

# What Works in an ENL Co-Teaching Class?

The Impact of Integrated & Stand-alone ENL Programs

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## Executive Summary

New York State school districts must comply with Commissioners Regulations Part 154 (CR Part 154) which establishes the legal requirements for the education of English Language Learners (ELLs). These new provisions ensure that ELLs are provided opportunities to achieve the same educational goals and standards that have been established by the Board of Regents for all students.

This brief explores the inherent challenges of implementing one of the new requirements under Part 154-2, using an integrated ENL approach which requires the co-teaching of ENL and content area by two certified teachers. This document offers an overview of this approach and distills lessons learned from schools who have embraced the opportunities presented by the amended regulations, and have met with some successes.

These are the Key Questions:

- **What are some of the challenges facing the implementation of integrated ENL?**
- **What are some lessons learned?**
- **What are some recommendations?**

## NYS CR Part 154, Revised

### Implementing Co-Teaching or Integrated ENL/ESL Model

#### I. Introduction

The Commissioner's Regulations Part 154 (CR Part 154) contain the mandated educational services that schools serving English Language Learners (ELLs) must implement. These regulations are the result of the landmark 1974 decision, *Lau Vs. Nichols* that established the right of ELLs to have a "meaningful opportunity to participate in the educational program" (*Aspira Consent*).

In 2014, the New York State Education Department sought to amend these regulations to better serve an increasing multilingual ELL population statewide. These proposed amendments were approved by the NYS Board of Regents in September 2014, and school districts were required to implement the new mandates by the 2015-2016 school year. Some of the changes include overdue improvements in the process of identification and placement of students, as well as

clear guidelines regarding the amount of instructional time in the students' home language and in English, depending on their level of English proficiency.

One of the most significant instructional changes pertains to the teaching of English-as-a-New-Language (ENL) formerly known as English as a Second Language (ESL) a distinct language support program most often taught as a stand-alone, either in the area in the classroom (push-in) or outside the classroom (pull-out). As a result of the amended regulations, schools must now implement ENL/ESL through a co-teaching or integrated ENL approach by which a certified ENL/ESL teacher co-teaches in the classroom with his/her content area counterpart.



## II. Empirical Observations

The State's swift implementation of the amended law demanded action from all school districts, both urban and rural, with fewer than 20 students (Marcus, 2017). The expectation for the implementation of a co-teaching model or integrated ENL/ESL approach has initiated beneficial conversations and collaborations between ENL/ESL teachers and their colleagues, but the logistics and cost involved continues to impede its full implementation.

In some schools, the co-teaching approach has flourished to become an exemplary practice, as is the case at both Brooklyn Preparatory High School (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r5kxv69N-MY>) and Jordon L. Mott, JHS 22, in the Bronx. At JHS 22 Mr. Ibarra, the ENL teacher and his colleague Ms. Pereyra, an ELA teacher, have embraced the new approach and developed trust in one another and rely on each other's expertise. Mr. Ibarra said that many of the challenges in his co-teaching scenarios revolve around figuring out the most effective practices for such diverse learners with such differing language levels. It has been a struggle to ensure complete success for every learner in the classroom." (Colón, 2016).

The co-teaching approach has been successfully implemented in special education classes for a number of years. However, the definition of integrated ENL or co-teaching in classrooms with ELL students has been interpreted rather broadly. For example, "some districts interpret "integrated" to be a class of ELLs, former ELLs, and native English speakers in a content area class. While other districts interpret it as a classroom comprising ELLs exclusively with the "integration" of one ENL and one content area teacher as co-instructors. Yet another example of integrated is a teacher who holds certification in both the ESOL and the content area being taught. (self-contained ENL) (p.4, Marcus).

In May 2016, a few months after the initial implementation of the amended CR Part 154, the UFT formed a focus group that included members of the NYS Board of Regents, the NYS Department of Education, the NYC RBE-RN from Fordham University, and 30 UFT members, to review the impact of the new mandates. In their deliberations, members expressed concern about the co-teaching mandate. Specifically, they "felt strongly that all English language learners should still receive stand-alone ENL classes. In particular, they noted that the needs of English language learners with little or no English could not be met in integrated ELA classes". (Nobel, 2016). Many questions also

stem from the lack of planning time and the feasibility of such planning in schools where there are one or two ENL/ESL teachers who are expected to collaborate and co-teach with three or more content area colleagues. In turn, these concerns impact the decisions school administrators must make to support their staff (Honigsfeld, 2015).



## III. Lessons Learned After Two Years

On May 31, 2018, the NYC RBE-RN in collaboration with the NYC DOE Bronx Borough Field Support Office organized a Bilingual Symposium on Co-teaching under the title, "**Where are we now and what needs to be done?**"

Here are the questions posed to the panel composed of teachers, counselors and administrators, and their responses regarding the lessons that we all learned about Co-Teaching or the Integrated ENL approach to teaching ELL students.

### 1. **What systems and structures are in place in your school to support co-teaching?**

#### **Administrators:**

- Created opportunities for open conversations about the challenges that exist, including the issues of programming.
- Made educating ELLs the top priority in our school and supporting co-teaching the focus of classroom visits.
- Provided PD opportunities for themselves and their staff to allow for turn key training.
- Established a non-evaluative culture of learning walks to provide feedback on a weekly basis.



- e. Created a budget to include the hiring of additional ENL teachers.
- f. Utilized PD funds to build capacity with the co-teaching teams.
- g. Used the School Based Option (SBO) to have alternative scheduling to extend the day for students.

**Teachers:**

- a. Collaborated more frequently to plan instruction.
- b. Assessed and reflected about teaching and learning using student work.
- c. Implemented a specific academic vocabulary program.
- d. Analyzed the impact of instruction using Assessment Analysis
- e. Used Google docs to share lesson plan templates, to edit work and support one another.

**2. There are 4 co-teaching components according to Honigsfeld and Dove. What are the components that you found most successful?**

- a. Incorporating language objectives because it made the language and content clear to students.
- b. Being strategic by identifying an instructional model, for example one teacher focused on the language component and the other on teaching the content of the lesson.
- c. Modeling explicitly during speaking and making thinking visible.
- d. Using key cards for accountable talk.
- e. During co-planning time, building structured opportunities into the lesson for students to listen and speak to each other.
- f. Setting purposeful *Turn and Talk* opportunities to prepare for independent writing, and the workshop model.
- g. Experimenting with alternative co-teaching models.

**3. What was the greatest challenge?**

- a. Scheduling planning time and working with multiple content area teachers.
- b. Pushing the co-planning agenda forward.
- c. Providing individual support to all ELLs when there is a wide range of English proficiency levels among students in the classroom.
- d. Implementing an equitable grading policy.
- e. Competing responsibilities when an ENL teacher is also the coordinator in charge of admissions and NYSESLAT testing.
- f. Learning ENL strategies so that content area teachers can support ELLs independently and also optimize instructional time during co-teaching periods.

**4. Challenges can become opportunities for solutions. From that perspective, could you highlight specific bridges**

**that you were able to build?**

- a. Realizing the multiple opportunities for professional growth that is built in to the co-teacher partnership.
- b. The Stand-alone time is a great bridge. It offers an opportunity to align language objectives and deepens the skills that students need for ELA class.
- c. Understanding the alignment of the CCLS standards and the Targets of Measurements for the NYSESLAT.(ToMs)
- d. Using of the Picture Word Inductive Model (PWIM )to increase vocabulary.
- e. Developing a theme -based curriculum that is integrated.
- f. Having a growth mind set .

**5. What advice would you give other schools?**

- a. Be open to accepting others into your classroom and sharing everything. Hold each other accountable when planning, reflecting and co-assessing.
- b. Both teachers need to see each other as equals, and give the same message to students.
- c. Encourage inter-visitations to see how *this* is working well. What does it look like?
- d. Build trust between co-teachers and the administration.
- e. Offer content area teachers opportunities to build ENL strategies to be better prepared to teach ELL students.
- f. Create enriched classroom environments where all students feel motivated and supported to learn.
- g. Use technology including Google docs, Class Dojo and Kinvolve (attendance tracking and texting parents from your phone goes straight to ATS).

Finally,



**Start planning early, and keep in mind that it's okay to make mistakes, just try again!**



#### IV. Recommendations

Supporting the instructional practices shared by the schools participating in the symposium mentioned above, requires a shared school-wide vision, and good planning.

As Eva Garcia and Sara Martinez detail in the article (2016), the first step is a clear understanding of the nuances of the Stand – Alone and Integrated ENL programs. A deep and clear understanding is at the core of successful implementation of each of these programs. To support your understanding, and to clarify any questions below are definitions as per the NYSED Office of Bilingual Education and World Languages.

##### a) Definitions

###### **Stand alone English as a New Language (ENL)**

In Stand-Alone ENL English Language Learners (ELLs) receive English language development instruction taught by a NYS certified ESOL teacher in order to acquire the English language needed for success in core content areas.

###### **Integrated English as a New Language (ENL)**

Integrated ENL is when English Language Learners (ELLs) receive core content area and English language development instruction which includes home language supports and appropriate scaffolds. Integrated ENL instruction is a co-teaching approach carried out by a combination of NYS certified ESOL and content area teachers. Dually certified teachers can also teach Integrated ENL.

##### b) Programming

**Below is guidance to support program implementation.**

**Stand-Alone:** First, program ELLs at the Entering and Emerging proficiency levels as they require more time. There is more flexibility in scheduling the students at the emerging, transitioning and expanding levels. (Reference the NYSED Units of Study Charts for K-8 or 9-12 updated May 2016)

Identify the number of ELLs within a given grade and determine class placement to avoid pulling students out from multiple classrooms.

**Integrated ENL:** Determine the content areas for co-teaching. Consider those content areas where teaching will be possible and most successful. Multiple content areas will limit planning time and will make it impossible for teachers to plan accordingly.

##### c) Planning & Collaboration

**Stand-Alone:** ENL teachers should have common planning time, and/or attend common planning time meetings for the grade. ENL teachers must follow the school's curriculum map to plan their lessons.

**Integrated ENL:** Schedule planning time for both teachers. Content teachers determine the content objectives and the ENL teachers determine the corresponding language objectives for each lesson. Use the Bilingual Common Core Initiative (BCCI), Targets of Measurements for the NYSESLAT, and curriculum units as resources.

##### d) Professional Development

**Stand-Alone & Integrated ENL:** Set a semester-long schedule for Monday PD's dedicated to the study of co-teaching and sharing of best practices. The sessions can be led by an administrator, a teacher, a coach and/or a member from the NYC RBE-RN Team.

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#### Information and Resources

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