stories and reflections. An interview protocol was created as a guide for the interview based on an understanding that an IP approach focuses on encouraging participants to speak about a topic with as little prompting from the interviewer as possible through practices such as funneling and open-ended questions (Smith & Osborn, 2008). The topics of the interview centered around the participants' perceptions of the effectiveness of the model, their interpretation the influence the model had on student growth and achievement, their understandings of how it affected community building and classroom climate, and how their teaching partners challenged them and their teaching philosophies, et cetera. (See Appendix B).

Following interview sessions, the video-recordings were transcribed, and participants were provided with an opportunity to review the transcripts prior to analysis. This member check included allowing participants to make any additions, deletions, or modifications to their responses. Once approved, transcripts were anonymized and then analyzed for codes and themes using IP analysis (see description in next section).

Data Analyses

Data analyses for this study followed Smith and Osborn's (2008) IP analysis approach, which begins with reading the transcript multiple times and annotating interesting and significant thoughts in the margins to understand the transcript. These annotations were considered the initial comments (Alase, 2017; Smith & Osborn, 2008) or codes (Saldana, 2011). While creating these initial annotations, I focused on using a descriptive coding process as described by Saldana (2011), to annotate the transcript and categorize the topics that were discussed in the interviews into initial codes. This process was continued until the first transcript had been completely read through and a tentative coding scheme was created. A second read through was then completed to solidify the initial codes and determine any theme titles that were emerging. In order to create a higher level of organization, the codes were then recorded and organized based on connections between them and the emerging theme titles from the second read through. Any clusters of codes that did not belong with the emerged theme titles were then re-examined to determine an appropriate theme title. A table of themes was then created based on the organized clusters of codes for the first interview transcript. An additional read through of the transcript was then completed to ensure consistency between the themes and the data. The same process was then completed for the second interview transcript.

After both transcripts had been analyzed using this interpretative and descriptive coding process, a final table was constructed after further analysis and prioritization of themes. A final read through of both interview transcripts was performed after completing the final table of themes to ensure consistency between themes and the preliminary data. After analyses, triangulation of results occurred in two ways: (a) a member check of the themes was performed

with each participant, and (b) a second reviewer was included to review the data and themes that emerged. During this member check, participants were asked to answer the following questions:

1. To what extent do the identified themes and the researchers interpreted findings resonate with your experience?
2. To what extent did the findings have applied significance to your work?

Three out of the four participants responded to the questions, each describing how their experiences were reflected in the findings. In addition, the expert peer reviewer agreed with the identified emerging themes and sub-themes, noting the accuracy and applied significance of this work. Triangulation was important to ensure that my understandings of participants' experiences were accurate, thorough, and demonstrated a holistic understanding of their experience.

Strength of the Study

In an effort to strengthen the study, authentication of the research data and findings was completed using various techniques. First, the study included two separate (and distinct) dyads as participants in the focus group interview as this provided various perspectives and understandings of utilizing a push-in co-teaching model of support within MSS. In addition, participants were given an opportunity to think about their responses prior to the interview, and were given an opportunity to make additions, deletions, or changes to their interview transcripts prior to analyses. This ensured that participants were able to provide rich understandings and descriptors of their experiences. Second, the study utilized member check procedures of the emerging themes, which promoted clarity of the researcher's understandings of the participants' experiences, and provided an opportunity for participants to comment on the accuracy and usefulness of the work. Lastly, to ensure strength of the study, an expert peer-reviewer was also utilized for review of the analysis.

Chapter 4: Findings

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the experience of co-teaching dyads made up of one general and one LSS teacher participating in a push-in co-teaching model of support. This study was designed as an IP study which utilized semi-structured interviews as a tool to allow teachers to express their perceptions about their co-teaching experience. The central research question and sub-question which guide this research were:

- 1) What are the experiences of GE teachers and LSS teachers as they engage in a co-teaching support model?
 - a. How does a push-in co-teaching model influence teachers and their classes?

Participants were chosen for this study using purposeful sampling. Two dyads of teachers participated in focus-group interviews, where they shared their perceptions, interpretations, and thoughts of their experiences. A description of participants is depicted in Table 1.

Table 1

Summary of Participants and their Experiences

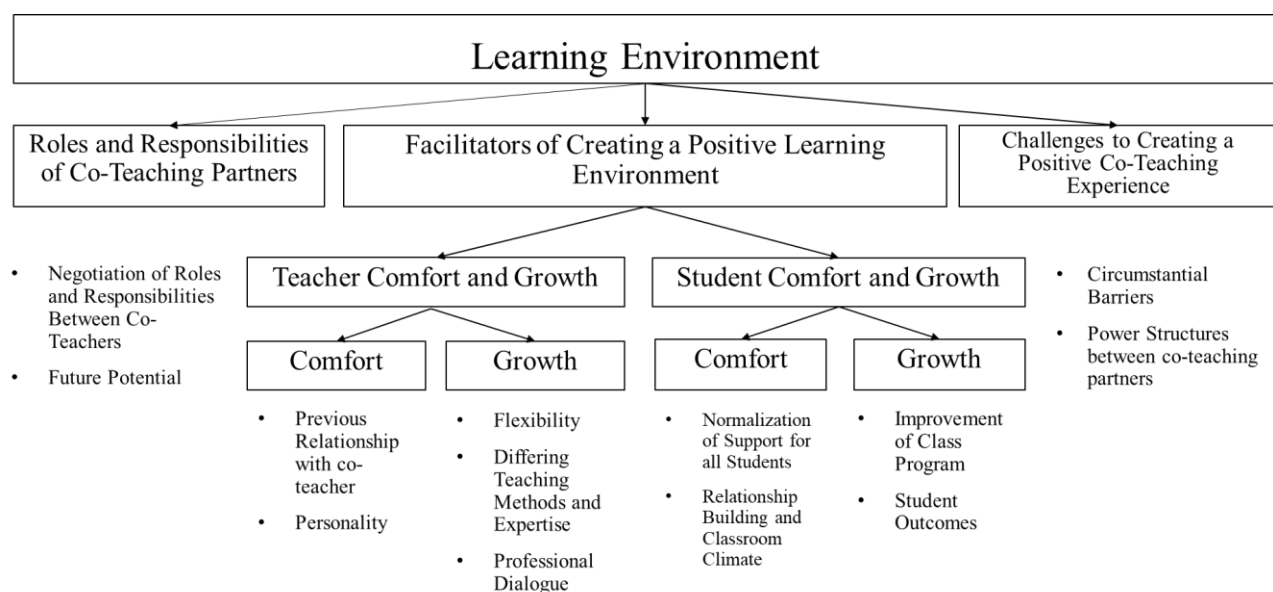
Teaching Dyad	Participant (pseudonym)	Gender	Years of experience teaching	Expertise	Relevant teaching experiences	Previous experience with co-teaching?
1	Terry	Female	20+	General Education	Business Education, Careers	No
1	Tam	Female	10+	LSS	LSS, Math, Elementary	Yes
2	Sally	Female	5+	LSS	LSS, Math, Science	No
2	Jay	Male	15+	General Education	Social Studies	No

Interviews were recorded, transcribed, and read through individually, to identify emergent themes and codes. Figure 1 summarizes the themes and codes identified during the analysis of the interview transcripts. The overarching theme of interviews was the learning environment of a co-taught classroom. The major themes that emerged in both interviews were:

- 1) The roles and responsibilities of co-teachers and how that is negotiated and understood by co-teaching partners.
- 2) Facilitators of Creating a Positive Learning Environment in a co-taught classroom, which included teacher comfort with their co-teacher, facilitators of teacher growth and learning, student comfort, and facilitators of student growth.
- 3) Barriers to creating a Positive Learning Environment.

Figure 2

Summary of Themes



Roles and Responsibilities

All four participants discussed their understandings of their roles, responsibilities, and the ways in which they were negotiated as having an influence on their experience. When discussing the negotiation of roles and responsibilities, three ideas emerged as having an influence on the roles that teachers took on within their co-teaching partnership. Those ideas will be discussed below.

Negotiation of Roles and Responsibilities

Coming into their experience, co-teaching dyads were not instructed on what their roles and responsibilities were, instead, they were given the freedom to negotiate their roles and responsibilities with each other. When asked about their experience, teachers described three important factors that played a role in determining what their co-teaching partnership looked like in terms of their roles and responsibilities. The three factors included removing assumptions about their co-teacher's role or knowledge base and working together to find roles that work, trusting their co-teaching partner as a professional to take on important roles where they see fit, and appreciating and encouraging the knowledge and expertise that each co-teaching partner adds to the experience to be incorporated into the class.

When participants were first introduced to the idea of co-teaching, participants were wary of what the experience might look like, and what assumptions their co-teaching partners had. In Jay and Sally's experience, Jay began the experience by being open and not setting any expectations based on assumptions: "But, if you to try to structure it like this is my job, and this is your job... you put doors and walls up. Where if you don't talk about it ... you see what that person takes on." In their experience, Jay was intentional in not directing Sally to take on certain roles based on his assumptions of what her role should be, but instead, he allowed Sally to find

her niche within the class. Sally was able to take on roles that she thought would support students. Jay's lack of assumptions about Sally's role, and his open-minded attitude, allowed Sally to find her place within the classroom and work with Jay to find meaningful ways to add to the classroom experience. Their experience demonstrates how assumptions about roles and responsibilities can hinder the possibilities of the co-teaching partnership between teachers, limiting the experience of the co-teaching dyad. Both co-teaching dyads described how co-teachers or support staff, and GE teachers need to work together to find out what roles each person can bring to the class, rather than assume or dictate the roles of co-teaching partners.

Co-teaching dyads also discussed the importance of having a knowledge base that allows co-teachers to naturally take on certain roles within their experience. For instance, in Terry and Tam's case, Terry spoke about the knowledge that Tam brought to their experience, and how that supported her to take on different roles: "Since she had such a great number of students that were in various LSS programs, it was having somebody who had eyes and knew background stories and ... could figure out dynamics as we go." Their co-teaching partnership relied on both participants being professionals and having knowledge and expertise that allowed them to take on roles naturally as the class progressed. In both co-teaching dyad's, their experiences demonstrate the importance of intentional co-teaching partnerships, where co-teachers have varied expertise and knowledge that allow them to take on different roles and responsibilities to support students.

Another important factor in negotiating the roles and responsibilities of co-teaching partners discussed by co-teaching dyads was professional trust. Participants discussed the importance of trusting your co-teaching partner's competence and experience to guide them to take on roles without direction. For example, Jay described how he trusted that Sally would

know how to support students and would step in and take on different roles when needed, but how without that trust, he could see how the co-teaching partnership might face some challenges:

Coming from an LSS background, you're automatically programmed to see, where can I help? Right? How can I help this ... group of kids, move to the next level of success and achievement? And I just trusted that's there because you have that position. I think maybe when problems happen, is when the classroom teacher doesn't trust that it's there.

Jay's trusting approach allowed him and Sally to let go of any assumptions and trust each other to take on roles based on knowledge and expertise. Terry also talked about the importance of trusting Tam in the negotiation of roles and responsibilities. She described how she was able to trust Tam to take on roles without being directed to do so, and find her place within their classroom, "Like it's the person coming into your room that takes the initiative and the time, and not expecting me to kind of hold their hand all the way through it." She described how she has not always had that trust in other support staff, but how it was beneficial that she had a previous relationship with Tam, and how that supported her to not only trust that Tam would take on roles without direction, but also that she was able to trust her expertise when she did take on different roles or responsibilities.

Future Potential Roles and Responsibilities

One of the major limitations of the co-teaching experience and implementation of different co-teaching models that participants described was planning time. Both co-teaching dyads described how the lack of planning time provided limited them to use a one-teach-one-assist model almost exclusively, but how in the future, they imagine themselves collaborating and lesson planning together, and implementing various co-teaching models.

In Sally and Jay's experience, they described how they would have liked to try different models of co-teaching and continue to build their co-teaching relationship to plan activities that incorporated both participants' expertise. Sally, for instance, spoke about how she envisions her and Jay incorporating stations teaching into their lessons if given the planning time, where she would be able to take part in the delivery of lessons: "Yeah, and actually do lessons or like, he's doing something over here and I'm doing something over there, and then they can swap stations..." Her co-teaching partner, Jay, also spoke about future potential given more planning time and time to develop the co-teacher relationship, talking about how their co-teaching relationship would shift from being the LSS teacher coming into a class to being a shared class between both teachers: "But I have a feeling ... there'll be more and more as time went on... more and more collaboration. Because it would be less that you're coming into my class, it would become our class over time." Both participants described how collaboration and planning time would allow their co-teaching relationship to grow, and how that would create a space for them to try new things with their class and roles over time. They described how despite feeling limited during their current experience, they envision growth and value in their future experiences co-teaching together.

Terry and Tam also described the potential future experiences of co-teaching may bring. For example, Tam described how she would work with Terry in the future: "I would actually sit with Terry and plan what the thing is. Like before going to the classroom, I sit with her, and ... both of us can sit together and like, discuss what's going to happen." During their experience, they were not given the time to sit down and plan together due to how the co-teaching partnership was rolled out, and the structure of the quarter system that they were teaching in, but

Tam described how she would have liked to use that time to engage in co-planning and deliver lessons as a team rather than as a one-teach-one-assist model.

In each of the descriptions for future potential of co-teaching experiences, participants alluded to increased collaboration and comfortability with their co-teaching partner as facilitators of taking risks together and taking on different roles and responsibilities including co-planning, collaborating on the delivery of lessons, and implementation of different models of co-teaching.

Facilitators of Creating a Positive Learning Environment

Another major theme that emerged in the interviews was creating a positive learning environment that fostered growth in students and teachers. This theme centered around four sub-themes that each played a role in creating a positive learning environment for all members of the classroom community, including staff and students, and will be discussed below.

Student Comfort

Reflecting on their experiences, participants detailed the role that student comfort played in creating a positive learning environment. This sub-theme was described by two factors, the normalization of support for all students, and the creation of a safe community for students through relationship building and classroom climate.

Normalization of Receiving Support. Participants described how normalizing students receiving support helped create a learning environment where all students felt they had access to support systems without feeling embarrassed or singled out. Participants in both interviews repeatedly described how their co-taught classrooms were able to provide support to all students, whether they were identified as designated students. They also explained how students welcomed the support knowing that the whole class was receiving support, and that support had become part of the culture of the class.

Students in the co-taught classroom felt safe to receive support because they knew that the whole class was receiving support, and it had been normalized. In Terry and Tam's experience, Tam described how students felt safe to receive support in class because the culture of the class meant that there was no stigma attached to receiving support: "She didn't always have the exact same type of help, but that was the goal, that the kids did not feel like 'I'm the only one getting targeted here.'" Tam went on to describe how she and Terry would provide targeted support to students in a way that allowed them to not only provide support to students in need, but also connect with each and every student in the class: "And we would go through literally all the rows, we would target and figure out... we would sit beside the kid that we know that was needing extra help, [whether or not they had designations]." Terry and Tam's experience demonstrates how they worked as a team to build an environment where students felt safe to ask questions and receive feedback and support from both teachers, regardless of if they were identified as having a designation.

Sally and Jay's co-teaching experience was similar as they described how support was provided to the entire class, whether they were identified as designated students. Jay explained, "And I know she's focused on the identified kids, but she's not just. And that tells me that she's not here for just them, she's here for the class, and especially the social emotional stuff." In their co-teaching experience, Sally and Jay demonstrate how the LSS teacher was able to provide support to all students, and not just the designated students. Jay described how Sally not only used her expertise on academic interventions to support SWE, but that she also used her SEL knowledge to support all students with their well-being, normalizing her role in the classroom to be accessible to all students.

Relationship Building and Classroom Climate. Student comfort, as described by participants, relied on co-teachers' efforts to build relationships with students, connect with them, and create a learning climate where students felt safe. Participants described how prior relationships with students, constant and consistent dialogue with students, and effort towards creating meaningful connections with students all played a role in building student comfort.

Terry and Tam discussed how they worked together to create a classroom climate where students felt safe and comfortable. Terry articulated that Tam's relationships with students prior to their co-teaching experience helped create the initial classroom climate, supporting student participation and risk-taking: "I think it's beneficial that Tam knew so many of the kids. Not even the kids that were on the LSS list, but all the students, so that helped make them feel... like she was there for everybody." Tam's strong connection with students allowed for students to feel safe at the start of the class, which helped Terry and Tam continue to build the class climate throughout their experience. The co-teaching dyad went on to describe how having two adults working together in the co-teaching experience allowed them to connect with the entire class instead of just specific students who required more support. Terry described, "And I sometimes think if it's not... a push-in model... you're only working with one group of students all the time, and you don't get that connection of the whole class." Her description of their experience demonstrates how the push-in model allows for connections to be made with all students, that might not happen in other support models, because the focus would be on those students who are underperforming or need support.

The model also allowed Tam and Terry to be intentional with their connections and ensure that each student was connected with during the lesson. Terry described, "And I can't say that I have that one-on-one interaction with every student, always... So, I feel like if I've maybe

missed somebody then for sure she had a chance to talk to them.” Though the number of interactions with all students was important, Terry and Tam noted that going deeper and making sure students felt valued also played an important role in creating a community of learners rather than just creating a safe environment. Tam described that the types of conversations that they were able to have with students given that freedom of having two teachers created a space for students feel heard and valued: “Like, even when we were talking to one particular kid about what's going on with the farmers, he felt like his voice was being heard.” The interactions that the co-teachers had with students allowed them to get to know students and build a space where students and teachers could learn together in meaningful ways.

Jay and Sally also described the extent to which they were able to connect with students in meaningful ways that likely would not have been possible without having two adults working with the students. One example was when Sally described how she was able to use her LSS background and expertise to provide SEL opportunities to students in need: “And I find that I'm doing a lot of social emotional stuff with them... If that's the role they need from me, then that's the role I'll take on that day.” This demonstrates how she was able to take on different roles based on her expertise, to ensure that all students were able to stay within the class rather than be pulled out to work through those challenges and needs. Jay built on Sally's example by describing how the meaningful connections that he and Sally were able to have with students, that were made possible by having two adults in the classroom, provided them both with opportunities to notice, connect, and provide targeted supports to students: “And the ability to see when somebody is struggling... and sit and connect with them, or just brush by and say something, and hopefully they open up, because every kid needs to be connected with differently.” Jay and Sally's experiences demonstrate the value of having multiple teachers

working with a group of students to pick up on different challenges or struggles that students are exhibiting, as well as to provide students with meaningful connections with their teachers so that they feel safe taking risks in the learning process.

Facilitators of Student Growth

Participants in both interviews described how their co-teaching experience provided opportunities for student growth and learning that may not have been possible in a classroom with only one teacher. They described how co-teaching could be used to facilitate student growth through the improvement of class programming, and Tam and Terry provided specific examples of the impact that their co-teaching practice had on students.

Practice Development. Participants described how co-teaching as a dyad allowed them to improve their instructional approaches. These approaches included practices such as teacher modelling, providing more one-on-one support opportunities with different teachers, adapting for students in a timely manner, and individualizing the learning for students.

In both teaching dyads, modelling was used as a method of supporting students to participate as well as a way to demonstrate positive relationships and communication skills for students. Terry described how modelling with Tam encouraged students to participate in online and in-person lessons: “Usually, if we were talking about something, the class was hearing. So, to see that that relationship and that conversation, communication happening, then they were more willing to participate and answer when we were asking them as well.” Terry and Tam’s example demonstrates how their ability to model communication skills and interactive dialogue encouraged their students to participate and engage in lessons.

In addition to modelling, co-teaching provided teachers with the opportunity to provide varied supports and perspectives which allowed students to grow and demonstrate their learning

to different people: “And learning, like they got to showcase it to somebody different. And not just the teacher that’s in charge. Or, like, they got input from, they got different perspectives, because there were lots of bodies in there.” This varied support system allowed for students to take advantage of the different experience, expertise, and perspectives of both teachers, which allowed for student growth that wouldn’t have been possible with only one teacher.

Participants also described how working in a co-taught classroom provided them with opportunities to individualize support to the specific needs of students in a timely manner. For example, Tam described how students were able to receive support immediately and, in the moment, before they fell too far behind: “I think them getting help, more in a timely manner. So, catching those kids that might be struggling, whether they were on caseloads or not, but catching kids that either attendance ... or disengaged or disappearing.” Sally and Jay also echoed that, with Sally describing how LSS has changed from catching students up to a more proactive approach of supporting them in the moment: “I’m right there... And then I can support them while they’re there, and it’s not like they’re coming up, and then I’m calling down like, ‘hey what are they supposed to be working on?’” Their experiences demonstrate how co-teaching provided them with opportunities to individualize support and provide feedback and interventions in a timely manner to students who might need support. They describe how having a push-in model vs. a pull-out model allowed for supports to be put into place immediately, keeping students engaged in the learning throughout the course.

Student Outcomes. Terry and Tam were able to explain student outcomes related to their co-teaching efforts helped and the safe environment that they built. Tam spoke about how students demonstrated their learning in ways that might not have been possible with only one teacher: “Like, what they learned and how they were able to show their learning, actually was

better than they would have been if there was only one teacher, or one EA.” She went on to describe how the students were able to develop collaboration and communication skills from being part of the class environment that they had created: “So, seeing the groups develop in that way... And, I don’t know if that’s because we took the time to create that safety in the classroom, that they were able to demonstrate that during their presentation and planning even.” Their examples of student growth demonstrate how co-taught classrooms can provide opportunities that foster student growth that are not possible with only one teacher.

Teacher Comfort

In both interviews, participants discussed the importance of having a previous relationship with their co-teaching partner or being open to building that relationship with their teaching partner to support a successful co-teaching relationship and experience.

Relationship with Co-Teaching Partner. Participants also described how having a relationship with each other, whether it was a professional relationship where they have built trust in each other, or a more personal relationship where they have worked together previously, supported their co-teaching relationship and experience. For example, Sally and Jay spoke about how they did not have a strong relationship prior to their co-teaching experience, but that they knew each other and were able to build the relationship from their professional understanding of each other. Sally described her concerns from her previous research:

So, that was one of my worries, because all the research was like, it doesn't always work, you have to have a good relationship. And I was like, I know him, but I don't know him know him... But it didn't it, like it worked so well.

Sally's concerns and her experience demonstrate how having a previous connection with a co-teaching partner can help ease co-teaching partners into a space where they are able to connect with each other and grow together, as long as both teachers are open minded with each other.

Personality. Another concept that participants spoke about was how their personalities played a role in being able to understand each other, take risks, and work well together. For instance, Tam spoke about her and Terry's complimentary personalities: "Our personalities jive, which is nice, and I think that that worked. And we also know, I'm a lot more-high strung than her, and she's a little bit more flexible about that, so it's nice." Jay also spoke about how his and Sally's personalities were similar in that they were both willing to try new things and take risks with each other, "I think, I think we're similar in that there's this, 'Yeah, let's try this.' Right? Let's not stick it in a box, and only use it there and then and how, let's kind of just let it happen..." Their experience was different from Terry and Tam, as they had limited experience with each other prior to their co-teaching experience, but they were able to build that comfort with each other through having similar personalities and keeping an open mind with one another.

Teacher Growth

Participants discussed the importance of both co-teaching partners' abilities to be flexible with each other, of co-teachers to have different teaching methods or expertise to share, and the importance of professional dialogue, as a means of supporting growth and learning.

Flexibility. Flexibility with your co-teaching partner's ideas and perspectives was also discussed as a factor for supporting teacher growth. Jay and Sally spoke in detail about the importance of being open and flexible to try new things together and learn from the experience. For instance, Jay explained the importance of encouraging your co-teacher when they have ideas: "So, whenever you see something, I have to be ready to be like, 'Yes Go for it.' And when there

was something that they might go, ‘I think we need to try this or I think this,’ ...’. He described how he was open to trying new things based on the insight that his co-teacher might bring, and how they could learn from their experiences. Jay also spoke about how the current circumstances created a new sense of flexibility for all teachers to try new things, and how he Sally are learning from their experiences: “I think that this whole, ‘We have to try things new,’ has opened up these doors, that in some cases don't work, but in some cases you're like, ‘Oh, this actually could be really good.’”. His description explains how the flexibility to try new things and then discuss the impacts of those new practices can provide space for growth.

Differing Teaching Methods and Expertise. Another idea that emerged from the interview was using differing teaching practices as an opportunity for co-teachers to learn from each other. Participants discussed how having different teaching methods or expertise than their co-teacher pushed them out of their comfort zone and challenged them to try new things that they might not have tried otherwise. For instance, Tam discussed how her teaching partner showed her technology and challenged her to try using it in a way that she normally would not have if she did not have a co-teaching partner: “It was a learning curve for me. And it was cool because she... had a little bit more experience, so she was like ‘oh let me try this.’ And so, she challenged me to try things that I wouldn't.” Sally also described how she took the experience as a learning opportunity, by observing other teachers’ teaching practices that she doesn’t normally get to see: “I, like you know when you're on your practicum and you go observe different classes – like, I'm sitting there going, ‘Oh, I like how he does this,’ ‘okay, I could do that.’”. Both dyads of co-teachers describe how co-teaching provides teachers with a space to be observe and learn from their co-teaching partner, while being positively challenged by each other.

Professional Dialogue. Teachers also described how professional dialogue and conversations with their co-teaching partners supported their professional growth and development. For instance, Tam described how her and Terry problem-solved together: “And so it was a learning curve for both of us, but we did talk through the things as we were going, and it was just, I thought it was a really neat experience.” Tam described how she and Terry were able to use professional dialogue to problem-solve as a team and come up with unique solutions to support students that might not have surfaced without having that professional dialogue. Terry also spoke about how the dialogue between her and Tam allowed for different perspectives to come to light, which allowed for a stronger understanding of students and their needs: “Just to get somebody else’s perspective sometimes, because I think as we teach the same courses, we kind of lose a little bit of perspective...” Her experience emphasizes how co-teachers can learn from each other through conversations and dialogue about lessons, activities, adaptations, intervention strategies, etc. She also spoke about how those conversations gave different insight on specific students when they discuss individual students, and acknowledged the importance of giving time to have those conversations:

Even over here sometimes, the conversations that Tam was having and be like, ‘Oh, I didn’t know that about that student,’ or ‘Oh, I didn’t know that that was their experience through it.’ So just knowing that it takes time, but it’s time well spent.

Both Terry and Tam valued the conversations and dialogue that they had with each other as tools for their learning and growth.

Challenges of Co-Teaching

Another major theme discussed by participants in both interviews was challenges that participants faced when trying to implement a positive co-teaching experience and learning

environment. Participants discussed how the challenges that they faced limited their co-teaching experience and the types of models that they implemented. Identified challenges included circumstantial barriers and power structures between co-teaching partners. These sub-themes will be described below.

Circumstantial Barriers

Participants discussed how circumstantial barriers affected the learning environment and co-teaching experience that they experienced. Co-teaching dyads described how they were faced with various challenges that limited their co-teaching experiences, including barriers related to the COVID-19 pandemic, lack of knowledge of the co-teaching models and opportunities, and being overwhelmed with additional roles and responsibilities outside of co-teaching. They described how the barriers limited their interactions with students, the models of co-teaching that they were able to utilize, the extent to which they dived into co-planning and collaborating with each other, and how often they were able to be present in the co-teaching experience.

Participants participated in their co-teaching experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic, which provided various challenges. Tam described how it was harder to get to know and understand student needs because the school schedule moved to a quarter system that flipped between online and in-person: “Because, especially as we're flipping so quickly in the quarter system, I find that by the time I figure out who needs what, we're already halfway through.” This challenge made it difficult for teachers to get to know, connect with, and provide appropriate supports to students, limiting the classroom experience that they were able to provide. In addition to affecting the learning environment that students experienced, the change in schedule and timetabling also affected when staff found out about co-teaching opportunities. Teachers found out very close to the start of the course that they would have a co-teaching partner, and that

limited the scope of their co-teaching experience, as there was limited time to co-plan and collaborate prior to the start of the class. Jay described it by stating, “But because of the way our semester or quarter system was set up, we found out two days before that, oh this is the class I’m going into. So, we don’t have that opportunity.” Teachers were given short notice of their co-teaching partnership because of how the schedule and timetable was changed so drastically at the start of the school year, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, and that limited the amount of time that teachers were given to collaborate with their co-teaching partner.

Another challenge that GE teachers spoke about was the lack of knowledge of information that they had on the different co-teaching models and opportunities coming into the experience. They described how the lack of information or experience with co-teaching limited their understanding of the potential that co-teaching could bring. For example, Terry described how she didn’t know what to expect or what it might look like, but while working with Tam, they found benefits. She realized that as teachers are more educated on the different models and are provided with planning time, their co-teaching experience can become more valuable and beneficial for students: “Coming into it, and not really knowing push-in or co teaching, and what specifically to expect... But I think as we... learn more about coteaching, then I think we’ll realize what the more benefits can come from it.” Jay echoed Terry’s experience by describing how his lack of knowledge around the different models of co-teaching prior to his experience limited his experience; he suggested that in the future, staff should be given information on the different models and provided with time to plan with their co-teaching partner. Jay stated, “But giving teachers the information. Like, it was kind of just thrown on to the teachers, like hey we’re doing push-in this year... And then on top of that... we’ve changed from two semesters to four quarters.” His experience emphasized how the lack of information provided, and the lack of prior

knowledge about co-teaching, in addition to going through so many fundamental changes as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, was a limitation of their experience, but that providing that information can support co-teachers to have a more positive experience, where they dive deeper into the experience with each other.

Another circumstantial challenge that was discussed was being given too many roles and responsibilities in addition to co-teaching. One participant felt that the biggest challenge that she faced was juggling the different roles that she was responsible for. Tam spoke about how she was often pulled out to do other tasks and did not feel like she was able to contribute as much as she wanted to or knew that she would be capable of if she had the time given to her: “I know I talked to you guys about it in general, but I really felt that ... I did not give as much as I could have, had I had a lot of stuff taken off my plate.” She went on to describe how she felt lucky that she had a previous relationship with Terry, because it allowed them to work together faster than if she was paired with a teacher that she had no previous experience with. She explained that if she was paired with someone that she did not have a relationship with, that she doesn’t think their co-teaching experience would have reached a place where it benefited the kids because she was pulled out so often: “...If I didn't have Terry, I don't think it would have... been a benefit to the kids, and I ... don't think we would have seen anything good come out... because I was pulled out quite a bit.” Having so many additional roles and responsibilities created a space where this Tam was unable to consistently participate in the co-teaching experience, which limited her and her Terry’s experience to rely solely on the one-teach-one-assist model.

Power Structures Between Co-Teaching Partners

Another challenge that was discussed was the potential role of power dynamics between co-teaching partners on implementing a successful co-teaching relationship and experience. In

Sally's research, she realized that GE teachers may interpret her coming in as a critic of their teaching styles: "General classroom teachers were worried that someone is coming into judge or critique their teaching." This experience that she was concerned about was something that Jay also spoke to by explaining the intimidation factor of another capable educator coming into the classroom: "But if there's another adult in the room, who has at least as much, if not more education than you do, that's intimidating." He also spoke about how he wondered about if his co-teaching partner questioned his methods or techniques: "I would have not been surprised if something had been said about my techniques, of teaching, or questioning, or whatever pedagogy, you know they want to critique on. And that was part of that fear..." But he was able to keep an open mind and work with Sally. He focused on the potential that the experience could bring rather than worrying about what the other person was there for. This power structure seems to be particularly important when teachers are put into co-teaching partnerships with staff that they have no previous relationship with.

Summary

This qualitative study aimed to explore the experiences of co-teachers and understand how their experience with co-teaching influenced co-teachers and their classes. Data was analyzed using an IP approach, and one major theme emerged from analysis of the interviews. The overarching theme of the interviews described the learning environment of a co-taught classroom, with three major sub-themes present. The first sub-theme was roles and responsibilities of co-teaching partners, which consisted of the negotiation of roles and responsibilities between co-teachers, and the future potential roles that co-teachers envisioned themselves taking on over time. The second sub-theme was facilitators of the learning environment, which included understanding the role that relationships played in building a

positive co-teaching experience for teachers and students. Participants discussed the role that personality, flexibility, expertise, and conversations play in fostering growth in teachers. They also described the how the classroom climate, student-teacher relationships, communication, teaching styles and expertise, and modelling allowed for students to feel safe, take risks, and grow. The last sub-theme discussed was barriers to creating a positive learning environment. Participants described how COVID-19-related barriers, lack of knowledge around co-teaching models and opportunities, power structures and relationships between co-teachers, and additional roles and responsibilities of LSS teachers all affected the co-teaching experience.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to gain insight into the experiences of GE teachers and LSS teachers as they engaged in a push-in model of co-teaching. The curiosity for this topic was driven by the understanding that GE teachers often feel underprepared to meet the needs of the diverse needs of students in their classes, as has been demonstrated by school failure lists and recurring patterns at SBT meetings at my school. Participants experiences were situated in a one-teach-one-assist model, which encompassed one teacher leading the instructional practices while the other assisted and circulated the classroom (Friend, 2015; Friend & Cook, 1995; Friend et al., 2010). In their experiences, the GE teacher took the lead for instruction, while the LSS teacher took on the role of assistant. The findings of the study provide insight into how various factors affect the learning environment that co-teachers co-create, and how they influence teachers and their classes. The findings support many of the ideas presented in historical literature, but also provide new insights and implications on practice.

In this chapter, the key findings of my capstone research project and their significance will be discussed, focusing on understanding how the implementation of the push-in co-teaching model at MSS influenced co-teachers and their classes. Next, unexpected findings will be discussed, followed by a discussion of the limitations of the research. Implications of the research on practice and future research will be discussed next, followed by a few closing thoughts.

Major Findings

In this section, key findings were categorized into three central themes: participants' understandings of roles and responsibilities within their co-teaching dyad, facilitators of a

positive learning environment, and challenges to creating a positive co-teaching experience. These findings provide insight to some suggestions and recommendations for schools and districts considering implementing a push-in co-teaching model of support.

Roles and Responsibilities

The findings of this retrospective study extend the findings from literature by describing the factors that supported participants to take on different roles and responsibilities over time. Teachers at MSS explained how professional trust, knowledge and expertise, and assumptions affected how they negotiated the roles and responsibilities within their co-teaching dyads and how they imagined roles to shift and change in future experiences. In each case, despite having different levels of trust, expertise, and assumptions, both co-teaching dyads experienced a one-teach-one-assist model, where the LSS teacher took on the supportive role.

The one-teach-one-assist co-teaching model is the model most often described in literature, and often encompasses the GE teacher taking on the planning and decision-making roles, whereas the LSS trained teacher often took on the assistant role, working on adapting work and providing help and support to students (Keefe & Moore, 2004; Rice & Zigmond, 1999). This is consistent with the model that participants used in this study. Literature describes how the limited content knowledge of the special education teacher limited their role in the class to be a support role in which they primarily supported students with (Keefe & Moore, 2004; Rice & Zigmond, 1999). This was not the case for teachers at MSS, however, as they described how special education teachers supported the entire class, and that their role evolved over time as the co-teachers built professional trust and let go of the assumptions that they previously held.

As co-teachers created a professional bond with their co-teaching partners, teachers found that they became increasingly prepared and eager to try new roles, take on different approaches,

and engage in conversations regarding instruction, educational practices, and teaching philosophies. Teachers described how they envision their co-teaching experience to be a much more collaborative approach over time, where they move from viewing the class as the GE teachers' class to their joint class. Teachers discussed how their goal would be to create a learning environment that embodies the team-teaching approach but that is flexible to switch between the different models of co-teaching in different circumstances.

GE teachers described how they were hesitant to ask their co-teaching partner to plan or execute lessons, as they did not think that was their co-teacher's role, but as they built a relationship with their co-teaching partner, they began to have deeper conversations and their co-teaching partners stepped up to take on different roles on their own. Participants also discussed how their conversations were light-hearted at the start, but over time, how their conversations developed into more meaningful discussions about practice and instructional strategies. Previous research supports the idea that co-teaching provides an opportunity for professional growth (Bauler et al., 2019; Hackett et al., 2019; Walther-Thomas, 1997), but the findings in this study demonstrate how the growing relationship between co-teachers is an important factor to supporting that growth.

The experience of the participants in this study provide insight to stakeholders on how to best support co-teachers' growth with each other, to create a space where co-teachers can share roles and responsibilities and take their experience further over time. These findings suggest administrators and other stakeholders support co-teachers by providing opportunities for relationship building, collaboration and discussion of the various co-teaching models, and that they are intentional with the pairings of co-teachers, so that co-teachers' expertise is complimentary to their teaching partner's. These recommendations are supported by previous

research that suggest regular collaboration and relationship building of co-teaching dyads provide co-teachers with co-learning opportunities, increased professional development opportunities, and reinforcement of best practices in the classroom (Hedin & Conderman, 2019; Morelock, et al., 2017; Walther-Thomas, 1997).

Facilitators of a Positive Learning Environment

Student Comfort. Another emergent theme that came up in both focus-group interviews was the importance of student comfort and sense of belonging in creating a positive learning climate. Participants described how they were able to create and expand the learning environment that they built throughout their co-teaching experience. Findings support previous literature by discussing how co-teaching allowed for the de-stigmatization and normalization of receiving support, allowed for all students to receive targeted and specialized support, improved student's understandings of their learning needs, and created a safe learning environment for all students to grow (Friend & Cook, 1995; Pickard, 2009; Walther-Thomas, 1997). Students were reported by participants as having more meaningful connections with teachers and with each other; they felt as though their voices were heard and valued and had more one-on-one interactions with their teachers. These findings support the findings of Walther-Thomas (1997) and Bauler et al. (2019), who found that co-taught classrooms allowed for more opportunities for students to interact with teachers, increased hands-on experiences for students, improved student engagement and increased feedback for all students. In addition, findings supported Pickard's (2009) research, where he found that students had increased interactions between SWE and their classmates.

In this study, participants spoke about how their classroom was an inclusive class environment in which students embodied a culture of empathy, support, and growth with each

other. Teachers reported that they noticed increased interactions between themselves and students, and between the students themselves, both inside and outside of the class. These findings further support previous literature that described how co-teaching can support students with learning acceptance and empathy skills (Bauler et al., 2019; Friend & Cook, 1995; Pickard, 2009; Walther-Thomas, 1997).

These findings suggest that co-teaching can support the creation of an inclusive learning environment that supports all students. They also demonstrate the importance of making connections with students to support their sense of safety, growth, and learning over time.

Student Growth. Another theme that was discussed by participants in the focus-group interviews was the relationship between co-taught classrooms and opportunities for student growth. These findings are consistent with previous literature (Bauler et al., 2019; Friend & Cook, 1995; Walther-Thomas, 1997). Participants discussed how student growth was supported through the improvement of their class program and practice, and was demonstrated through student outcomes. Co-teachers described how teacher modelling, increased one-on-one support, differentiated learning opportunities, targeted support systems, et cetera were increased as a result of co-teaching and enhanced the overall class program and standards of practice. Findings support Walther-Thomas' (1997) findings; her findings demonstrated how co-taught classrooms provide students with more opportunities to participate in enrichment activities, guided practice activities, and re-teaching support.

Participants also described how feedback, adaptations, and interventions were available to all students in a timely manner, and individualized learning opportunities and hands-on activities were provided more frequently to all students in their co-taught learning environment. They focused on how they were able to work together to catch students, regardless of whether

they were identified as having a designation and how they were able to keep students engaged through their proactive support system that was made possible through having a co-teaching partner. They described how they supported students academically, socially, and emotionally, regardless of if the student was identified as having a designation, and that they supported these students within the class rather than pulling them out. These findings are consistent with Friend and Cook's (1995) findings, where they describe how co-teaching can be used to support the creation of an inclusive learning environment for all students, where students feel safe to receive in-class support rather than having to leave and receive support outside of the classroom.

Teacher Comfort. Findings suggest that teacher comfort with their co-teaching partner played an integral role in how they worked together to support their class and each other. These findings support previous research that describes how successful co-teaching experiences require co-teachers to have some compatibility or relationship, and suggest that as co-teachers get to know each other, they develop shared experiences that support their ability to co-plan (Cobb & Sharma, 2015; Friend et al., 2010; Hedin & Conderman, 2019; Keefe & Moore, 2004). The findings of this study extend those findings by demonstrating that teachers don't need to have a personal relationship with their co-teacher, as long as both co-teachers are open to each other's ideas, are willing to collaborate, discuss, and trust each other's professional competence. Participants described how they were open to co-teaching, regardless of if they knew their co-teaching partner because they wanted fresh ideas and dialogue. These findings support Walther-Thomas's (1997) findings; her findings describe how participants were receptive to conversation and moral support from their co-teaching partners, because they found teaching to have historically been a lonely profession. These findings suggest that successful co-teaching

partnerships require participants to have trust in their co-teaching partner's abilities, be open to each other's ideas, and have compatible personalities.

Teacher Growth. Another theme discussed by participants was the link between co-teaching and opportunities for professional growth of teachers. These findings are consistent with the claim that co-teachers enhance their professional development through co-teaching with another teacher (Bauler et al, 2019; Hackett et al, 2019; Walther-Thomas, 1997). Findings from this study focus on how co-teaching can be used to support teacher growth through professional dialogue and open discussions between co-teachers that have different expertise and knowledge, and are flexible to try new things with their co-teaching partner.

Participants described how their co-teaching relationships supported them to be flexible with each other and learn from each other. They described how they were able to attempt and evaluate dynamic instructional activities and strategies based on their co-teaching partner's expertise and experiences, which helped them to increase their skill repertoires. They found themselves learning through experimenting with different techniques and implementing different instructional activities and practices in various capacities. These findings are consistent with Pickard (2009)'s findings, where he described how freedom to experiment with instructional strategies enhanced teacher's integration of subject matter and student's success. Walther-Thomas (1997) also describes how co-teaching provided teachers with the ability to share their unique knowledge bases and skills, which supported teachers to explore, expand, and experiment with new ideas and content areas.

Participants in this study went on to describe how they not only experimented with the various instructional activities, but they also discussed, reflected, and evaluated them. This is consistent with the literature, which describes how teachers found themselves regularly

addressing assumptions, reflecting on practice, increasing their metacognition of practice, practicing dynamic instructional activities, et cetera. (Bauler et al., 2019; Hackett et al., 2019). In their studies, they described how those findings were a result of co-teaching but did not describe how the relationship between co-teachers supported this. The findings of this study, however, describe how the relationship between co-teachers allowed for a space where teachers felt challenged by their co-teaching partners, frequently engaged in open dialogue regarding teaching practice, and worked together to improve their class. These findings demonstrate the importance of strong co-teacher relationships to support teacher engagement in professional dialogue and reflections with their co-teaching partners, supporting their professional growth and learning.

Challenges of Co-Teaching

Another theme that emerged were the challenges that teachers anticipated or faced when implementing the co-teaching model of support. Participants described circumstantial barriers such as limited understanding of the different models of co-teaching and instructional opportunities, extensive workloads of LSS teachers, lack of planning and collaboration time, and COVID-19-related barriers. These challenges support previous literature which describes how collaboration and planning time, lack of preparedness to work in non-traditional ways such as co-teaching, and work loads of special education teachers, affect the successful implementation of the push-in co-teaching model of support (Rice & Zigmond, 1999; Walther-Thomas, 1997).

In addition to circumstantial barriers, participants also described how power dynamics between co-teachers created feelings of intimidation and judgement of practice, which had to be overcome for a successful co-teaching experience. Participants described how if teachers did not overcome those concerns, that the professional dialogue and flexibility to try new things or take on different roles would not be possible. These findings are consistent with Rice and Zigmond,

(1999) who described how teachers sometimes see co-teaching as a threat to their autonomy. Participants in this study, however, suggest that as the culture of the school changes, teachers will see more benefit from the co-teaching model and will warm up to the idea. They suggest that teachers just need time. These sentiments by participants are supported by Walther-Thomas (1997) and Hedin and Conderman (2019), who describe how, over time, working together in co-taught classes allowed for concerns and issues to become less relevant over time. These findings provide insight and recommendations to how administrators can support co-teaching dyads in the future.

Unexpected Findings

Participants in this study described their experience in the unique context of MSS and the COVID-19 pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic created unique challenges for teachers based on provincial guidelines, such as, limited amounts of face-to-face interactions and changes to the structure of the school schedule. Students alternated between participating online and in-person for a 10-week period and wore masks throughout their in-person instructional times, creating challenges for teachers when trying to connect with students. Teachers described how they found that students were missing significant amounts of school online and in-person as a result of the stress of the pandemic and the faster timeline of courses introduced as part of the cohort guidelines. They described how they used co-teaching to support students better than when they were in single-teacher taught classes. They described how they were able to utilize the social and emotional knowledge of LSS teachers to support students' well-being and social skills. They also described how they used co-teaching as a way for modelling problem-solving and participation for students. These findings demonstrate how, despite the challenges faced due to the COVID-19 pandemic, their co-teaching experience provided them with an opportunity to support their

students with engagement in learning and with their social and emotional barriers. These findings support the use of the co-teaching model to support student well-being and engagement in diverse circumstances.

Despite both co-teaching dyads participating in a one-teach-one-assist model, participants found that students felt supported by both teachers, and that they were seen as equals in the class. These findings are unique to previous literature, which warns how a one-teach-one-assist model where co-teachers do not switch between instructional teacher and assistant teacher can create increased awareness of the difference in power and status (Strogolis & King-Sears, 2018). I believe these findings were different because the co-teachers made a conscious effort to connect with all students, regardless of if they were identified as having a designation. In addition, participants demonstrated academic and social support for students, which created an environment where students were actively engaged in learning and feedback was on-going and frequent from both teachers. Over the past year, as teachers have adjusted to the new realities of the COVID-19 pandemic, the focus of professional development has been on supporting the social and emotional well-being of students. This may be why participants were able to connect with so many students and not have the one-teach-one-assist model affect the beliefs that students held about who the teacher-in-charge was.

Limitations

Since this study focused on gaining a deep understanding of personal accounts and perspectives of co-teachers, it used an IP approach with a small number of participants (n=4). This meant that the research study focused on meaning-making of the participants' perceptions of their experiences rather than exploring the experience in a more holistic manner, such as through a case study exploring teachers' experience throughout the duration of their co-teaching

experience. This approach was useful, however, to provide immediate insight and recommendations for teachers at MSS implementing the co-teaching model of support in the next quarter.

The research was also limited by the number of participants as well as the voluntary nature of the research. The number of participants limited the generalizability of the research, but still provided insight in how MSS may run their LSS program in future years. The voluntary nature of the research also meant that participants with negative experiences might not have been willing to participate in the study due to the utilization of focus-group interviews. Despite this limitation, participants in this study described how schools can support teachers with their co-teaching relationship and successful implementation of the push-in co-teaching model of support, which will provide insight for future practice. Findings can also be used to provide insight to new staff at MSS attempting to implement the model. Research findings may also inform schools with similar contexts, but should not be used as prescriptive, as the focus was on interpretations of a select group of voluntary participants.

Implications and Recommendations for Practice

Although further research is still required, the findings of the current study provide support for the use of the push-in co-teaching model of support to create a positive classroom environment and provide recommendations for future practice. Schools wanting to improve their approaches to implementing the co-teaching model should consider providing staff with learning opportunities on the various models of co-teaching, intentional co-teaching partnerships to include teachers with different expertise and knowledge, and scheduled time for teachers to build their co-teaching partnership and collaboration over time, along with opportunities for facilitated dialogue or conversation prompts. Schools may also consider providing budgetary and

operational support by giving co-teaching partners opportunities to grow together through long-term assignments with their co-teaching partner and reduced workloads and caseloads of LSS teachers.

Implications and Recommendations for Future Research

Although this study supports the use of the co-teaching model to create a positive learning environment for co-teachers and their classes, there are still gaps in the research. It is suggested that co-teachers and students from a variety of co-taught classes be interviewed to further support the perceived effects of a push-in co-teaching model of support on teachers and their classes, including quantitative studies that look at the effect on learning. In addition, it is suggested that future research continue to look at the role that relationships, trust, and comfort play in creating a positive co-taught experience for teachers, as well as what factors cultivate teacher trust and comfort, in a wide-scale study with a higher number of participants. A final suggestion is to perform a thorough case study observing various co-teaching dyads participating in the different models of co-teaching. This case study could focus on the co-teaching relationship, the class community, the support that co-teachers felt when implementing the various models, and student reflections of their experiences.

Closing Thoughts

Completing this capstone research project has provided me with insight on how to support the cultivation of a co-teaching partnership, and how that can be used to create a classroom environment that is inclusive of all students. Through the discussions and conversations with the participants of this study, I have learned about the common and unique challenges that they faced when trying to implement the push-in co-teaching model of support. I have also learned about the complex nature of negotiating roles, as well as potential strategies to

overcome various challenges. I have also learned how valuable the relationship between co-teachers can be in supporting teachers to take risks, curate a positive learning environment for all students where they observe teachers modelling social skills, engaging in problem-solving activities, and taking risks, and how the relationship between co-teachers can grow over time to support them to engage in dialogue and challenge and support each other to grow. I look forward to being able to apply what I have learned in the classroom and through facilitating and supporting other co-teaching dyads within my school setting.

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Appendix A

Ethics Approval

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Human Research Ethics Board - Certificate of Ethical Approval

HREB Protocol No: 100590

Principal Investigator: Miss Victoria Kooner

Team Members: Miss Victoria Kooner (Principal Investigator)

Dr. Nancy Norman (Supervisor)

Dr. Sheryl MacMath (Course Instructor)

Title: Co-teaching partners and their experiences with a push-in co-teaching model

Department: Faculty of Professional Studies\Teacher Education

Effective: January 05, 2021

Expiry: January 04, 2022

The Human Research Ethics Board (HREB) has reviewed and approved the ethics of the above research. The HREB is constituted and operated in accordance with the requirements of the UFV Policy on Human Research Ethics and the current Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS2).

The approval is subject to the following conditions:

1. Approval is granted only for the research and purposes described in the application.
 2. Approval is for one year. A Request for Renewal must be submitted 2-3 weeks before the above expiry date.
 3. Modifications to the approved research must be submitted as an Amendment to be reviewed and approved by the HREB before the changes can be implemented. If the changes are substantial, a new request for approval must be sought. *An exception can be made where the change is necessary to eliminate an immediate risk to participant(s) (TPCS2 Article 6.15). Such changes may be implemented but must be reported to the HREB within 5 business days.
 4. If an adverse incident occurs, an Adverse Incident Event form must be completed and submitted.
 5. During the project period, the HREB must be notified of any issues that may have ethical implications.
- *NEW** 6. A Final Report Event Form must be submitted to the HREB when the research is complete or terminated.

****Please submit your Research Continuity Plan to REGS@ufv.ca before beginning your research. The plan can be found here: <https://www.ufv.ca/research/>**

Thank you, and all the best with your research.

UFV Human Research Ethics Board

****Do not reply to this email****

Appendix B

Interview Protocol

Part One: Describing who you are as a participant.

1. What gender do you identify as, or what pronoun do you prefer?
2. What is your preferred pseudonym to be used in the transcript?
3. How long have you been a teacher? In this capacity (LSS/Subject Area)? At this school?
4. Describe your understanding of what a push-in co-teaching model is in one or two sentences.
5. Have you ever participated in a co-teaching model? If so, how long?

Part Two: Describing your experience with co-teaching.

6. Coming into the experience, what value did you anticipate from the push-in co-teaching model? What challenges did you anticipate? Did you experience these advantages and challenges when participating in this co-teaching model? Were there other advantages and challenges?
7. Describe your experience implementing the push-in co-teaching model. What were the perceived impacts on student learning? On classroom climate and community building?
8. Did you experience any shifts in teaching practice or teaching philosophies as a result of co-teaching? If so, please describe.
9. Reflecting on your co-teaching experience with your co-teaching partner, what stood out to you? In what ways, if any, did you feel challenged by your co-teaching partner?

Describe your co-teaching relationship.

10. Overall, what helped with the co-teaching experience, and what hindered it/was there anything that hindered it?