Successful Co-Teaching: A Handbook for Educators
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Abstract

The purpose of this study was twofold: 1) to develop a practical co-teaching handbook for educators; and 2) to help disseminate conscious raising of co-teaching strategies and the importance of co-teaching while giving practical suggestions for how to have a successful co-teaching relationship. *Successful Co-Teaching: A Handbook for Educators* was developed through applying and using theoretical and empirical research, educational resources and recommendations from a needs assessment. The handbook comprises of background co-teaching information, co-teaching and co-planning resources and templates, and strategies for co-teaching partners to use to better equip themselves as co-teachers. *Successful Co-Teaching: A Handbook for Educators* was evaluated by four educators who reported the resource to be comprehensive and informative, and indicated they would use it in their own classroom.
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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION TO THE PROBLEM

The purpose of this study was twofold: 1) to develop a practical co-teaching handbook for educators; and 2) to help disseminate conscious raising of co-teaching strategies and the importance of co-teaching while giving practical suggestions for how to have a successful co-teaching relationship.

*Successful Co-Teaching: A Handbook for Educators* may be beneficial to educators in the Full-Day Early Learning Kindergarten Program (FDELKP) as a guide to follow to improve struggling co-teaching relationships, or to begin a co-teaching relationship in a positive manner. Though the handbook was written based off of the needs assessment and suggestions of kindergarten educators, the suggestions and strategies found in *Successful Co-Teaching: A Handbook for Educators* may be beneficial to any co-teaching partnership.

**Background of the Problem**

Co-teaching has been present in the educational system since the 1950s (Friend, Reising & Cook, 1993) and recently has become a staple in Ontario’s FDELKP (MOE, 2011). Co-teaching is also known as team teaching, collaborative teaching, partner teaching, and cooperative teaching (Austin, 2001; Lynch, 2014; Fenty & McDuffie-Landrum, 2011). Essentially, co-teaching is when two teachers work together with groups of students in the same physical space, who share in planning, organizing, delivering instruction, and assessing instruction (Bacharach, Heck & Dank, 2004). The Ontario Ministry of Education (2010) has suggested that kindergarten students benefit from having both a kindergarten teacher and an early childhood educator (ECE) co-teaching in the classroom. In 2010 the Education Act added section 264.1 outlining that teachers and early childhood educators have a legal duty to cooperate in planning and providing education to students, for observing, monitoring and assessing
students, for keeping a healthy learning environment, communicating with families, and of course, for any duties assigned by the principal. Despite this legal duty to co-operate, findings from preliminary research into the FDELKP have shown that not all teams are working together co-operatively (MOE, 2013). This may be because, despite being bound legally to co-operate and to co-teach a class of up to 33 children, there are no set-in-stone ministry guidelines for educators to rely on for how to achieve this lofty goal.

Co-teaching has been described by Howard and Potts (2009) as a marriage of the two co-teaching partners. Typically in Ontario, one can choose who they wish to marry, but in the FDELK program, partners are just assigned without reflection as to whether the partners want to be together. With this forced relationship there are bound to be bumps along the way to a successful partnership. Pratt (2014) outlined several challenges to teaching partnerships, including, difficulty establishing equal classroom roles, interpersonal differences, lack of planning time, incompatibility of the partners, and lack of support from administration. Further, Fluijt, Bakker and Struyfc (2016) and McGlynn-Stewart and Bezaire’s (2014) research determined incompatibility and personal issues as the largest obstacles in partnerships. Despite the hard work and challenges that co-teaching partners may be faced with, there is research to demonstrate that co-teaching has many benefits to both students and the educators (Diana, 2014; Walther-Thomas, 1997). Diana (2014) found that co-teaching led to an improved student-teacher ratio, greater sense of community in the classroom, and greater opportunities for students to seek help when needed. Additionally, Diana (2014) suggested that co-teachers benefit from co-teaching through enhanced motivation and professional growth. Walther-Thomas (1997) found students in co-taught classes had improved academic performance, and improved social skills. Thus suggesting, the importance of having co-taught classrooms.
Statement of the Problem

As of September 2014, every Ontario kindergarten class with more than 16 students enrolled is being co-taught by a teacher and an ECE. The teacher and ECE are expected to work collaboratively to educate and care for the students in their classroom (MOE, 2010). The goal of the FDELKP is that these two educators will work seamlessly together and that each educator’s strengths will shine. Unfortunately, after an in-depth analysis of the first two years of the FDELKP implementation, the Ministry of Education (2013) found that not all co-teaching partnerships were benefiting from a collaborative approach. Instead, it was found that many co-teaching relationships were suffering from lack of clearly defined and established roles and responsibilities, and that hierarchies were forming based on the social perspective that teachers hold more power than ECEs (MOE, 2013). One of the biggest areas of improvement for the FDELKP is to foster growth in the FDK teams. Without knowing how to improve the relationships, this could be a difficult goal to achieve.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was twofold: 1) to develop a practical co-teaching handbook for educators; and 2) to help disseminate conscious raising of co-teaching strategies and the importance of co-teaching while giving practical suggestions for how to have a successful co-teaching relationship. Specifically, the purpose of this project was to create a handbook for educators that would offer information on co-teaching, strategies, resources and team building exercises to better equip them as co-teachers. Through the strategies, resources and exercises provided, it is hoped that educators will become more informed about co-teaching practices, and to feel more confident in their role as a co-teacher. Further, it is hoped that the information provided in the handbook will encourage struggling co-teaching partners to utilize the resources,
and encourage new co-teaching partners to begin their co-teaching partnership with the strategies included.

**Rationale**

Based on the lack of pedagogical resources available to educators on co-teaching and creating professional relationships there was a need for creating *Co-Teaching: A Handbook for Educators*. When designing the handbook, it was originally developed for FDELK teaching teams, however, the information provided in the handbook, and the activities and strategies provided are transferable to other co-teaching grade partners. Since there is widespread knowledge that co-teaching can come with many challenges (Fluijt et al., 2016; Hepnar & Newman, 2010; Pratt, 2014), it is hoped that this handbook will be an important resource to not only kindergarten teachers and ECEs but also to any co-teaching educators. Further, it is anticipated that this handbook may be an important resource for administrators who are trying to build professional relationships in their schools, or attempting to facilitate an efficient reciprocal instructional co-teaching dyad. The activities and resources shared in the handbook could be useful for successful co-teaching partners to strengthen their relationships. The handbook is not intended for use to only those educators who are experiencing challenges in co-teaching, but rather to help disseminate conscious raising of co-teaching strategies and the importance of co-teaching while giving practical suggestions for how to have a successful co-teaching relationship.

Current empirical research supports the need for educators to have access to more professional development in their co-teaching roles, and a better understanding of their defined roles (Gananthan, 2011; McGlynn-Stewart & Bezaire, 2014; Ontario Ministry of Education, 2013; Tozer, 2011; Vanderlee et al., 2012). It is anticipated that with access to *Co-Teaching: A*
Handbook for Educators, co-teaching teams will be able to utilize the information and be able to co-teach harmoniously. The need for this handbook is supported by the many benefits that come along with successful co-teaching. Diana (2014) and Walther-Thomas (1997) have suggested that successful co-teaching results in teachers experiencing enhanced motivation and professional growth, and that students benefit by improved academic performance and more one-on-one time with a teacher. Given the empirical research and demand found in the needs assessment a handbook surrounding co-teaching strategies is in high demand (Diana, 2014; Gananthan, 2011; Vanderlee et al., 2012; Walther-Thomas, 1997). Because the relationship of co-teachers has been shown to affect a student’s social and academic achievements (Diana, 2014; Walther-Thomas, 1997), Successful Co-Teaching: A Handbook for Educators has been developed to equip educators with the basic knowledge needed to create and/or maintain a successful co-teaching partnership. With this knowledge it is hoped that successful partnerships will flourish and both educators and students will see benefits.

My personal interest in co-teaching FDK partners has stemmed from my own personal experiences working in the FDELKP. I have worked in the field of education for the past four years. I spent three years working as an ECE for a southwestern school board, and have been employed as an Occasional Teacher (OT) with the same district school board for the last year. As an ECE with the board I had three different teaching partners. During this time one partnership was excellent, one partnership was challenging, and my final partnership was somewhere in the middle. When I was looking for resources to aid me in my co-teaching journey I realized that there was a substantial need for such resources. As an OT I often supply teach in kindergarten rooms when the kindergarten teacher is absent, and have discussions with the ECEs. These discussions have ranged from ECEs who are very happy in their position and with their
partnership, to those who are miserable and don’t feel they have a good partnership but don’t know how to fix it. This has sparked my interest in the need for a co-teaching document for co-teaching educators to rely on.

**Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical foundation, which framed this project, comprises of the theorizing of Albert Bandura. Bandura’s (1977) social learning theory (SLT) sheds light on how an individual person learns and what influences their learning. Within SLT, Bandura (1977) proposed the theory of reciprocal determinism. Reciprocal determinism suggests that an individual’s behaviour is influenced by three factors: the environment (physical and social), the individual (perceptions, thoughts, feelings, etc.), and the behaviour that is occurring (Bandura 1978; Kauffman & Landrum, 2013). Essentially, the environment influences an individual’s behaviours and perceptions and an individual’s behaviours and perceptions influence the environment and each of these three factors are interconnected, conditional upon each other, and not to be considered separately (Bandura, 1978).

Due to the fact that the success of co-teaching partnerships often depends on the relationship between and the compatibility of the partners (Fluijt et al., 2016; Pratt, 2014), the way in which educators interact with one another may be influenced by the theory of reciprocal determinism. For educators to successfully co-teach, understanding how these interactions may affect each other could be beneficial.

**Importance of the Study**

The Ontario Ministry of Education (2014) has suggested that the full-day kindergarten program is, “the single most significant investment in education… giving every four-and-five-year-old the best possible start in life” (p. 2). A kindergarten student spends the majority of their
day with their homeroom teacher and early childhood educator, and the way the educators interact may have a lasting impression on the student. The FDELKP promises two educators who collaborate co-operatively with a shared goal of educating students (OME, 2010). Since the Ontario Ministry of Education’s (2013) report has identified shortcomings in the relationships between these two educators, and a lack of pedagogical resources and professional development for these educators, a handbook specifically designed to aid co-teachers in fostering and maintaining a successful relationship is greatly needed.

If educators and administrators have a co-teaching resource with strategies and suggestions for how to successfully co-teach, they will be able to assess their partnerships and apply the strategies in their own classrooms and schools. It is hoped that this resource will be an effective resource in minimizing unhappy partnerships.

**Scope and Limitations**

Several limitations arose during the development of *Successful Co-Teaching: A Handbook for Educators*. The first limitation was the limited sample of participants for the needs assessment and the evaluative questionnaire. The sample sizes for the assessment and questionnaire only consisted of four participants (two ECEs, and two teachers), and all of the participants were from the same elementary school in southwestern Ontario, teaching the same grade (kindergarten).

The second limitation was that many of the questions outlined on the questionnaires were closed-ended, resulting in participants being confined to a rating scale that may not have accurately reflected their opinions. Furthermore, there was no contextual evidence to add to the responses as the researcher did not have contact with the participants.

Finally, although the participants indicated that the strategies, information and resources provided were beneficial, the handbook has not yet been empirically validated to demonstrate
whether the use of the handbook strengthens co-teaching partnerships as suggested. Despite these limitations, the responses from the needs assessment indicated a need for this project, and informed the content and approach to developing the handbook.

**Social Location**

It is important to address the preconceptions and perspectives of the researcher. As previously stated, I am currently an occasional teacher, and was previously an ECE in a southwestern school board and the developmental process of creating this handbook has been influenced by my experiences in both of these roles. Throughout my career as an ECE, I have had the opportunity to be a part of three different co-teaching partnerships with varying degrees of quality. Since I was the consistent factor in each of these relationships it ignited the passion to explore these relationships further. In my role as an occasional teacher I have met many FDK teams struggling in a co-teaching partnership and needing a co-teaching resource. Prior to this project, I do not feel that I knew enough about co-teaching, and I was a practicing co-teacher. I believe this information is crucial to make available to co-teachers.

**Objectives of the Handbook**

*Successful Co-Teaching: A Handbook for Educators* was developed based on the following objectives.

1. Educators will extend their knowledge of co-teaching
2. Educators will become aware of resources and suggestions on how to collaborate and co-teach a class
3. Educators will be equipped with strategies to use when challenges in their partnerships arise
4. Educators will complete an evaluation questionnaire to evaluate the practicality and usefulness of the handbook.

These objectives will be revisited in the methodology section of Chapter Three, and are also included in the evaluation of the handbook in Chapter Five.

Outline of the Remainder of the Document

This project is separated into five chapters. Chapter Two is comprised of a thorough review of theoretical and empirical literature in the co-teaching field. An analysis of what co-teaching is, and the different types of co-teaching are presented. Also included is a thorough analysis of Ontario’s FDELKP and findings from the first three years of its implementation. Within this analysis of the FDELKP both educators’ roles are looked at in detail, along with the benefits and challenges of co-teaching. The implications of the benefits and challenges in the new FDELKP are examined. This will help to substantiate this research topic and serve as background information for the reader.

Chapter Three presents the research methodology used to create Successful Co-Teaching: A Handbook for Educators. This section includes the reports and results from the participants who completed the needs assessment.

Chapter Four is the handbook created for educators on how to successfully co-teach. The handbook was created based on the suggestions and opinions of the four participants ensuring relevancy to the co-teaching population. Finally, Chapter Five will summarize this project, outlining the theoretical and practical implications which arose, and will suggest what future research is needed for co-teaching partners.

Definition of Terms

To ensure a basic level of understanding, the following includes operational definitions of
terms that could be interpreted differently by individuals based on their life experiences. The following terms will aid the reader in understanding the nature of co-teaching, the different styles of co-teaching, and will demystify educational jargon. The operational definitions will also aid the reader in understanding what the full-day kindergarten program is, and some of the key components of the program.

**Co-teaching:** Involves two or more educators working collaboratively to deliver instruction to a heterogeneous group of students in a shared instructional space (Conderman, 2011, p. 24).

**Ontario Certified Teacher:** A certified and licensed member of the Ontario College of Teachers, who is searchable in a public database.

**Early Childhood Educator:** A certified and licensed member of the College of Early Childhood Educators, who is searchable in a public database.

**ELK Team:** A teacher and an early childhood educator who work collaboratively to support the needs of children (OME, 2016, p. 112).

**Triadic Reciprocity:** A behaviour and personality model in which the person, behaviours and environment interact and influence one another (Bandura, 1973).

**Reciprocal Determinism:** A theory that an individual’s behaviour is influenced by personal factors and the social environment, and that
reciprocally, the individual’s behaviour influences personal factors and the social environment (Bandura, 1973).

**Social Learning Theory:** Concept that learning takes place in a social context through observations, direct instruction or from direct reinforcement (Bandura, 1977).

**Collaborating:** A shared vision for student learning and teaching fuelled by a commitment to work together with frequent, extended, positive interactions among those working together (Miller & Burden, 2007, p. 4).

**Full-day kindergarten:** A child-centred, developmentally appropriate, integrated program of learning for four- and five-year-old children. In Ontario, led by a kindergarten teacher and an ECE (OME, 2016).

**Hierarchy:** When one member of the team has a more meaningful voice, and is regarded as more powerful (Roth & Tobin, 2001, p. 11).

**Play-Based Environment:** An environment which uses play to further children’s learning and to inspire a higher level of engagement and curiousity (OME, 2012, p.1)
Role confusion: When one does not know what is expected from them based on their assigned role, generally due to a lack of clarity in responsibilities (Vanderlee et al., 2012).

One Teach One Assist: When one educator takes on a lead teaching role, and the other educator specifically supports student learning on the side (Fenty & McDuffie-Landrum, 2011).

Team Teaching: When both educators take on an active role in teaching a lesson to the entire class (Fenty & McDuffie-Landrum, 2011).

Alternative Teaching: When one educator teaches a small group of students, while the other educator teaches the rest of the class. (Fenty & McDuffie-Landrum, 2011).

Parallel Teaching: When a class is divided into two separate groups, and each teacher teaches the same content separately to their individual group (Fenty & McDuffie-Landrum, 2011).

Station Teaching: When a class is divided into 3 stations, one station of independent activities, and each other station led by an individual teacher (Fenty & McDuffie-Landrum, 2011).
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this chapter was to examine empirical evidence, which relates to the Full-day early learning kindergarten program (FDELKP) and to deconstruct empirical data on successful co-teaching practices. The theoretical framework used for the present study was explored, as well as the various definitions and types of co-teaching that are currently in practice. An overview of the affects of the FDELKP and the roles of the teacher and early childhood educator within the FDELKP have been addressed, and the perspectives of teachers and ECEs have been noted. Most importantly, the strengths and pros of co-teaching have been outlined, and the challenges of co-teaching have been identified. The current research suggested that more professional development for both teachers and ECEs is needed, thus showing the need for a handbook for these educator duos. Much of the reviewed research was included in the handbook to further expand educators’ awareness of how to co-teach and why co-teaching effectively matters.

Theoretical Framework

When trying to understand relationships between two people, it is important to understand what influences each person’s behaviour. This project was grounded in a social-cognitive learning theory (Kauffman & Landrum, 2013), specifically, Albert Bandura’s (1978) theory of reciprocal determinism. Social-cognitive theory has a natural science perspective that uses what is known about environmental effects, and cognition, and then uses this to explain human behaviour (Kauffman & Landrum, 2013). Bandura’s (1977) social learning theory (SLT) sheds light on how an individual person learns and what influences their learning. Bandura (1977) suggested that learning occurs in a social context and is often a result of observations. Bandura (1977) further suggested that an individual most often learns from verbal instruction,
live models or from the media, indicating that models can be fictional characters. Bandura (1977) further proposed that reinforcement is not the cause of direct learning, but that reinforcements can play a role in shaping a behaviour; for instance when an individual observes a behaviour and the consequence of the behaviour, that behaviour is vicariously reinforced. For instance, if a student observes a teacher rewarding another student for a perfect quiz with a sticker, the student may learn that perfect quizzes are good and aim to get perfect. Reinforcements can also be negative (e.g. if a student observes another student getting suspended for cheating on a quiz, the student may learn that this behaviour is unacceptable, and avoid cheating). Even though the student observing did not directly interact in either situation, the student has learned through observations. Bandura (1977) proposed a theory within SLT; reciprocal determinism. Reciprocal determinism submits that people are not what they are just because of their actions, but that an individual’s behaviour is influenced by three factors: the environment (physical and social), the individual (perceptions, thoughts, feelings, etc.), and the behaviour that is occurring (Bandura 1978; Kauffman & Landrum, 2013). Essentially, the environment influences an individual’s behaviours and perceptions, and an individual’s behaviours influence the environment. The main difference between this and SLT is that Bandura (1978) argued each of these three factors are interconnected, and conditional upon each other – not to be considered separately. This concept has been coined triadic reciprocity or triadic reciprocal causation (Bandura, 1983). See figure 1.
Figure 1. How Triadic Reciprocation Occurs (Adapted from Creek, 2010).
Bandura (1983) suggests that interactions can have a unidirectional causality, a bidirectional causality or a reciprocal causality. Unidirectional causality describes how a situation and the people in the situation produce a certain behaviour, whereas a bidirectional causality describes when the people and the situation affect one another which produces a behaviour — however the behaviour is not considered to affect the interactions between the person and the situation (Bandura, 1983). Finally, reciprocal causality describes how behaviour, cognitive and environmental events work together to create an interaction (Bandura, 1983).

An example that can connect reciprocal determinism to relationships is as follows: Imagine two teachers who are made to work together in a single classroom. If one teacher feels resentful of having to share their classroom with a new teacher, their personal feelings may influence interactions with the new teacher. The teacher directed to share a room may set the room up to be an unwelcoming environment for the new teacher (not giving much personal space, leaving all his or her things out), these factors may contribute to the teacher acting indifferent or cold towards the new teacher (Bandura, 1983). If the new teacher accepts this and returns the cold shoulder, the actions are reinforced, and a cycle will be started. A reciprocal determinism lens may indicate how the environment, each individual partner, and their behaviours affect and influence teacher and ECE’s co-teaching relationships. Further, this reciprocal determinism lens acts as the root of the handbook created. When a teacher or ECE uses the reciprocal determinism lens in any activity it can provide a different approach based on a new point of view (Bandura, 1983).

Using Bandura’s (1978) theory of reciprocal determinism, Bacharach, Heck and Dahlberg’s (2008) five components to successful co-teaching (planning, communication, relationship, classroom applications, and co-teaching knowledge base) are expanded upon to
show how reciprocal determinism can affect each of these components. Bacharach et al. (2008) focused their co-teaching study on teacher candidates and cooperating teachers, taking input from both sides to construct a list of the top five most crucial components for a successful relationship. Despite the fact that these five components were designed for co-teaching students and teachers, the overall aim is the same as in the Full-Day Early Learning Kindergarten Program (FDELK-P).

Bacharach et al. (2008) indicated the common goal for co-teaching was that, “As the experience [co-teaching] continues, the pair seamlessly alternate between assisting and/or leading the planning, teaching, and evaluation.” (p. 43). In the FDELK-P both teachers and early childhood educators are expected to plan and facilitate activities with assessments in mind (OME, 2010). One can only hope that these partnerships would work seamlessly together. Bacharach’s et al. (2008) five crucial components have been deemed credible components of co-teaching by many researchers (e.g. Austin, 2001; Kohler-Evans, 2006; Indelicato, 2014).

**Importance of Planning in Co-Teaching**

Similarly to the research of Bacharach et al. (2008), Austin (2001) identified planning time as an important aspect of co-teaching, with over eighty percent of 139 collaborating teachers indicating through a survey the importance of scheduled planning time. Hepner and Newman (2010) indicated that for effective co-teaching, shared planning time is a necessity – yet shared planning time was cited as the greatest challenge for co-teachers. This could be due to the fact that in Ontario’s FDK program ECEs are not given paid preparation time - even though their OCT partner is allotted paid preparation time (McGlynn-Stewart & Bezaire, 2014). Walter-Thomas (1996) suggested that a minimum of 45-60 minutes per day should be allotted to shared planning time for co-teachers, and that most effective co-teaching partnerships made planning
time a priority. Kohler-Evans (2006) similarly suggested a time for mutual planning to be of utmost importance, citing the old adage; *you get what you pay for*. Kohler-Evans (2006) argued that co-teaching relationships greatest investment is time put in, as good relationships are reflective of time put in, and further suggest that schools should make shared planning a top priority.

**Importance of Communication in Co-Teaching**

Indelicato (2014) corroborated Bacharach et al. (2008) finding that communication is important, indicating that one of the most important aspects of a co-teaching relationship is open communication. Furthermore, Brown, Howarter and Morgan (2013) suggested that communication is the key to any collaborative partnership, and that co-teaching teams should intentionally plan times to communicate with one another about their perspectives, beliefs, philosophies and feelings toward both student academics and their shared responsibilities and roles in the classroom. Brown et al. (2013) believed that co-teachers should follow the golden rule of *do unto others, as you would have them do unto you*, by communicating in a way that their teaching partner prefers. Gately and Gately (2001) argued that communication is one of the most important aspects of co-teaching, and that truly effective co-teachers will be able to correctly interpret verbal and non-verbal cues, and in fact act as a role model to students for how to communicate. Kohler-Evans (2006) indicated that co-teachers must communicate about not only the good, but the bad too – suggesting an ongoing dialogue about pet peeves, struggles, and “what bugs them” (p.263). Finally, Bacharach et al. (2008) suggested that for successful communication in a co-teaching relationship, co-teachers must always communicate honestly, actively listen to one another, give feedback to each other, intentionally address communication strategies, and attend to one another’s body language and non-verbal cues.
Importance of Partners’ Relationships in Co-Teaching

The implementation of FDK in Ontario is still so new, that current research on the interprofessional relationship between ECEs and kindergarten teachers in the classrooms is scarce (McGlynn-Stewart & Bezaire, 2014). McGlynn-Stewart and Bezaire (2014) suggested that ECEs and OCTs in their study recognized that relationships take a lot of work, and that trust and respect for one another was one of the most important aspects of a working relationship. Kohler-Evans (2006) conducted a survey among co-teachers, which asked the teachers to identify the most important feature in their co-teaching relationship, and the number one response was “a positive working relationship” (p. 261). Mastropieri, Scruggs, Graetz, Norland, Gardizi, and McDuffie (2005) indicated that the relationship between educators can also affect the students within the class. Mastropieri et al. (2005) focused their research around co-teachers in special education rooms, and suggested that, the relationship among co-teachers is such a crucial component of co-teaching that it is influential on students with disabilities success and failure rate. In this case, students benefit from good co-teaching relationships with a better success rate, and are at a disadvantage when teachers have a poor co-teaching relationship, with higher failure rates. Furthermore, the research of Corderman, Johnston-Rodriguez and Hartman (2009) indicated that teachers in co-teaching relationships often report personal compatibility as the most important factor in the success of their co-teaching relationships. Though, even with compatibility, relationships are not always fluid; Howard and Potts (2009) suggested a need for continuous self-reflection on how the relationship is working, so that changes can be made to make the relationship more beneficial to the partners and to the students. Bacharach et al. (2008) suggested that for a successful co-teaching relationship, co-teachers must respect and trust one
another, be able to accept personality and teaching differences, and have both partners by ‘in-sync’, knowing when to jump in, and when not to.

**Importance of Classroom Applications in Co-Teaching**

Gately and Gately (2001) indicated that for successful co-teaching, teachers will compromise and both lead instructional presentations, participating and being engaged in all activities. McGlynn-Stewart and Bezaire (2014) found that many successful FDK co-teaching teams agreed that sharing responsibilities, playing to each team member’s strengths, and being flexible in the classroom was crucial. The need for clarity in regards to roles and responsibilities makes up the classroom applications. Tzivinikou (2015) similarly found that successful team-teachers were both responsible for planning and instructing all students. Bacharach et al. (2008) suggested that for classroom applications to be implemented successfully, co-teachers must have shared leadership and shared control of the classroom. The emphasis for classroom applications is the shared component for the educators – they are to work seamlessly together, not seamlessly apart.

**Importance of Co-Teaching Knowledge Base for Effective Co-Teaching**

Indelicato (2014) suggested that to have a truly effective co-teaching relationship, both parties need to understand what it means to co-teach. This directly fits into Bacharach et al. (2008) theory that a knowledge base of co-teaching is necessary for successful co-teaching. Similarly, results from Brinkmann and Twiford’s (2012) interviews with special education teachers and regular classroom teachers suggested that teachers found essential knowledge in co-teaching to be important for successful co-teaching relationships. McGlynn-Stewart and Bezaire (2014) suggested that most ECEs are used to working in teams and have experience with co-teaching groups of children, but that often OCTs do not have experience working directly with a
teaching partner. Understanding how to work with a team member for a common goal was cited as important for the participants in McGlynn-Stewart and Bezaire’s (2014) study. Bacharach et al. (2008) suggested that having a co-teaching knowledge base involves understanding co-teaching strategies, and being able to explain co-teaching benefits to parents and students. Bacharach et al. (2008) also hinted at the importance of each educator being provided with support and training.

**Defining Co-Teaching**

Co-teaching nomenclature is used interchangeably with, partner teaching, collaborative teaching, team teaching, and cooperative teaching (Austin, 2001; Lynch, 2014; Fenty & McDuffie-Landrum, 2011). Bacharach, Heck and Dank (2004) defined co-teaching as two teachers who work together with groups of students in the same physical space, who share in planning, organizing, delivering instruction, and assessing instruction.

Bacharach and Heck (2011) suggested that co-teaching is not just actions, but that it is also an attitude between teachers, and for a successful co-teaching partnership both parties must always be thinking: *We are both teaching!* Murawski (2006) added to the definition, indicating that co-teaching involves two professionals who collaboratively plan, instruct and assess students with and without disabilities. More recently, the definition of co-teaching was defined by Hartnett, Weed, McCoy, Theiss, and Nickens (2013) as two educators who “share all aspects of the classroom including the planning, organization, instruction, assessment, and physical space of the classroom” (p. 6). Despite small differences in definitions it can be seen that co-teaching typically involves two or more educators in a single classroom working collaboratively to teach a group of students.
Fenty and McDuffie-Landrum (2011) identified six different co-teaching models. The co-teaching models included: one teach, one assist; station teaching; parallel teaching; alternative teaching; and team teaching (Fenty & McDuffie-Landrum, 2011). The one teach, one assist method of co-teaching involves one teacher taking on a lead teaching role, and the other teacher specifically supports student learning. In a classroom this would be seen as one teacher in a lecture style giving instruction to the entire class while the other teacher monitors student learning and understanding from the side (Fenty & McDuffie-Landrum, 2011). In a station teaching approach the class involved would be divided into three groups which rotate through three stations; one led by each teacher and the third with independent activities. In this approach both teachers are actively involved in the teaching process (Fenty & McDuffie-Landrum, 2011). In parallel teaching, the class is divided into two groups, and each teacher teaches the same content to their individual group. Despite teaching the same content, each educator is able to teach it in their own style, allowing for smaller student-teacher ratios and reaching different learning styles (Fenty & McDuffie-Landrum, 2011). The alternative teaching approach requires one educator to teach a small group of students, while the other educator teaches the rest of the class. Typically this is done when a small group of students needs extra help or review (Fenty & McDuffie-Landrum, 2011). Finally, team teaching occurs when both teachers take on an active role in teaching a lesson, and is described by Fenty and McDuffie-Landrum (2011) as a synergistic class where teachers have a high level of comfort with one another and can often finish each others thoughts. Based on the description in the FDELKP document, team teaching and alternative teaching would suit the FDELKP best.

While the focus of this study is how co-teaching occurs in kindergarten, co-teaching is not exclusive to kindergarten teams. Co-teaching can be seen between teacher candidates and
associate or cooperating teachers (Bacharach et al., 2008). In this model of co-teaching, the teaching candidate and cooperating teacher begin by collaboratively planning and delivering instruction, and alternating between who teaches (Bacharach et al., 2008). A more commonly known model of co-teaching is between a general education teacher and a special education teacher in an inclusive classroom (Conderman et al., 2009). This model of co-teaching typically sees an alternative teaching approach where the special education teacher works with a small group of students for individualized attention and lessons. This type of co-teaching is commonly seen in inclusive classrooms (Tzivinikou, 2015). Co-teaching can also be seen through a different lens, where same grade teachers collaborate behind the scenes to ensure a smooth and common delivery of instruction to same grades in different classrooms (Wallace, 2007).

It is important to note that like any relationship, co-teaching takes time and effort (Gately & Gately, 2001). Educators who are co-teaching should take this into consideration when beginning a new co-teaching relationship, or when confronted with struggles during the process. Despite the hard work and time needed to allow a co-teaching relationship to flourish, these relationships come with many benefits to both students and the educators. Diana (2014) identified several benefits, including but not limited to, an improved student-teacher ratio, greater sense of community in the classroom, and greater opportunities for students to seek help when needed. Diana (2014) also identified that co-teachers benefit from enhanced motivation and professional growth. Similarly to Diana (2014), Walther-Thomas (1997) found classroom communities improved, and that students benefited from more time and attention from teachers. Additionally, Walther-Thomas (1997) found students had improved academic performance, and improved social skills in co-taught classrooms. The teacher benefits of co-teaching found by
Walther-Thomas (1997) were similar to those of Diana (2014), in that professional satisfaction, and professional growth were cited, yet in addition to these, so was personal support.

**Challenges Encountered in Co-Teaching Partnerships**

Despite all of the benefits of co-teaching, becoming a harmonious co-teaching team may not be easy. Every partnership takes work, and in any typical partnership challenges will arise. This is no different in a co-teaching partnership; Pratt (2014) outlined several challenges to the partnership, including, difficulty establishing equal classroom roles, interpersonal differences, lack of planning time, incompatibility of the partners, and lack of support from administration.

Research of Fluijt, Bakker and Struyfc (2016) corroborated Pratt’s (2014) findings that incompatibility and interpersonal differences were challenges. Fluijt et al. (2016) reviewed 17 articles about co-teaching and professionalism, and concluded that the majority of challenges faced amongst co-teaching partners were in fact personal issues that were not connected to instrumental needs or skills. Incompatibility of partners was seen as a recurring theme by many educators in McGlynn-Stewart and Bezaire’s (2014) research, where they suggested that more emphasis on how to pair individuals is needed.

McGlynn-Stewart and Bezaire (2014) and Vanderlee, Youmans, Peters and Eastabrook (2012) suggested that hierarchies within the team can be a problem. Hierarchies may form because ECEs are given a lower social status than OCTs based on a substantially lower salary, and OCTs are given paid preparation time and more paid professional development opportunities (McGlynn-Stewart & Bezaire, 2014). For a team to work seamlessly as indicated in the OME (2013) curriculum documents, a hierarchy could be detrimental to the partnership’s rapport.

**Overview of the Full-Day Early Learning Kindergarten Program (FDELKP)**

The *Full-Day Early Learning Kindergarten Program* is self defined as, “a child-centred,
developmentally appropriate, integrated, extended-day program of learning for four- and five-year-old children” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 1). The program’s goals include: providing a play based environment, helping children make a smooth transition to grade one, and improving a child’s potential for academic and life success (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010). Pascal (2009) proposed that the FDELKP is meant to improve children’s readiness for grade one, and that the experiences of the FDELKP set the stage for future academic success. Prior to the implementation of the FDELKP, kindergarten students only went to school for half days, but as of 2015 all schools in Ontario must be implementing the FDELKP, and all kindergarten students will attend school for full days unless modified (OME, 2013). The FDELKP implementation began in 2010 with a five year roll out, so that by September 2014 every Ontario public school would be implementing it; it is estimated that at full implementation the program has around 265,000 students enrolled (OME, 2013).

There are six fundamental principles, which guide the FDELKP. These principles are based on the Best Start Expert Panel on Early Learning report, *Early Learning for Every Child Today (ELECT)*. The principles are as follows:

1. Early child development sets the foundation for lifelong learning, behaviour, and health.

2. Partnerships with families and communities strengthen the ability of early childhood settings to meet the needs of young children.

3. Respect for diversity, equity, and inclusion are prerequisites for honouring children’s rights, optimal development, and learning.


5. Play is a means to early learning that capitalizes on children’s natural
6. Knowledgeable, responsive educators are essential (ELECT, 2007). The principle most relevant to the current study is knowledgeable, responsive educators are essential. The Early-Learning-Kindergarten team consists of an early childhood educator (ECE) and a kindergarten teacher who work together in a partnership to educate kindergarten children across six learning areas – personal and social development, language, mathematics, science and technology, health and physical activity, and the arts (OME, 2010). In order to be a kindergarten teacher in the FDELKP, one must have a minimum of a 3-year post-secondary degree, in addition to a teaching certificate with primary/junior certifications from a faculty of education, and be registered with the Ontario College of Teachers (Gibson & Pelletier, 2011). To be an ECE in the FDELKP one must have a minimum of a 2-year college diploma in Early Childhood Education, and also be registered with the College of Early Childhood Educators. Each educator is governed by an act: teachers are under the Education Act and ECEs are under the Early Childhood Educators Act (Gibson & Pelletier, 2011).

**Roles of the Early Childhood Educator and Teacher in FDELKP**

The MOE (2013) indicated that the partnership brings together two qualified specialists to maximize the benefits for the students; teachers are considered specialists in teaching, and ECEs are considered specialists in development. The FDELKP document states, “Early childhood educators and teachers will have the benefit of a collaborative and complementary partnership to support children and families in a high-quality, intentional, play-based learning environment.” (OME, 2010, p. 8). In this collaborative partnership, the teacher and ECE have different roles. It is expected that teachers will be responsible for the management of the kindergarten class, as well as long-term planning and organization. Furthermore, teachers are
responsible for using the team’s assessments of children, and doing formal assessments, evaluation and reporting (OME, 2010). The ECE is expected to focus their knowledge in child development by creating age-appropriate program plans which create experiences for children to develop their physical, cognitive, language, emotional, and social skills, as well as improve their creative development and well-being (OME, 2010). The ECE is expected to create opportunities for children whereby the ECE can observe student learning and contribute toward assessments and evaluations (OME, 2010).

The OME (2013) reviewed the FDELKP after it’s first two years of implementation in Ontario. The study, *A Meta-Perspective on the Evaluation of Full-Day Kindergarten during the First Two Years of Implementation* analyzed many aspects of the program, including the partnership between ECE and teacher (OME, 2013). The MOE (2013) indicated that roles and responsibilities outlined in the FDELKP document were not defined clearly enough, and that many teams were not taking advantage of the collective expertise of both professions (ECEs and teachers). One of the biggest areas for improvement moving forward was a need to foster growth in the FDK teams. The roles for each educator are not clearly stated in the FDELKP document, and in fact, are not clearly stated anywhere. The Ontario government’s Bill 242 (2010), section 16 (242.1) attempts to address the roles of each practitioner, but much is left to ambiguity.

This section requires teachers and early childhood educators to cooperate with each other with respect to matters regarding provision of junior kindergarten and kindergarten. The full day learning program will require collaboration among teachers and ECEs to provide high quality and effective play-based education to support enhanced learning and cognitive, emotional and social development of children. Implementing full day early learning will require strong partnerships
under a provincial framework (Bill 242, p.4).

Vanderlee et al., (2012) suggested that despite this legislation, there are hierarchical problems, because teachers and administrators are the stakeholders who control the power to co-operate. Thus, if a disagreement between ECE and teacher arises, the admin and teachers will have the final say.

Gibson and Pelletier (2011) suggested that when teachers collaborate it either occurs as a hierarchical relationship or as a co-teaching relationship. In hierarchical relationships, one educator acts as more of an assistant and the other educator takes a lead role, whereas in a co-teaching relationship each educator “equally share(s) classroom responsibilities” (Gibson & Pelletier, 2011, p. 1).

As seen above, it is indicated that ECEs and teachers will work in a collaborative partnership to teach students which suggests a co-teaching model. However, Tozer (2011) suggested that with all the role confusion, many ECEs struggle to find their place in the school setting. Interestingly, Gananthan (2011) interviewed ECEs who were part of full day kindergarten, and reported that every ECE interviewed had concerns about what their role was in the school. These findings were further corroborated through a netnography research study by Lynch (2014), which revealed that Ontario kindergarten teachers have concerns over team teaching. Lynch’s (2014) study indicated that, the lack of clearly articulated roles for ECEs and teachers in the FDK program impacted not only the teachers’ resentment of ECEs but also the teachers’ view that ECEs do not have the skills or knowledge needed to work in kindergarten. These findings indicate that there may be room for improvement for the FDELK partnerships.

Effect of the Full-Day Early Learning Kindergarten Program

The FDELKP holds much promise, but whether the program is actually beneficial has
been debated. Longitudinal, empirical data needs to be collected over time, both qualitative and quantitative, to evince the efficacy of the program across the students’ academic achievement and the socio-emotional, affective development. Since this program is relatively new, there is limited research available on the outcomes, and often findings are inconsistent, and for obvious reasons, are not longitudinal (Cooper, Allen, Patall & Dent, 2010; McGlynn-Stewart & Bezaire, 2014).

In collaboration with Queen’s University and McMaster University, the Ontario Ministry of Education (2013) created an evaluative report on the first two years of the FDELKP implementation. This report had two objectives: to identify early indicators of effective practices related to the impact of full-day kindergarten, and to inform program delivery moving forward through to full implementation (MOE, 2013). The MOE (2013) report covered 125 schools across 18 school boards, of these schools, 42 began FDELK in 2010, 41 began FDELK in 2011, and 42 did not offer FDELK at all (control group). Early Development Instruments (EDI) measured physical, social-emotional, cognition, language and communication development (MOE, 2013). EDI data was collected through classroom activities, interviews with teachers, early childhood educators and principals, focus groups with parents, and telephone interviews with community education partners (MOE, 2013). In total 225 interviews were conducted (35 with school administration, 91 with educators, 80 with parents, and 19 with community partners), 167 surveys completed (42 from year 1 educators, and 125 online surveys from year 2 educators), over 1000 photos and 500 classroom documents were reviewed, 60 observations were made during classroom visits, and 48 kindergarten classrooms were visited (OME, 2013). All EDI data was collected in the spring of 2011 and again in the spring of 2012, with informed consent. In 2011 data was collected for 4008 participants (2424 JK students, and 1584 SK
students). In 2012 data was collected from 4570 participants (2237 JK students and 2333 SK students). Of these participants 52% were female children, and 48% were male children. A chi-square analysis concluded an insignificant distribution difference between males and females across the three kindergarten groups analyzed (MOE, 2013). The average age of JK participants was 4.94 (SD=0.28), and the average age of SK participants was 5.8 (SD=0.29) with no differences in age across the three groups (MOE, 2013). Of all the participants, longitudinal EDI data was only available for 690 students (257 in FDK for both JK/SK, 223 in FDK for SK only and 210 who were not in FDK at all). The longitudinal cohort included students with special needs (4%), students of First Nations, Metis and Inuit (FNMI) communities (.8%), students who do not have French or English as their first language (23.8%). The three cohorts had comparable amounts of students from FNMI communities and different first languages spent at home, but it was noted that the FDK for SK only had a greater amount of students identified as low on at least one EDI domain (MOE, 2013).

A second measure used, was information available through the Ontario Student Information System (OnSIS), to make links between FDK and non-FDK, and students who required special needs (MOE, 2013). The OnSIS was consulted to help create a matching kindergarten cohort to the control group.

The results indicated improved development for students who changed from half-day to full-day kindergarten, and that the group who began full-day kindergarten in year 1 had a 75% advantage over those who did not attend kindergarten at all, in regards to being “at risk” in grade one (MOE, 2013, p. 11). Furthermore, the Ministry of Education (2013) compared risk estimates of kindergarten students in 2009 to the students who had completed two years of the FDELKP, and found that overall, the students who attended FDELKP were 6% less vulnerable than those
students from 2009.

The MOE (2013) outlined that professional development opportunities were recognized as crucial for the success of the FDELKP. In the MOE (2013) review it was indicated that despite ministry data indicating 90% of boards benefitted from professional development offered, only a little over 50% of the educators interviewed had attended professional development in relation to the FDELKP. Most shocking, was that typically only teachers attended FDELKP professional development, and the ECE was not included (MOE, 2013). There was minimal mandatory training, and more professional development for both partners could be a step in the right direction for the FDELKP.

The physical and emotional environment was reviewed with positive findings. The physical environment was often deemed inadequate in space for an average 26 student classroom, plus teacher and early childhood educator. Yet evidence suggested that the physical health and wellbeing of students in the FDELKP improved over the two years, indicating classroom space may not be a barrier (MOE, 2013). The emotional climate was concerning due to issues with professional development, physical space, and the relationships between the teacher and ECE, however, the children of the classrooms studied were most often described as, “happy, cooperative, and focused on their learning” (MOE, 2013, p.16). The case studies suggested children in these rooms were developing strongly, in social competence, language and problem-solving skills, and their worldly knowledge on a whole (MOE, 2013).

Pelletier and Jackman (2014) created a research report based on the findings from the third year of FDELK implementation in the Peel district. The purpose of Pelletier and Jackman’s (2014) research was to analyze the implementation of the program, specifically in how the program impacted the students, the parents, and the educators involved (including the classroom
The study is longitudinal and is following students from kindergarten until the third grade when EQAO scores can be considered (Pelletier & Jackman, 2014). The participants include 878 children, but for the current year being analyzed 328 children were included, of those children 54% were boys and 46% were girls, and 61% were English language learners (Pelletier & Jackman, 2014). For the year three analysis 16 kindergarten teachers and 11 ECEs participated in focus groups and surveys (Pelletier & Jackman, 2014). Parent participants for surveys included 218 mothers and 63 fathers, and 586 parents rated their child’s readiness for kindergarten (Pelletier & Jackman, 2014).

A vast amount of measures were used for Pelletier and Jackman’s (2014) study; measures for the children included, the *Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test III* to measure receptive vocabulary, the *Test of Early Reading Ability III* to measure children’s early reading capabilities, the *Number Knowledge Task* to measure number knowledge, children were asked to write a sentence as dictated by a researcher to measure early writing capability, children were asked to draw a specific picture of themselves to measure drawing capability, to measure social understanding and experiences children were asked questions through a puppet interview, and finally, using the *Child Observation Framework*, direct observations of 40 FDK children acted as self-regulation measures. The measures employed for parents included a 42-item *Parenting Daily Hassles* survey, and a rating scale about their child’s readiness for kindergarten (Pelletier & Jackman, 2014). The measures used for staff included surveys about the educators’ feelings towards collaborating and benefits of FDK, a focus group which used the Indicators of Change Tool to measure how integrated the teams and the program were, and finally, the *Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised* was used to measure the quality of classroom environments (Pelletier & Jackman, 2014). Pelletier and Jackman (2014) found that the
vocabulary of the students who participated in FDELK was considerably higher compared to students who participated in half-day kindergarten. Interestingly, when the students were interviewed about what was most important in kindergarten, the half-day students put more of a focus on academics than play, yet both groups acknowledged play and friendship as the most enjoyable part. Furthermore, self-regulation of FDELK students was noted as strong, and a benefit of the program (Pelletier & Jackman, 2014). The results of the writing tasks indicated that by the third year there was no difference between students in the control group and the research group (Pelletier & Jackman, 2014). The results of number knowledge were similar, in that the half-day cohort and the full-day cohorts had no difference in knowledge by the third year (Pelletier & Jackman, 2014). Interestingly, the results of early reading suggested that by the third year of tracking, students who began full-day by SK had higher reading scores than those who only did half-days (Pelletier & Jackman, 2014). One of the most significant findings in Pelletier and Jackman’s (2014) research was that the children in FDK were able to better control their attention, regulate their behaviours and inhibit their responses in comparison to those from the half-day program.

While some findings were inconsistent, Cooper et al. (2010) suggested that though there are positive effects from the program, there are potentially negative impacts. These negative impacts included: 1) students possessing a less positive attitude towards school; and 2) experiencing more behavioural problems in the classroom (Cooper et al., 2010). Previous research cited challenges with the FDK program, indicating that the costs versus the benefits in the long run will not be worth it (Reynolds & Temple, 2008).

However, positive effects have been found, with regard to FDK programming. Cooper et al. (2010) found a positive association between FDK and academic achievement, self-
confidence, ability to work and play with others, and a child’s independence. In comparison to students who attended half-day kindergarten, those who attended full-day scored between one fifth to one third of a standard deviation higher on academic tests (Cooper et al., 2010).

Further, Cooper et al. (2010) found that parental attitudes towards full-day kindergarten are more positive than parental attitudes towards half-day kindergarten. These results stemmed from single-parent families, and families who worked outside the home who could arguably save on child-care expenses through the kindergarten program. This finding was consistent with the MOE (2013) who found that parents were supportive of the program because they appreciated the opportunities the full day kindergarten program provided to their children and to themselves. Despite the support, parents were also cited for having high expectations of the program, specifically regarding class sizes, preparation for the rest of their children’s education, and their child’s safety (MOE, 2013). Pelletier and Jackman (2014) had parents from the Peel board fill out an eight-item rating scale about their child’s development in comparison to other children of the same age; full day kindergarten parents rated their children higher on all eight items than half day kindergarten parents. Pelletier and Jackman (2014) examined the well-being of parents and how the FDELKP impacted parents. The parents of children who attended full-day kindergarten reported feeling less hassled in their daily lives in comparison to half-day parents. This finding, consistent with Cooper et al. (2010) and the MOE (2013) further suggests that the FDELKP provides support to parents as well as students.

Several researchers are concerned that students are suffering from “hurried child syndrome”, where too much is expected from children and their lives are overscheduled (Bonnet, 2012; Elkind, 2006; Kimball, 2015). While it is possible that some children are not ready for a full day of school at the ages of four and five, inconsistent results indicate that there are benefits
to the program for those children who are ready. As Cooper et al. (2010) predicated, FDK is not a “magic bullet” that will make otherwise struggling students succeed, but that FDK should be considered as a complementary component to parental and educational interventions that help children succeed and reach their potentials. Since kindergarten is not mandatory by law in Ontario (MOE, 2013), parental opinion and preference should be used to decide whether the FDELKP is right for their child.

**Co-Teaching in FDELK**

Research of Vanderlee et al. (2012) indicated that one of the most important functions for successful FDELK implementation is successful team teaching between ECEs and kindergarten teachers. However, team teaching was not being done correctly in all classrooms. The purpose of Vanderlee et al. (2012) two-year study was to inform future program delivery based on what was seen, and to identify effective practices within FDELK. Sixteen schools across Ontario were used for case studies, including 12 English schools, and 4 French schools; of those schools 9 were in the first year of FDK, 5 were in the second year of FDK and 2 did not have FDK at all (Vanderlee et al., 2012). Hundreds of participants were included in this study, 35 administrators, 53 teachers, and 38 ECEs, 80 parents and 19 community partners were interviewed, 125 educators were surveyed, and over 300 students had conversations with researchers (Vanderlee et al., 2012). Of the participants 73% identified English as their first language, and 18% identified French as their first language, nearly all educators interviewed were female, 65% of parents were female, and 100% of community partners were female, 83% of participants identified as white, less than 5% identified as Aboriginal, and 38% did not respond to that question (Vanderlee et al., 2012). Individual and focus group interviews, surveys, narratives and
observations made up the majority of data collected, however, program artifacts and photos were also used (Vanderlee et al., 2012).

In reference to the FDK teaching team, the case study findings of Vanderlee et al., (2012) research indicated that more knowledge about FDELK in general was needed, as administrators and educators found a lack of support for structure in the program. Of all the FDK teams looked at, only one had role clarity and communication within the team (Vanderlee et al., 2012). It was found that with such a lack of role clarity ECEs were not always treated as a teaching partner, but more as an assistant to the teacher in the classroom (Vanderlee et al., 2012). Perception of the ECE not being an integral part of the team was seen as a huge concern (Vanderlee et al., 2012). Vanderlee et al., (2012) suggested several recommendations to improve the quality of team teaching for FDK teams, including: role clarity, and emphasis on the important role the ECE fulfills, paid preparation time for ECEs so that co-planning is accessible to both educators, a higher wage for ECEs to better reflect their role and image as the other half of the FDK team, and strongly recommended better training and professional development opportunities for educators.

Gibson and Pelletier (2011) also examined co-teaching of teachers and ECEs. The purpose of Gibson and Pelletier’s (2011) research was to examine teachers and ECE dynamics as well as to explore the teaching structures in FDELK classrooms. The research of Gibson and Pelletier (2011) was guided by three research questions: 1) Do ECEs feel less supported at school than teachers? 2) How do classroom responsibility views differ between ECEs and teachers, and are hierarchies formed? 3) How have teaching practices for ECEs and teachers changed since working in FDELK?

Data was collected by pencil-and-paper surveys, and participants had to use Likert scales
to rate answers, and complete three short answer responses (Gibson & Pelletier, 2011). The participants included 32 teachers and 28 ECEs from Southern Ontario schools, working in FDELKP for the first time with a 92.4% response rate. All the participants received $5 gift cards to coffee shops for their participation (Gibson & Pelletier, 2011).

The results of Gibson and Pelletier’s (2011) study indicated a vast difference in perception for teachers and ECEs. When asked how the division of responsibility was divided in the classroom, ECEs felt that it was mostly equal, where teachers felt they had more responsibility. Yet when asked whether the school identifies an ECE as separate from an assistant, teachers were more likely to agree than ECEs. Fifty percent of the ECEs surveyed, strongly felt that they had less influence on decisions than their teaching partner, where only 6% of teachers felt this way (Gibson & Pelletier, 2011). When asked in comparison to one another who had more authority, over 50% of the teachers surveyed indicated that they had more authority, with only 3% of ECEs indicating the opposite. Finally, a quarter of the teachers surveyed agreed that they delegated tasks to their teaching partner, and no ECEs reported delegating tasks to their partner. Gibson and Pelletier (2011) found that many ECEs had concerns about being misunderstood and feeling unequal, and both ECEs and teachers felt a need for more training and joint planning time. All of these results indicate that some FDELKP are developing a hierarchical teaching relationship as opposed to a true co-teaching relationship (Gibson & Pelletier, 2011). Finally, Gibson and Pelletier (2011) suggested that a lack of joint planning time may be the root cause for these hierarchies, as often the teacher plans without the ECE and decisions are made individually.

McGlynn-Stewart and Bezaire (2014) conducted a study to examine the perspectives of ECEs and teachers working in FDK classrooms, guided by a singular research question: What
supports the process of creating equitable and effective teaching partnerships in full-day kindergarten classrooms? Data was collected by anonymous online surveys and in-person interviews (McGlynn-Stewart & Bezaire, 2014). There were 297 survey participants (46.5% ECE; 53.5% OCT), with no data on the gender or age of participants. The online surveys consisted of open-ended questions, and the interviews were one hour in length and semi-structured, with self-selected FDK teams (McGlynn-Stewart & Bezaire, 2014). McGlynn-Stewart and Bezaire (2014) focused their research on responses to the open-ended question about what suggestions the participants would recommend to new FDK teams. The recommendations of both ECEs and teachers were very similar. The participants’ advice mostly fit into two categories – structural and interpersonal, with the interpersonal advice specifically targeting relationship building, effective communication, and role/responsibility negotiation (McGlynn-Stewart & Bezaire, 2014). A focus on building relationships was the most cited piece of advice from the FDK teams, with a suggestion that making an effective team is a lot of work, and that recognizing each others strengths and experiences are a key piece of to an effective team. While it was indicated that effectives teams don’t have to be ‘best friends’, a personal relationship with one another was highly recommended (McGlynn-Stewart & Bezaire, 2014). McGlynn-Stewart and Bezaire (2014) noted that almost every survey response made reference to on-going communication – with open and respectful communication being most important. Participants cited the need for clarity in regards to roles and responsibilities, however, many participants did not want a predetermined formula, but instead cited the importance of flexibility and relying on each individual’s strengths. The three most cited pieces of advice for roles and responsibilities were to play to each other’s strengths, to be flexible, and to share responsibilities.
Summary of the Chapter

The teacher-ECE relationship is an important aspect to the success of the FDELKP. This chapter outlined how Bandura’s (1977) social learning theory, specifically reciprocal determinism fits as the theoretical framework for the present study to be grounded in. There was much supporting empirical research to each of the five components necessary for successful co-teaching: planning, communication, relationship, classroom applications, and co-teaching knowledge base (Kohler-Evans, 2006; Howard & Potts, 2009; Conderman et al., 2009; Brinkman & Twiford, 2012; Brown et al., 2013; Indelicato, 2014). Co-teaching has been operationally defined as, showing a shared view of the need for equality amongst teaching partners as opposed to hierarchies (Austin, 2001; Lynch, 2014; Fenty & McDuffie-Landrum, 2011). The different types of co-teaching, including one teach, one assist; station teaching; parallel teaching; alternative teaching; and team teaching have been explained, and the different types of co-teaching teams have been analyzed - special education teachers with general teachers, teacher education students with general teachers, ECEs with teachers (Bacharach et al., 2008; Conderman et al., 2009; Tzivinikou, 2015). An overview of the FDELKP has been provided, along with an in-depth look at the different roles of the teacher and ECE in the program, and the implications these roles may have (OME, 2013; Vanderlee et al., 2012). Research indicated that in many areas FDK has not seemed to improve students’ academics in comparison to students who attended half-day kindergarten, however, a significant difference in self-regulation has been found (Pelletier & Jackman, 2014). Empirical research of McGlynn-Stewart and Bezaire (2014), Vanderlee et al., (2012) and, Gibson and Pelletier (2014) has been provided to indicate the effect of the FDELKP and the quality of co-teaching currently present within the FDELKP. The empirical research had varying conclusions, however overall, the research suggested that
Hierarchies are forming due to lack of role clarity and understanding of the program. Research indicated that there is a need for better definitions of roles, and more training and co-planning time for the partnerships to truly flourish (McGlynn-Stewart & Bezaire, 2014; Vanderlee et al., 2012; Gibson & Pelletier, 2014).
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlined the needs assessment for a handbook that was designed to help educators with strategies and activities to strengthen their co-teaching relationship. While this handbook was specifically designed for the use of kindergarten teachers and ECEs, the strategies and information provided could be implemented pedagogically by any co-teaching pair of educators. This chapter provided a rationale for the need of a handbook, a description of the participants, and the duration of the assessment. Further, included is a summary of the needs assessment results. Using the data collected, along with empirical research and personal experiences Co-Teaching: A Handbook for Educators was created. The key factor that shaped Co-Teaching: A Handbook for Educators was the expressed needs and suggestions of the educators who partook in the needs assessment. Finally, a summary of Chapter Three is provided.

Need for the Handbook

Based on the lack of pedagogical resources available to educators on co-teaching and creating professional relationships there was a need for creating Co-Teaching: A Handbook for Educators. When designing the handbook, it was originally developed for FDELK teaching teams, however, the information provided in the handbook, and the activities and strategies provided are transferable to other co-teaching grade partners. Since there is widespread knowledge that co-teaching can come with many challenges (Fluijt et al., 2016; Hepnar & Newman, 2010; Pratt, 2014). It is hoped that this handbook will be an important resource to not only kindergarten teachers and ECEs but also to any co-teaching educators. Further, it is anticipated that this handbook may be an important resource for administrators who are trying to build professional relationships in their schools, or attempting to facilitate an efficient reciprocal
instructional co-teaching dyad. The activities and resources shared in the handbook could be useful for successful co-teaching partners to strengthen their relationships. The handbook is not intended for use to only those educators who are experiencing challenges in co-teaching, but rather to help disseminate conscious raising of co-teaching strategies and the importance of co-teaching while giving practical suggestions for how to have a successful co-teaching relationship.

Current empirical research supports the need for educators to have access to more professional development in their co-teaching roles, and a better understanding of their defined roles (Gananthan, 2011; McGlynn-Stewart & Bezaire, 2014; Ontario Ministry of Education, 2013; Tozer, 2011; Vanderlee et al., 2012). It is anticipated that with access to Co-Teaching: A Handbook for Educators, co-teaching teams will be able to utilize the information and be able to co-teach harmoniously. The need for this handbook is supported by the many benefits that come along with successful co-teaching. Diana (2014) and Walther-Thomas (1997) have suggested that successful co-teaching results in teachers experiencing enhanced motivation and professional growth, and that students benefit by improved academic performance and more one-on-one time with a teacher. Given the empirical research and demand found in the needs assessment a handbook surrounding co-teaching strategies is in high demand (Diana, 2014; Gananthan, 2011; Vanderlee et al., 2012; Walther-Thomas, 1997).

**Needs Assessment**

**Participants in the Needs Assessment**

Four educators (two teachers and two early childhood educators) completed the needs assessment (see Appendix A) to augment the practical efficiency of the handbook for educators. Table 1 provides a description of the participants, including their gender, number of years
teaching and their role in the FDK program. To maintain confidentiality and anonymity each participant was randomly assigned a pseudonym. Please see Table 1.
Table 1

*Participants in the Needs Assessment*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Years Taught</th>
<th>FDK Role</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Hayley</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Heather</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Kim</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>ECE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Leah</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>ECE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Pseudonyms are used for all participants
**Description and Duration of the Needs Assessment**

The needs assessment (Appendix A) was a semi-structured questionnaire, which included a rating scale and open-ended questions. The questionnaires were completed at a public elementary school located in southern Ontario. On September 14, 2016 the researcher dropped off four copies of the questionnaires to the school administrative assistant for distribution, along with an envelope to store completed questionnaires. The questionnaire was structured in a way that allowed the teachers and ECEs to provide their opinions and comments in an open-ended way. It was anticipated that each questionnaire would take approximately ten to fifteen minutes to complete. Participants were given two weeks to complete the questionnaire. Each questionnaire was assigned a random number and that number was demarcated in the envelope cover, as well as an enclosed envelope that was sealed upon completion and returned to the school administrative assistant.

Attached to the questionnaire was a copy of the informed consent with the participant’s random number. That consent form would be signed prior to the completion of the questionnaires. Within the informed consent, emphasis was placed on the anonymity and confidentiality of the data (Please see Appendix A for copy of the informed consent). The informed consent, attached to each questionnaire, outlined the purpose for the handbook, instructions on how to complete the survey, and the methods required to return the completed survey. Further, the informed consent provided the student researcher’s, advisor’s contact information, should the participants have any concerns or questions about the questionnaire.

Each participant was instructed not to provide identifying information, and to seal their questionnaire in the provided envelope and return to the secretary by September 30, 2016, when the researcher returned to pickup the questionnaires. Upon the return of the sealed envelopes, the
researcher randomly assigned a pseudonym to each random participant number to further ensure the anonymity and confidentiality of the participants. The goal of the questionnaire was to determine what kinds of information and material was most needed for *Co-Teaching: A Handbook for Educators*.

**Findings from the Needs Assessment**

The following section delineates the questions in the needs assessment and provides the responses from the four participants. Questions #1 through #8 requested that the participants *please circle the response that most accurately describes the following*. The participants were given a scale of strongly disagree, disagree, no opinion, agree, or strongly agree to each of the questions. These questions were meant to garner a better understanding of current co-teaching partnerships in the FDELKP and whether there was a true need for the handbook. The ratings of the four participants can be found in table 2. Each participant’s random number was used in the table.

**Question #1-8: Please circle the response that most accurately describes the following:**

*(see Table 2 for specific questions)*

All of the participants agreed or strongly agreed to being familiar with the Kindergarten document (which indicates the duty of the teacher and ECE to co-teach). However, when asked whether their role was clearly defined, only three of the participants agreed with the statement, and Leah (participant #4) disagreed. All four of the participants agreed that they were cognizant of a kindergarten teaching team that was ineffectual in their partnership. Further, Hayley (participant #1), Kim (participant #3), and Leah (participant #4) agreed to knowing of a relationship that resulted in incompatible pedagogy. Only Heather (participant #2) was unaware of a partnership in which pedagogy was incompatible.
Table 2

*Educators’ Perceptions of Co-Teaching Practices in FDELK*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>No Opinion</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I am familiar with the Kindergarten Document.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1, 2, 4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I feel my role as a teacher or ECE is clearly defined.</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1, 2</td>
<td>teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I know a full-day kindergarten teaching team that is unhappy with their partnership.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I know a full-day kindergarten teaching team that has resulted in incompatibility of pedagogy.</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1, 3, 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Table continues)
5. I am aware of strategies for how to communicate with my partner when we have differing perspectives on instructional activities and pedagogy.

6. I feel my partner and I have a successful co-teaching relationship.

7. I think acquiring more knowledge and strategies about co-teaching will be beneficial to me as an educator.

8. I think with strategies and support any two educators can have a successful co-teaching partnership.
All four participants indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed to being aware of strategies to use when differences of opinions arose, however, when asked if they felt they currently had a successful co-teaching relationship, Hayley (participant #1) disagreed, and Leah (participant #4) did not provide a response. Heather (participant #2) strongly agreed that she had a successful co-teaching relationship and Kim (participant #3) agreed. When asked if acquiring more strategies and knowledge about co-teaching would be beneficial, all four participants agreed or strongly agreed that it would. Finally, all four participants agreed that with the right strategies and support, any two educators could have a successful co-teaching partnership.

Throughout the answers to this section of the needs assessment, it was very clear that there is a definite need for a handbook on co-teaching. Even with just a sample size of four participants, every participant knew of an unhappy co-teaching team, and Hayley (participant #1) currently identifies as not having a successful co-teaching partnership. Despite this, all four participants indicated that with the right support and strategies any partnership can work, thus, the need for this handbook is substantiated.

**Question #9: Please provide details with what you know about co-teaching, or what you would like to know about co-teaching.**

The responses to this question were quite varied. Hayley (participant #1) suggested that co-teaching was about give and take, open communication and defining roles and responsibilities, whereas Heather (participant #2) suggested that co-teaching was about respecting one another’s “roles, opinions and feelings”. Kim (participant #3) was the only participant to indicate that co-teaching was beneficial; in her response she wrote, “co-teaching is a unique collaboration which is very beneficial for both teachers and students. It can be challenging but very rewarding. Respect and professionalism are key!”. Leah (participant #4) did
not indicate that she knew anything about co-teaching but instead suggested that she would like more information on the teacher and ECE’s roles.

**Question #10: What do you find most challenging and most rewarding about co-teaching?**

This question evinced incomplete responses by the participants. Heather (participant #2) and Leah (participant #4) listed a challenge, and Kim (participant #3) listed only a positive reward. Despite this, a common challenging theme emerged. Hayley (participant #1), Heather (participant #2) and Leah (participant #4) all indicated that finding time to plan, collaborate or talk was the most challenging aspect of co-teaching. Hayley (participant #1) further added that determining roles and responsibilities was also a great challenge. Hayley (participant #1) suggested that the most rewarding aspect was being able to share ideas with one another and benefits to having two educators for classroom management. Kim (participant #3) shared this sentiment, and wrote that the most rewarding aspect was, “having another educator to count on for support and ideas that shares your journey along with your students”.

**Question #11: Please rank in order of importance what you would like to see in a handbook. 1 being most important and 5 being least important. (Background information on co-teaching, the different types of co-teaching, strategies to use when challenges arise, resources for how to co-teach, and team building exercises).**

Each participant chose a different answer for being the most important item to include, suggesting that each component listed is a crucial aspect to the handbook (see Table 3). Hayley (participant #1) ranked information about the different types of co-teaching as most important, followed by strategies to use when challenges arise as the next most important. Hayley (participant #1) then ranked resources for how to co-teach as next most important. Hayley (participant #1) suggested that background information was not as important as she ranked it
fourth, and finally in last were team building exercises. Since Hayley (participant #1) has indicated that she is not in a successful co-teaching partnership it is interesting that team building exercises would be ranked as least important to her.

Similar to Hayley (participant #1), Leah (participant #4) also ranked team building exercises as the least important component to have in the handbook. However, Leah (participant #4) ranked background information on co-teaching as being most important, followed by the different types of co-teaching, then resources for how to co-teach, and then strategies to use when challenges arise as fourth place for importance. Since Leah (participant #4) did not indicate whether she was in a successful co-teaching partnership, it is difficult to interpret the reasoning behind her rankings.

Heather (participant #2) ranked strategies to use when challenges arise as the most important component for the handbook. This was interesting, as Heather (participant #2) strongly agreed that she had a successful co-teaching partnership, and further, she was unaware of a partnership which had incompatible pedagogy. Heather ranked the different types of co-teaching and background information on co-teaching as her bottom two for importance, and ranked resources for how to co-teach and team building exercises as the next two most important components to be included. Kim (participant #3) ranked resources for how to co-teach as the most important component to include in the handbook. Closely followed by strategies to use when challenges arise and team building exercises. Kim (participant #3) ranked background information on co-teaching and the different types of co-teaching in her bottom two slots.

The diverse rankings suggest that readers of the handbook will need all of the different parts to make the handbook beneficial to them. Heather and Kim both put background information and the types of co-teaching in the two least important spots, whereas Leah and
Hayley both had the different types of co-teaching in one of their top two most important spots.

Heather and Kim ranked strategies for challenges and co-teaching resources in their top two most important spots, whereas Leah had ranked strategies as the second least important component.
Table 3

*Ranking of Handbook Components*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Most Important</th>
<th>Rankings</th>
<th>Least Important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Background info</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1, 3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Different types of</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2, 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>co-teaching</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategies to use</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1, 3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>during challenges</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-teaching</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1, 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>resources</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team-building</td>
<td></td>
<td>2, 3</td>
<td>1, 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>exercises</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Random number for each participant used to show preferred ranking of components
**Question #12:** Please reflect on your role and personal experience co-teaching and list the top 3 components that you think would make ‘Successful Co-teaching: A Handbook for Educators’ as practical and effective as it could be. Think about the types of activities and information that would aid you most in your co-teaching.

There was some ambiguity in the participants’ responses to this question. Two participants (Hayley and Kim) answered with ideas for what should be in the handbook, but the other two participants (Leah and Heather) identified components needed within the partnership to make a successful co-teaching team.

Kim (participant #3) suggested that resources for how to co-teach, strategies to use when challenges arise, and team building exercises would be the most important components to include in the handbook. Hayley (participant #1) corroborated one of these points, suggesting that strategies to use when facing difficulties in the relationship was one of the most important components needed. Kim (participant #3) suggested that figuring out how to determine the roles and responsibilities of each educator was needed, and as a third inclusion she wrote, “discuss communication”. This response could be interpreted to mean communication strategies or how to find time to communicate.

Heather (participant #2) wrote, “respect for one another, time to collaborate, and utilizing each others strengths and building on them” as her three suggestions. I believe that Heather (participant #3) has listed suggestions for what is needed for a successful co-teaching partnership. These responses point towards a need for strategies to collaborate, and how to become cognizant of each teaching partner’s strengths. This finding points towards a need for a critical component of the design and components of the present handbook.

Leah (participant #4) wrote two suggestions on the questionnaire, these suggestions were, “more communicating with each other, more time” and “how to make the most of the time you have together”. I believe, as above, that Leah (participant #4) has also listed ways to have a
successful co-teaching partnership instead of items that could be beneficial in the handbook. I have interpreted this to fit my handbook by including suggestions for how to make time to collaborate, and strategies for communicating.

**Question #13: Please record any additional comments here that you may have regarding ‘Successful Co-Teaching: A Handbook for Educators’**.

The purpose of this final question was to allow the participants the opportunity to voice any comments or thoughts about co-teaching that I had not addressed throughout the questionnaire. Only one participant responded to this question. Kim (participant #3) wrote, “GREAT IDEA!! Can’t wait to read your work”.

**Summary of the Needs Assessment and Findings**

The results of the needs assessment indicated that all four of the participants agreed to knowing about an unhappy co-teaching partnership in the FDELKP. This directly aligned with empirical research findings suggesting that many partnerships are not co-teaching as effectively as they could be (Gibson & Pelletier, 2011; McGlynn-Stewart & Bezaire, 2014; Vanderlee et al., 2012). One of the participants indicated that she did not feel that her role as an ECE was clearly defined. This aligns with the research of Gibson and Pelletier (2011), Lynch (2014), and Gananthan (2011) who all suggested that there is a lack of articulated roles for ECEs and teachers in the FDK programs.

Each of the participants indicated that they felt more knowledge and strategies would be beneficial to them as educators, and that with strategies and support any educators can have a successful co-teaching partnership. Based on the OME’s (2013) evaluation of the FDELKP and Vanderlee’s et al. (2012) analysis of the program, it was indicated that more professional development and resources were required for educators. This not only aligns with the
participants’ responses but also for the overall need for a handbook of this calibre. While all four educators concurred that they knew strategies to use for communication when a challenge arose, only one participant strongly agreed to knowing strategies, thus indicating room for improvement, and a need for more strategies for the majority of educators.

Based on Bacharach et al. (2008) five components for successful co-teaching (planning, communication, relationship, classroom applications, and co-teaching knowledge base), each of the participants indicated at least one of the components as important in a co-teaching relationship or addressed one of the components as a need for further exploration in a handbook. All four participants made reference either directly or indirectly to communication being important. Hayley (participant #1) indicated that planning time was important. Kim (participant #3) suggested that collaborating and teaching together was important (classroom application). Heather (participant #2) and Kim (participant #3) touched on the need for respect in the relationship as being a key factor to success for the partnerships. Finally, Leah (participant #4) and Hayley (participant #1) indicated that they would like to see more about co-teaching types and the background of co-teaching in a handbook.

The Developmental Process of the Handbook and Social Location

The developmental process of this handbook has been influenced by my experiences working as a full-time contract ECE, and more recently, as an occasional teacher for the same school board. As stated previously, while I was a practicing ECE, I had the opportunity to work with three different teaching partners. Of those teaching partners, I shared pedagogical views with only one. We collaborated and made a point to co-plan and co-teach our classroom with great success. It was the only co-teaching partnership that I felt effectual. One of the teaching partners and I did not share similar pedagogical perspectives. Our co-teaching relationship
suffered from a lack of co-planning and co-teaching. The third co-teaching partner I had was somewhere in the middle. We shared some of the same pedagogical views, and inconsistently collaborated on planning and teaching. Since I was the consistent factor in each of these relationships, it ignited the passion to explore these relationships further.

When I became an occasional teacher and began to substitute teach in kindergarten classrooms, I found that many ECEs confided in me about their teaching partners and their co-teaching relationships. Interestingly, there was a strong divide among those who were content and felt successful with their co-teaching partner, and those who were unhappy and did not feel like they had a co-teaching partner. Prior to beginning this project, I probed the ECEs about their unhappy relationships and what they planned to do. Many of the ECEs indicated that they did not know what to do, often resulting in requests for transfers, and some leaving the profession entirely. In the future, I hope to become involved in the FDELK at an administration level (as an instructional coach or mediator), and I believe that resources such as this one will be beneficial for all teaching partners, whether they are currently struggling or not. Prior to this program, I do not feel I knew enough about co-teaching, and I was a practicing co-teacher. I believe this information is crucial to make available to co-teachers.

Based on my professional experiences and the responses of the participants in the needs assessment, this was the impetus for me to create a handbook that addressed some of these challenges in co-teaching. It is evident that a handbook, which addresses co-teaching, may be helpful to practicing educators. The empirical research explored in Chapter 2 were used as a framework for the handbook. The findings from the needs assessment assisted in the development of the content, to create a handbook that would be practical and effective for all co-teaching educators. The inclusion of practical strategies, resources and team building exercises
were meant to strengthen the practicality and usefulness of the handbook. A combination of empirical research, my personal experiences as a teacher and ECE, and the needs assessment findings helped create the framework for *Successful Co-Teaching: A Handbook for Educators*.

The handbook’s objectives include:

5. Educators will extend their knowledge of co-teaching

6. Educators will become aware of resources and suggestions on how to collaborate and co-teach a class

7. Educators will be equipped with strategies to use when challenges in their partnerships arise

8. Educators will complete an evaluation questionnaire to evaluate the practicality and usefulness of the handbook.

**Summary of the Chapter**

Chapter 3 delineated an overview of the need for this handbook, a description of each of the participants, and the duration of the needs assessment. Conclusions drawn from the needs assessment and the developmental process of the handbook was reviewed. Each of these items was taken into consideration when developing the handbook. Chapter 4 contains the handbook - *Successful Co-Teaching: A Handbook for Educators*, which includes background information and the types of co-teaching, strategies for co-teachers to use when difficulties arise, resources, and team building exercises. The information provided in the handbook aims to provide co-teachers with a better understanding of co-teaching and to feel better equipped as a co-teacher.
CHAPTER FOUR: THE HANDBOOK FOR EDUCATORS

This chapter contains Successful Co-Teaching: A Handbook for Educators. This handbook was created in order to: (a) develop a practical co-teaching handbook for educators; and; (b) to help disseminate conscious raising of co-teaching strategies and the importance of co-teaching while giving practical suggestions for how to have a successful co-teaching relationship. The researcher incorporated the findings from the needs assessments, empirical and theoretical research, and pre-existing resources when developing the handbook.

Successful Co-Teaching: A Handbook for Educators includes background information on co-teaching, strategies for co-teachers to use when pedagogical disagreements occur, team-building exercises, planning templates, and a list of helpful co-teaching resources for educators to utilize.
Successful Co-Teaching:

A Handbook for Educators

Adapted from: Fitzell, 2014

Miranda MacDougall (2016)
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Introduction

Based on the lack of pedagogical resources available to educators on co-teaching and creating professional relationships there was a need for creating *Co-Teaching: A Handbook for Educators*. When designing the handbook, it was originally developed for FDELK teaching teams, however, the information provided in the handbook, and the activities and strategies provided are transferable to other co-teaching grade partners. Since there is widespread knowledge that co-teaching can come with many challenges (Fluijt et al., 2016; Hepnar & Newman, 2010; Pratt, 2014). It is hoped that this handbook will be an important resource to not only kindergarten teachers and ECEs but also to any co-teaching educators. Further, it is anticipated that this handbook may be an important resource for administrators who are trying to build professional relationships in their schools, or attempting to facilitate an efficient reciprocal instructional co-teaching dyad. The activities and resources shared in the handbook could be useful for successful co-teaching partners to strengthen their relationships. The handbook is not intended for use to only those educators who are experiencing challenges in co-teaching, but rather to help disseminate conscious raising of co-teaching strategies and the importance of co-teaching while giving practical suggestions for how to have a successful co-teaching relationship.

Current empirical research supports the need for educators to have access to more professional development in their co-teaching roles, and a better understanding of their defined roles (Gananthan, 2011; McGlynn-Stewart & Bezaire, 2014; Ontario Ministry of Education, 2013; Tozer, 2011; Vanderlee et al., 2012). It is anticipated that with access to *Co-Teaching: A Handbook for Educators*, co-teaching teams will be able to utilize the information and be able to co-teach harmoniously. The need for this handbook is supported by the many benefits that come
along with successful co-teaching. Diana (2014) and Walther-Thomas (1997) have suggested that successful co-teaching results in teachers experiencing enhanced motivation and professional growth, and that students benefit by improved academic performance and more one-on-one time with a teacher. Given the empirical research and demand found in the needs assessment a handbook surrounding co-teaching strategies is in high demand (Diana, 2014; Gananthan, 2011; Vanderlee et al., 2012; Walther-Thomas, 1997).
Handbook Objectives

Educators will extend their knowledge of co-teaching.

Educators will evaluate the practicality and usefulness of the handbook.

Educators will become aware of resources and suggestions on how to collaborate and co-teach.

Educators will be equipped with strategies to use when challenges arise.

(Created by MacDougall, 2016)
Section One

Co-Teaching Information

(Adapted from Microsoft Word, Free Clip Art 2014)
What does the Kindergarten Document Say?

It is apparent that in Ontario, the Full Day Early Learning Kindergarten Program is now implemented in every school. In every kindergarten classroom with 16 or more students there is an Ontario Certified Teacher and a Designated Early Childhood Educator. These two educators share a classroom, however the expectations of each role can be ambiguous.

The curriculum states that each educator will have, “the benefit of a collaborative and reflective partnership” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2016, p. 112), and should “feel he or she belongs, is a valuable contributor, and deserves the opportunity to engage in meaningful work” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2016, p. 10).

Teacher

• The teacher is responsible for making sure that the Kindergarten curriculum (aka the Kindergarten Communication of Learning) is completed and processed (Ministry of Education, 2016)

ECE

• The ECE is responsible for bringing a focus on age-appropriate planning, and contributing to formative assessments (Ministry of Education, 2011)

Both

• Both educators should be a part of planning and implementing the Kindergarten program to create a healthy emotional, physical and social learning environment
• Both educators should observe, monitor and assess the development and progress of the children in their class
• Both educators should communicate with families
• Both educators should provide opportunities for children to develop skills, attitudes and knowledge
• Both educators should engage children in critical reflection and inquiry (Ministry of Education, 2016)
Is Co-Teaching Mandated?

Sometimes co-teaching can be challenging, and teachers and ECEs may wonder whether they really have to work together. The answer is yes! It is in fact required by law.

In 2010 the government amended the Education Act to include early childhood educators. Below is the amended section 264.1 with the legal requirements of teachers and ECEs.

Duty of teachers and designated early childhood educators to co-operate, etc.

264.1 (1) It is the duty of the following persons to co-ordinate the matters listed in subsection (2) and to co-operate with each other with respect to those matters:

1. Teachers
2. Temporary teachers
3. Designated early childhood educators
4. Persons who, under the authority of a letter of permission, are appointed by a board to positions designated by the board as requiring an early childhood educator

Duty of teachers and designated early childhood educators to co-operate, etc.

(2) The matters referred to in subsection (1) are:

1. Planning for and providing education to pupils in junior kindergarten and kindergarten.
2. Observing, monitoring and assessing the development of pupils in junior kindergarten and kindergarten.
3. Maintaining a healthy physical, emotional and social learning environment.
4. Communicating with families
5. Performing all duties assigned to them by the principal with respect to junior kindergarten and kindergarten.
Will the Co-Teaching Process be Fluid and Efficient?

The answer to this question will vary based on the teaching team! Some teaching teams will find co-teaching an easy and rewarding experience, while others may face challenges.

Compiled below are some of the most commonly cited challenges that co-teaching partners face:

- Difficulty establishing equal classroom roles (Pratt, 2014)
- Interpersonal differences (Pratt, 2014)
- Lack of planning time (together) (Pratt, 2014)
- Unequal professional development (one member given more opportunities) (McGlynn-Stewart & Bezaire, 2014)
- Lack of support from administration (Pratt, 2014)
- Incompatibility of personalities (Fluijt, Bakker, & Struyfc, 2016)
- Hierarchies forming within the team where one team member seems more important (Vanderlee, Youmans, Peters & Eastabrook, 2012).
Rationale for Co-Teaching

Though it may seem like co-teaching is going to take a lot of time and effort, and that there are many challenges, the good news is, there are also many benefits! These benefits not only benefit educators, but students too! Since every teacher wants to help their students reach their potential, this type of pedagogical approach augments the optional learning for all students. Below are some of the cited benefits in recent research.

Benefits to Educators

• Enhanced motivation  
• Professional growth  
• Professional satisfaction  
• Learning from one another  
• Sharing ideas and workload  
• Having personal support (Walther-Thomas, 1997; Diana, 2014)

Benefits to Students

• Improved student-teacher ratio  
• Greater sense of community in the classroom  
• Better opportunities for students to seek help when needed  
• Improved academic performance  
• Improved social skills (Walther-Thomas, 1997; Diana, 2014)
What do Effective Co-Teaching Teams Have in Common?

In recent research there have been 5 common components to a successful co-teaching team (Bacharach, Heck & Dahlberg, 2008). Those components are:

1. Planning
2. Communicating
3. Relationship
4. Classroom Applications
5. Knowledge Base of Co-Teaching

If you are interested in having a strong co-teaching partnership, reflecting on each of these components within your own relationship is a great place to start!

*See Section Three for more information on each of these components
Section Two
The Different Types of Co-Teaching

(Adapted from Microsoft Word, Free Clip Art 2014)
The Six Different Co-Teaching Models

There are many different ways to co-teach. Identifying which way you and your partner co-teach, and which way you want to co-teach may be beneficial. Below is a pictorial description of each of the co-teaching models. Following the diagram, I will go into detail about the roles of the educators in each model, when to use each of the models, and the pros and cons of each.

Guess which model you are currently practicing, and check to see if you are right at the end!

**One teach, One Observe**

In this model one teacher leads the entire class in a lesson or activity, and the other teacher simply observes the students, making notes and collecting data. This is a very effective model when a teaching team needs anecdotal records, or observations for a particular student. It allows one teacher to devote their attention specifically on making the observations needed. While this model can be practical, it is advised to be used “sparingly and specifically” (Sussman, personal communication, January 8, 2015).

To successfully implement this model of co-teaching, teacher teams should:

- Decide who will lead the lessons and who will observe (this role should be switched regularly)
- Determine what the focus of the observations are
- Discuss observations together after the lesson (Kurtz, 2015)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pros</th>
<th>Cons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Focused observations</td>
<td>• The observing teacher may feel less involved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• An uninterrupted time to observe</td>
<td>• Possible imbalance of power based on the feelings of the teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Time will need to be made to discuss observations (Kurtz, 2015)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One Teach, One Assist

In this model one teacher leads the entire class in a lesson or activity, and the other teacher supports individual students as needed. This can be an effective model when one teacher feels more comfortable teaching a specific topic, or when it is known that a specific student will require one-on-one teacher support. It is suggested that this model be used about 10% of the time (Kurtz, 2015).

To successfully implement this model of co-teaching, teacher teams should:

- Switch the lead teacher regularly to minimize a power imbalance
- Determine one another’s strengths and play to them

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pros</th>
<th>Cons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| • Allows teachers to showcase their strengths when leading a lesson  
• One-on-one support for students  | • The assisting teacher may feel less involved  
• Possible imbalance of power based on the feelings of the teachers  
• One-on-one support is not as efficient as group instruction |

(Kurtz, 2015)

**Station Teaching**

In this model the class is split into smaller groups, and will rotate through predetermined stations. Each teacher will lead a station, and there will often be an independent or technology station as well. This model can be very effective when you want to differentiate instruction for students, as not every group of students needs to do the same thing at the teacher led stations. This model also allows each teacher to have an active hands on approach to teaching. It is suggested that this model be used about 40% of the time (Kurtz, 2015)

To successfully implement this model of co-teaching, teacher teams should:

- Predetermine the student groupings
- Decide what each teacher will be teaching at their station based on their strengths
- Be flexible

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pros</th>
<th>Cons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Both teachers have an active role in teaching</td>
<td>• Needs regular time commitments to set up and organize</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Easier to differentiate instruction</td>
<td>• Noise levels may be increased if expectations are not clearly outlined</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Station repetition allows teachers to perfect their delivery</td>
<td>• Independent stations aren’t monitored (Kurtz, 2015)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Group flexibility for student growth</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Parallel Teaching

In this model the class is split in half with one teacher teaching half the class, and the other teacher teaching the other half of the class. Typically both teachers will teach the same content using their own style, however, it is possible to teach different concepts in this manner. Co-teachers also use this method to teach the same topic but different concepts, and then come together as a group to share what each group learned. This model can be very effective when there is a lot of content that may be overwhelming, or when the student-teacher ratio is ideally lower. This model also allows each teacher to have an active role teaching. It is suggested that this model be used about 30% of the time (Kurtz, 2015).

To successfully implement this model of co-teaching, teacher teams should:

- Predetermine the student groupings
- Regularly switch which group of students each teacher teaches (Kurtz, 2015)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pros</th>
<th>Cons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Both teachers have an active role in teaching</td>
<td>• Finding space for each teacher and their group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Makes it possible to separate students who may distract one another</td>
<td>• Teachers must be like-minded in student expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Great for differentiation</td>
<td>• Teachers must know what one another is teaching</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Alternative Teaching**

In this model one teacher teaches a small group of students requiring more intensive instruction and the other teacher teaches the rest of the class. This is a very effective model when several students require differentiated instruction. This might be useful for re-teaching a concept, doing pre-teaching, skills remediation or an extension beyond what is required. This gives both teachers an active role in teaching. It is recommended that this model be used about 30% of the time (Kurtz, 2015).

To successfully implement this model of co-teaching, teacher teams should:

- Decide who will lead which group (switch regularly)
- Determine what the focus of instruction is
- Determine how the smaller group will catch up for the missed lesson

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pros</th>
<th>Cons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| • Both teachers have an active role in teaching  
• Makes it possible to separate students who may distract one another  
• Students benefit from more support (Kurtz, 2015) | • Time required to determine groupings and who will teach which group  
• Catch up for students pulled  
• Larger group has less support |

Team Teaching

In this model both of the teachers lead the entire class in the same lesson. This can be an effective model when the students can benefit from both teachers at the front of the room as opposed to being immersed with the students. It is suggested that students may find it engaging to see both educators working together. Both educators are actively engaged in teaching. While this model may be engaging, it is also advised to be used “sparingly and specifically” (K. Sussman, personal communication, January 8, 2015).

To successfully implement this model of co-teaching, teacher teams should:

- Determine the role that each teacher will play
- Work to not overshadow one another (Kurtz, 2015)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pros</th>
<th>Cons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Teachers can play off each other’s energy</td>
<td>• One teacher may overshadow the other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Showcasing strengths and modeling for all students</td>
<td>• Less support for students during the lesson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Active role for both teachers</td>
<td>• The back and forth between teachers could be distracting to students (Kurtz, 2015)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Section Three
Strategies to Co-Teach

(Adapted from Microsoft Word, Free Clip Art 2014)
Planning Together

As mentioned in Section One, planning is one of the crucial elements to a successful co-teaching partnership! This may be a challenge in some co-teaching teams due to a lack of paid prep time for both educators.

It has been suggested that co-teaching partners should allot 45-60 minutes a day to shared planning
-Walther-Thomas (1996)

Shared planning time is in fact the number one greatest challenge met by co-teaching partners, yet it is cited as the most important element! If you currently do not have any designated shared planning time between you and your partner, consider trying these tips:

• Speak to administration about having the same duty schedule so you can discuss plans during this time
• Utilize your early-release days and do long term planning together during them
• Consider doing a “walk and talk” before or after school – getting in some exercise and some planning!
• Have breakfast or lunch together and plan while you eat
• Use Google docs or something similar so that you can both plan together from home
• Use a co-planning template to keep each other’s responsibilities and commitments organized
  (Adapted from: Spencer & Land, 2008)

Consider using the templates in the following pages to assist your co-planning! But first, try out the questionnaire and see how your co-planning is already going!
Collaborative Planning Questionnaire

Read each statement carefully. Place one of the following symbols in front of each statement.

! = We need to do this!
✓ = We already do this. Good for us!
? = We need information on this to incorporate it into our practice.

1. We plan regularly for at least one hour per week.
2. We plan our teaching roles and responsibilities prior to classroom instruction.
3. We continually evaluate our co-teaching relationship.
4. We generate strategies to meet individual needs.
5. We teach students cognitive or learning strategies.
6. We adapt curriculum, instruction, and assessment to meet individual needs.
7. We teach students social and communication skills.
8. We plan to use different co-teaching variations such as station teaching, parallel teaching, and alternative teaching.
9. We change teaching responsibilities during the week.
10. We use alternative assessments such as portfolio, curriculum-based measures (CBM), oral reports, written tests, journals, or demonstrations.
11. We provide a variety of materials.
12. We allow time to reflect on and evaluate instruction on a daily basis as well as weekly.
13. We feel comfortable taking risks and trying new techniques.
14. We plan a content outline for the semester or year.
15. We come mentally prepared to our planning meetings.

Adapted from (DeBoer, & Fister, 1995) and (Spencer & Land, 2008)
Co-Planning Meeting Agenda Template

Date: _________________________ Note taker: ___________________
Timekeeper: _________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Review (20% of time)</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reflect on teacher and student performance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What worked well?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What didn’t?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plan Instruction (60% of time)</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Discuss “big picture” issues first</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Discuss content</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Plan content delivery</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Consider variations of co-teaching</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Design practice activities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Plan individual and group evaluation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assign Responsibilities (20% of time)</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Identify needed materials</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Clarify teaching roles and responsibilities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Write out responsibilities for all involved</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Next Meeting Date: _________________________ Place: _________________________
Adapted from: Spencer and Land (2008)
Co-Teaching Weekly Lesson Plan Template

Week of: ________________________________
Inquiry: ________________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Lesson</th>
<th>Who? (T or ECE)</th>
<th>Prep/Materials (T or ECE?)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>Opening Circle:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Practice Activities:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Closing Circle:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assessment:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>Opening Circle:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Practice Activities:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Closing Circle:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assessment:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>Opening Circle:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Practice Activities:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Closing Circle:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assessment:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>Opening Circle:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Practice Activities:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Closing Circle:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assessment:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>Opening Circle:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Practice Activities:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Closing Circle:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assessment:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from: Walther-Thomas, Korinek, McLaughlin, & Williams, B. (2000).
Communicating Together

Having open communication is a huge component of a successful co-teaching partnership. This means being open and honest with one another, even when it may be difficult (i.e., reflecting after a tough day). A great way to start your co-teaching partnership off is by having a discussion where each co-teaching member communicates their:

- Teaching perspectives
- Teaching beliefs
- Teaching philosophies
- Feelings toward student academics
- Feelings toward shared responsibilities in the classroom
- Feelings toward their role in the classroom
- Strengths
- Weaknesses
- Pedagogical frustrations (Brown, Howarter & Morgan, 2013; Gately & Gately, 2001)

If you have been co-teaching for a while, it is recommended that you still make time to communicate. Even if it’s just for a few minutes a day. Great co-teaching partners have been cited in research as being able to read each other’s verbal and non-verbal cues (Bacharach, et al., 2008). Remember that the students in your class are watching you and your partner all day, and they are learning how to communicate by your example.

Remember to actively listen to your partner and provide feedback to each other.
Building a Relationship Together

Co-teachers efficacy requires consistent, collaborative work and communication, (Bacharach et al., 2008).

Not only will the relationship you have together affect your work day, and enjoyment of your work, but it will also affect the students in your class. They will pick up on tense relationships. In fact, Mastropieri, Scruggs, Graetz, Norland, Gardizi, and McDuffie (2005) conducted a study that found students in a class with teachers who got along tended to do better academically as opposed to students in a class with teachers who did not get along.

Some of the most important things a good relationship is built on are:

- Trust
- Respect
- Communication
- Acceptance (Howard & Potts, 2009; Bacharach et al., 2008)

Compatibility of personalities has a huge impact on the relationship you may have with your partner. If you and your partner are having trouble meshing your personalities, try:

- To find some things you have in common
- To communicate (try and find the root of why you aren’t on the same page)
- To embrace one another’s strengths and weaknesses
- Complete team-building exercises (see Section Five: Additional Resources)

Most importantly, remember that you are both there for the students! At the very least, this can be your common ground!
Classroom Application

This component of successful co-teaching is all about how you co-teach in the classroom. Successful classroom application will reflect:

- Shared classroom leadership
- Shared control in the classroom
- Using co-teaching strategies to differentiate instruction
- Supporting each other during lessons and planning
- Being attentive to one another
- Compromising
- **Flexibility**  (Bacharach et al., 2008; McGlynn-Stewart and Bezaire, 2014; Tzivinikou, 2015)

Successful classroom application will see two educators working seamlessly together, not seamlessly apart!

Is this what your classroom reflects? What changes can you make?
Having a Co-Teaching Knowledge Base

How much do you know about co-teaching? Having a knowledge base about what co-teaching is, and how to co-teach is another important component of a successful partnership. This handbook is a great place to begin that knowledge acquisition journey.

Why is it Important to have a Co-Teaching Knowledge Base?

- If you know strategies for co-teaching, you are more likely to follow the strategies and be a more effective co-teacher
- If you understand the benefits of co-teaching this may give you more incentive to co-teach
- You will be able to explain your co-teaching relationship to parents with effectiveness (Brinkmann & Twiford, 2012; Indelicato, 2014)

How to Better Your Co-Teaching Knowledge Base

- Take advantage of professional development workshops (share what you learn with your partner - if you can both go together, this is even more efficient.) (Vanderlee et al., 2012)
Walther-Thomas et al. (2000) create a mnemonic device to help co-teachers remember these important aspects of being a co-teaching partner. Placing this mnemonic device somewhere in your room may help you to remember!

Plan together weekly
Address classroom concerns proactively
Receive ongoing administrative support
Thrive on challenges
Nurture a sense of classroom community
Evaluate student performance
Reflect on practice and strive for improvement
Support each other

(Adapted from Walther-Thomas et al., 2000)
Section Four
Strategies for Dissension around Pedagogy

General Tips
Try your best to minimize conflict in your relationship. Listed below are some strategies for preventing conflicts from beginning:

- Set clear expectations – know what your roles and responsibilities are and follow them
- Develop rapport with one another – find some common ground and get to know one another
- Be in control of your emotions – do not allow yourself to visibly get upset or raise your voice, take a break if needed
- Communicate regularly – communicate your pet peeves and things that are going well. This may clear problems before they even begin (Wholistic Stress Control Institute, n.d)

However, even with the best prevention strategies in place, in any partnership there are bound to be disagreements! If you are having trouble with disagreements coming up regularly, try some of the tips below!

- Take time to cool down
- Attack the problem, not the person – try starting with a compliment
- Do not point blame
- Be assertive but not aggressive
- Accept that opinions may not be the same, and work towards a compromise
- Do not jump to conclusions or make assumptions. Ask and communicate!
- Listen without interrupting each other
- Do not bring up the past – stay in the present
- Be honest
- Be aware of your body language
- Apologize
- Avoid using the words never and always (Harris, 2012)

If your partner and yourself still cannot come to a resolution, consider finding an impartial party to be a mediator. The rest of this section outlines three specific strategies that you can use when facing a conflict.

**Strategy 1: Active Listening**
Active listening is something we tell our students to do all the time. Chances are, that you are familiar with what active listening is, and how to do it. However, when faced with a conflict, sometimes even adults can forget how effective active listening when trying to resolve a conflict.

- **Eye-contact** – make sure that you’re looking at the speaker
- **Body language** – make your body neutral – even if you disagree with what is being said!
- **Full Attention/Distractions** – put your phone and all other distractions away. Give the speaker your full attention.
- **Reinforcement** – Encourage the speaker to continue talking
- **Clarification** – if you have any questions for clarification purposes, ask them
- **Restatements** – restate what the speaker has said to ensure you have understood and heard properly
- **Reflection** – Before you respond take a moment to reflect on what they have said
  
  (Harris, 2012)

Do not listen to reply – listen to understand!

**Strategy 2 – “I” Statements**
When you are in the middle of a conflict it is important to think about how you are coming across to your partner. Gordon introduced the concept of using I Statements in 1970, and it is still a popular conflict resolution strategy.

I statements are sentences that begin with I that explain a thought or feeling that are typically used to describe subjective reactions, ideas, hopes or beliefs (Burr, 1990). Since the person bringing up the problem is starting with “I” it indicates that, that person is owning the problem, and doesn’t place blame.

Consider the following problem: your teaching partner hasn’t allowed you to plan any lessons all week. If you start with a “you” statement such as “You haven’t let me plan any lessons all week, I might as well not come to work!” it might make your teaching partner defensive. If you turn this into an “I” statement, you might say “I feel like I haven’t had much planning time this week, and I would really like to help plan and be part of the team”. An “I” statement takes the blame out of the problem, and allows the focus to be on a solution.

Here is an example:

```
“YOU” keep moving my pen and I can’t find it when I want to write an anecdotal note!

“I” feel frustrated when my pen is missing because I forget the anecdotal notes I want to write by the time I find it.
```

Next time you are feeling frustrated, try an I Statement!
You can remember this strategy by thinking of TNT – just replace the T’s with C’s!
When conflicts arise, use CNC – it’s dynamite!

(Adapted from Microsoft Word, Free Clip Art 2014)

Communicate

• Listen to your partner without interrupting them
• Explain how you feel
• Show that you understand what the problem is
• Explain your point of view (R.I.C Publications, 2016)

Negotiate

• Come up with solutions together
• Compromise
• Make the solutions fair for everyone
• Put your plan into action (R.I.C Publications, 2016)

Consolidate

• Evaluate your plan
• Communicate your feelings to your partner (R.I.C Publications, 2016)


Section Five
Additional Resources

Compilation of Useful Resources

(Adapted from Microsoft Word Free Clip Art, 2014)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>How to Access</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Information on the 6 Different Types of Co-Teaching</td>
<td><a href="http://www.ictmodels.wordpress.com/about/alternative-teaching-model-copy/">www.ictmodels.wordpress.com/about/alternative-teaching-model-copy/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Start up kit for Co-Teachers through TPT</td>
<td><a href="https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Special-Education-Co-Teaching-Start-Up-Kit-Inclusion-1217322">https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Special-Education-Co-Teaching-Start-Up-Kit-Inclusion-1217322</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-teaching Planning forms through TPT</td>
<td><a href="https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Co-Teaching-Planning-Form-271476">https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Co-Teaching-Planning-Form-271476</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-Planning Strategies</td>
<td><a href="http://education.wm.edu/centers/ttac/documents/packets/coplanning.pdf">http://education.wm.edu/centers/ttac/documents/packets/coplanning.pdf</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leading the Co-Teaching Dance: Leadership Strategies to Enhance Team Outcomes</td>
<td>Book by Wendy Murwaski &amp; Lisa Deiker, 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-Teach! A Building &amp; Sustaining Effective Classroom Partnerships in Inclusive Schools</td>
<td>Book by Marilyn Friend, 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-Teach! A Building &amp; Sustaining Effective Classroom Partnerships in Inclusive Schools</td>
<td>Book by Marilyn Friend, 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inclusive Schools</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Collaborate, Communicate &amp; Differentiate! How to Increase Student Learning in Today's Diverse Schools</strong></td>
<td>Book by Wendy Murawski and Sally Spencer, 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Collaborative Teaching in Elementary Schools</strong></td>
<td>Book by Wendy Murawski, 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>20 Tools for the Collaborative Classroom: Getting the Most from your Partnerships</strong></td>
<td>Book by Rebecca Hines and Lisa Deiker, 2015</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Team Building Exercises**
If you aren’t sure if team building is for you, here is a list of reasons why team building is a great exercise to take part in!

1. You get to know your partner better
2. You may bond and improve morale
3. Encourages tolerance and understanding
4. Creates a sense of belonging and connectivity
5. Creates a climate of cooperation and collaborative problem-solving
6. Improves motivation
7. Improves communication within the group
8. Develops trust, care, compassion, kindness and creates empathy
9. Creates an understanding and awareness of individual differences, personality strengths and weaknesses
10. Breaks down barriers (Fulford, 2011)
There are many different kinds of team-building exercises out there; here are 3 team-building or team-bonding exercises to get you started!

**Class Coat of Arms**

If you’re going to be sharing a class together, you might as well make it feel homey for both of you! Before classes start, brainstorm some ideas about what you can call your class. Maybe you and your partner both have cats, and you want to name your class the *Kitten Den*. Then create a mascot or coat of arms for on your door, together! It’s ok if you aren’t artists, the fun will be seeing it daily and knowing you made it together. Plus you might find a few things in common! (MacDougall, 2016)

**Two Truths and a Lie**

How well do you know your teaching partner? Do you think you would know if they were lying to you? Try it out in a fun way! Each person writes down on a piece of paper two things about them that are true, and one thing that is a lie. Then you read from your paper and the other person tries to guess which one thing is a lie. You can do this several times, and find out some fun information about your teaching partner.

**You've Got an Appreciation!**

Set up a small spot in your classroom where there is a notepad or a whiteboard where you can write appreciations to one another. You can make this a regular thing (one week one partner writes something daily, and the next week you switch, or every Tuesday partner A writes something and every Thursday partner B writes something) or you can just use it whenever the mood strikes! Giving your teaching partner a compliment will certainly make their day! (MacDougall, 2016)
References


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MacDougall, M. (2016)

Intervention in School and Clinic, 40(5), 260-270.


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Wholistic Stress Control Institute, Inc. (date unknown). Ten strategies for conflict resolution.

Summary

Chapter 4 comprised of *Successful Co-Teaching: A Handbook for Educators*, which included background information and the different types of co-teaching, strategies for co-teachers to use when difficulties arise, resources, and team building exercises. The information provided in the handbook aimed to provide co-teachers with a better understanding of co-teaching and to feel better equipped as a co-teacher. Chapter 5 will outline the evaluative questionnaire and the results of the evaluative questionnaire which was taken by the same participants who participated in the needs assessment. Further, the implications and limitations of this study will be addressed.
CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, EVALUATION DATA, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was twofold: 1) to develop a practical co-teaching handbook for educators; and 2) to help disseminate conscious raising of co-teaching strategies and the importance of co-teaching while giving practical suggestions for how to have a successful co-teaching relationship. Since Ontario has adopted a full-day kindergarten program, which requires an early childhood educator and a teacher to co-teach a classroom, the relevance of this study is quite timely (OME, 2013). Initially, this handbook was geared towards kindergarten partnerships, but as the study unfolded it became clear that any co-teaching partners could benefit from the practical handbook created.

Current research has suggested that co-teaching kindergarten partnerships are in need of more professional development and training, more clearly defined roles, and co-planning time (McGlynn-Stewart & Bezaire, 2014; Vanderlee et al., 2012; Gibson & Pelletier, 2014). McGlynn-Stewart and Bezaire (2014), Vanderlee et al., (2012) and, Gibson and Pelletier (2014) proposed that current FDK teams are varying in quality, and that due to a lack of role clarity, instead of partnerships working harmoniously as co-teaching partners, hierarchies are forming; thus, co-teaching is not happening as described in the Full Day Early Learning Kindergarten document. Because the relationship of co-teachers has been shown to affect a student’s social and academic achievements (Diana, 2014; Walther-Thomas, 1997), Successful Co-Teaching: A Handbook for Educators has been developed to equip educators with the basic knowledge needed to create and/or maintain a successful co-teaching partnership. With this knowledge it is hoped that successful partnerships will flourish and both educators and students will see benefits.
Based on current research and the needs identified through the needs assessment in Chapter Three (Appendix A), *Successful Co-Teaching: A Handbook for Educators* was created to assist educators specifically in: 1) extending co-teaching knowledge; 2) accessing resources and suggestions on how to collaborate and co-teach; and 3) equipping with practical strategies when challenges arise. Due to the fact that the success of co-teaching partnerships often depends on the relationship between and the compatibility of the partners (Fluijt et al., 2016; Pratt, 2014), this project was grounded in the theoretical framework of Bandura’s (1977) social learning theory, specifically reciprocal determinism which suggests that the behaviour of individuals is shaped by not only the environment and individual themselves, but also that behaviour that is occurring. For educators to successfully co-teach, understanding how these interactions may affect each other could be beneficial. In this chapter, the feedback from the evaluative questionnaire and implications for theory and practice are discussed. Further, the limitations of the study, recommendations for future research, and a conclusion are provided.

**Evaluation of the Handbook**

*Successful Co-Teaching: A Handbook for Educators* was evaluated based on its practicality, organization, and comprehensiveness. To ensure consistency, the same educators who completed the needs assessment for the handbook, completed the evaluative questionnaire. The participants included four members of FDK teams; 2 teachers and 2 ECEs.

**Participant Demographics**

To ensure continuity and consistency the participants were provided with the same pseudonyms used in the needs assessments. These pseudonyms were provided with the intention of protecting anonymity and confidentiality. Please see Table 4 for a detailed description of the participants who took part in the evaluative questionnaire.
Table 4

*Participants in the Needs Assessment*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Years Taught</th>
<th>FDK Role</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Hayley</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Heather</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Kim</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>ECE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Leah</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>ECE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Pseudonyms are used for all participants
Duration of the Evaluation

The evaluation questionnaire (Appendix B) was conducted in an elementary school in southwestern Ontario. The questionnaire was semi-structured and contained evaluative questions of *Successful Co-Teaching: A Handbook for Educators*. The researcher dropped off four copies of the questionnaire to the school secretary for distribution on October 26, 2016. Attached to the questionnaire was a cover letter explaining the purpose of the research, completion instructions, returning procedures, and contact information of the researcher’s MRP advisor in case the participants had questions. No questions arose, and there was no contact between the researcher and the participants during the evaluation period. The participants were given until November 9th, 2016 to complete the evaluation. On that day, the researcher returned at the end of the school day to collect the evaluative questionnaires. As instructed, four questionnaires were returned in sealed envelopes, protecting the confidentially and anonymity of the participants.

Findings from the Evaluative Questionnaire of the Handbook

The participants’ responses from the evaluative questionnaire are provided below. I have included the four questions included in the questionnaire.

**Question #1**

*Please circle the number, which most accurately describes your position on the following statements.*

The participants were prompted to use a rating scale of strongly disagree, disagree, no opinion, agree, and strongly agree to rate the effectiveness of the handbook. The participants’ ratings are provided in Table 5 using their participant numbers.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>No Opinion</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. The presentation and layout of the materials in this handbook are</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1,2,3,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>well organized and easy to follow</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. The handbook provided a balance of information and practical</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1,2,3,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>activities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. The strategies, activities and resources included are resourceful</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1,2,3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and easy to understand</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. After reading the handbook, I feel better equipped to be a co-teacher</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1,2,3,4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
All of the educators who participated in the evaluative questionnaire strongly agreed that *Successful Co-Teaching: A Handbook for Educators* was organized and easy to follow, and provided a good balance of information and practical activities. Hayley (participant #1), Heather (participant #2) and Kim (participant #3) all strongly agreed that the strategies, activities and resources included in the handbook were resourceful and easy to understand. Leah (participant #4) agreed that the strategies, activities and resources included were resourceful and easy to understand. All of the participants indicated that they agreed to feeling better equipped to be a co-teacher.

**Question #2**

*Please circle the answer, which best represents your opinion. After reading *Successful Co-Teaching: A Handbook for Educators,**

a) Do you feel that you have extended your knowledge of co-teaching?

b) Do you feel that you have new strategies to try and use to strengthen your partnership?

c) Do you find the suggested strategies, activities, planning sheets, and information useful?

d) Would you utilize the strategies in your own co-teaching partnership?

e) Do the suggested supplementary readings and recommended educational resources complement and extend professional development relating to emergent literacy?

f) Do you feel better equipped as a co-teacher?
All of the participants responded “yes” to each of the questions listed above. Three of the four participants added comments to supplement their answers. Leah (participant #4) indicated that the handbook was easy to read and understand and provided great examples. Similarly, Hayley (participant #1) indicated that the handbook was clear, informative and had useful information. Heather (participant #2) indicated the importance and need for the handbook in her comments. Heather (participant #2) wrote, “I feel that the idea of creating a handbook for co-teaching is a great idea and something that we have not been provided with. I know that not all partnerships work well together and new ideas might be helpful”. Kim (participant #3) did not provide any comments under this question.

Question #3

*Please reflect on which aspect of the handbook you found most useful.*

Through the comments offered, Kim (participant #3) and Leah (participant #4) both suggested that the most useful aspect of the handbook was the planning section. Kim (participant #3) indicated that she found this section particularly useful because she finds many co-teaching relationships lacking in planning together. Leah (participant #4) suggested that within the planning section, the Collaborative Planning Questionnaire (to be done with your teaching partner) was the most useful aspect because with such busy days it is nice to have something accessible to quickly refer to. Heather (participant #2) responded that she found the strategies provided as the most useful aspect. Participant #2 did not specify which strategies, but indicated that the strategies were useful because they gave new ideas and reinforced some of the things that her and her teaching partner already do. Finally, Hayley (participant #1) suggested that the team building exercises and learning about the different types of co-teaching was most useful, however, she did not expand on why. The positive feedback received to Question #3 suggests
that the handbook could serve to be beneficial to educators through the information included, as well as the strategies and resources provided.

Question #4

*Please offer any additional feedback or suggestions, which can assist in further improving the handbook*

None of the participants offered suggestions for improvements to be made within the handbook. Hayley (participant #1) indicated that the handbook was clearly laid out and had lots of useful information. Similarly, Heather (participant #2) wrote that she found the handbook, “very informative and resourceful”. Kim (participant #3) commented that she hoped the handbook would be used by teams looking for support as she found the handbook to be a “great resource!”. Leah (participant #4) did not provide any comments.

After reviewing the evaluators’ responses, it is apparent that *Successful Co-Teaching: A Handbook for Educators* was considered a comprehensive and practical resource. The handbook was developed based on both empirical and theoretical research, existing co-teaching resources, and most importantly, from the findings of the needs assessments. Overall, the objectives specified in the needs assessment were met in *Successful Co-Teaching: A Handbook for Educators*.

**Implications for Theory**

This project was grounded in a social-cognitive learning theory (Kauffman & Landrum, 2013), specifically, Bandura’s (1978) theory of reciprocal determinism. Bandura (1977) suggested that learning occurs in a social context and is often a result of observations. Reciprocal determinism submits that people are not what they are just because of their actions, but that an individual’s behaviour is influenced by three factors: the environment
(physical and social), the individual (perceptions, thoughts, feelings, etc.), and the behaviour that is occurring (Bandura 1978; Kauffman & Landrum, 2013). Essentially, the environment influences an individual’s behaviours, and an individual’s behaviours influence the environment and each of these factors are interconnected, and conditional upon each other – not to be considered separately (Bandura, 1983). This is particularly important for co-teachers to understand as the environment one co-teacher creates may impact the behaviours of the other co-teacher – yet the behaviour from one co-teacher may impact the type of environment that teacher creates. Thus, a cycle of reciprocity is created.

Further, to create a handbook based on successful co-teaching, understanding what comprised a successful co-teaching was crucial. Bacharach’s et al. (2008) five components to successful co-teaching (planning, communication, relationship, classroom applications, and co-teaching knowledge base) were used as a basis for the handbook as the components mirrored the responses from the needs assessments. Bandura’s (1983) theory of reciprocity could be applied to each of these five components, and how co-teachers interactions among the five components continually influence one another.

By applying Bandura’s theory it is apparent that co-teachers need to understand the implications of triadic reciprocity and how their behaviours and the environment interact to produce cohesive interactions. The foundational work of Bandura’s (1983) triadic reciprocity theory was important in the development of Successful Co-Teaching: A Handbook for Educators. As a result, the information provided in the handbook explored how the interactions, behaviours and environment of co-teaching teams could encourage or discourage a successful partnership, along with strategies to encourage a successful one. Overall, Successful Co-
Teaching: A Handbook for Educators addressed the aspects of triadic reciprocity in how they relate to positive co-teaching behaviours.

**Implications for Practice**

As suggested in the results of the evaluative questionnaire, Successful Co-Teaching: A Handbook for Educators is a practical and comprehensive resource for FDK teams. However, it is important to note that the information, strategies and resources provided could be used and implemented by any two co-teaching educators interested in strengthening their partnership. The information, resources and list of websites provided in the handbook are linked to general co-teaching tips and strategies – not specifically strategies for FDK teams, thus making the handbook practical outside of co-teaching. Due to the commonly cited problems of interpersonal differences and personality/compatibility in co-teaching partnerships (Fluijt et al., 2016; Pratt, 2014) a section of the handbook was designated with practical exercises and tools to better get to know one another, and to plan collaboratively. These strategies may be implemented by new co-teaching teams to start their partnerships off positively, or to strengthen existing partnerships. In addition, the six different co-teaching models (Friend et al., 2010) may serve to help any co-teaching partner better understand the pros and cons of each model and when to use each model.

The results from the needs assessments and the evaluative questionnaires assisted in developing the handbook to be as practical and comprehensive as possible. Sections of the handbook were created based off of the feedback and recommendations given by the participants in the needs assessment. To assess whether the needs, practicality and comprehensiveness of the handbook was met, an evaluative questionnaire was given to the same participants who completed the needs assessment. Results of the evaluative questionnaire concluded that the participants found the information, resources, and strategies provided useful. All of the
participants indicated that they felt better equipped to be a co-teacher after reading the handbook. After reflecting on the feedback provided, it is suggested that Successful Co-Teaching: A Handbook for Educators is a comprehensive and practical resource.

**Limitations of the Project**

There is a need to acknowledge several limitations associated with the development of Successful Co-Teaching: A Handbook for Educators. First and foremost, the sample of participants for the needs assessment and the evaluative questionnaire was limited. Both sample sizes only consisted of four participants (two ECEs, and two teachers). Further, all of the participants were from the same elementary school in southwestern Ontario. For a broader representation of perceptions on the handbook, a larger sample size could have been used, and selecting different schools or different geographical regions could have been beneficial. Additionally, each of the participants was working in a FDK room. Recruiting participants who co-teach in different grades may have resulted in a different perspective on the handbook.

Second, many of the questions outlined on the questionnaires were closed-ended, resulting in participants being confined to a rating scale that may not have accurately reflected their opinions. In an attempt to minimize this limitation, each closed ended question was followed by a space for participants to note any additional comments they had. Further, the researcher did not have contact with the participants so there was no contextual evidence to add to the responses. An interview or observations in the co-teaching teams’ classrooms may have had potential to provide more feedback and draw more conclusions from.

Third, the participants were left with the handbook to read but had no additional support for implementing the strategies, or how to use the resources. Providing participants with professional development linked to the content of the handbook may be beneficial for accountability and to
track growth and progress.

Finally, although the participants indicated that the strategies, information and resources provided were beneficial, the handbook has not yet been empirically validated to demonstrate whether the use of the handbook strengthens co-teaching partnerships as suggested.

**Recommendations for Further Research**

*Successful Co-Teaching: A Handbook for Educators* included various activities, strategies, team-building exercises, resources and information that could assist any team member in being a good co-teacher. The feedback in the evaluative questionnaire indicated that the resource was practical and useful, however, without empirical research to validate the effectiveness of the handbook between co-teachers there is no proof that the resource would actually strengthen co-teaching partnerships. I suggest that empirical research be conducted on co-teaching teams that read the handbook, and follow the strategies, and team-building exercises included, as well as make regular use of the resources and planning tools provided. Further, it is important to understand what the root cause of successful and unsuccessful co-teaching teams is. I suggest that research should be conducted to come up with a way to evaluate the quality of a co-teaching team, and subsequently what the biggest problems and biggest successes are in these co-teaching relationships. This resource was only evaluated by co-teaching FDK teams. It would be interesting to submit and evaluate the effectiveness this handbook could have on same grade co-teaching partners that are not based in kindergarten.

**Conclusion**

Recent research has suggested that there is a lack of pedagogical resources for co-teaching partners, and that more support in FDK co-teaching partnerships is needed (OME, 2013; Vanderlee et al., 2012). With the roll-out of FDK across all of Ontario complete, the need
for co-teaching resources is higher than ever. As the Ontario government and curriculum
documents have legislated that teachers and early childhood educators are required to co-teach
together without any specific co-teaching training (OME, 2013), these educators deserve to have
support in learning how to be co-teachers. These facts coupled with statements from the
evaluative questionnaire reinforce the immeasurable need for a handbook on co-teaching.
*Successful Co-Teaching: A Handbook for Educators* was developed to augment educators’
awareness and understanding of co-teaching, as well as to better equip educators on how to co-
teach. Since co-teaching is not limited to only kindergarten partnerships, this resource may be
beneficial for co-teaching teams in other grades, as well as administration overseeing co-teaching
teams.

The development of this project included the theoretical concepts of Bandura’s (1983)
reciprocal determinism theory and empirical research, which focused on the benefits of co-
teaching and the evaluations of current co-teaching teams. A needs assessment was created and
administered to educators prior to developing the handbook so that the recommendations and
opinions of current co-teaching teams would be reflected. Following the creation of the
handbook an evaluative questionnaire was administered to the same participants to assess the
practicality and comprehensiveness of the handbook. The handbook was evaluated and
considered by all of the participants to be a comprehensive and practical resource, which better
equipped them to be co-teachers. Each of the participants indicated that they would use the
strategies provided in their own co-teaching partnerships. This project focused on creating a
resource that would augment the awareness of successful co-teaching among educators, and
better equip the educators to be co-teachers. Based on the evaluative feedback received, the goals
of this project have been met.
References

*A Meta-Perspective on the Evaluation of Full-Day Kindergarten during the First Two Years of Implementation.* (2013). Ontario Ministry of Education.


doi:10.1037/0033-295X.90.2.166


Support for building a relationship with your co-teacher. (2011). St Cloud State University.


Appendix A

Needs Assessment

September 16th 2016

Successful Co-Teaching: A Handbook for Educators

My name is Miranda MacDougall and I am completing my final project for the Masters of Education program at Brock University. For my final project I am going to create a Co-Teaching Handbook for Educators. The purpose of the handbook is to: 1) expand educators’ awareness of the benefits and different types of co-teaching; and 2) to provide strategies that may help co-teachers in strengthening and improving their existing and future co-teaching relationships. The responses from the needs assessment will aid the researcher in what to include in the handbook. All feedback and suggestions from participants will shape the practical efficiency of the handbook. By utilizing a needs assessment the handbook will include the components that practicing teachers actually want to see, making it more beneficial for co-teachers.

The responses collected through this needs assessment are confidential and anonymous. Please do not include your name or any specific references to your home school, or any other identifying comments. A participant number and pseudonym will be assigned to every participant’s questionnaire to maintain confidentiality and anonymity. If you do not feel comfortable answering a particular question, you may leave it blank.

After you have completed the questionnaire, please place and seal in the envelope provided and bring to the office. The envelopes will be picked up on Friday, September 30th, 2016. If you have any
questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact my advisor, Dr. Ann-Marie DiBiase, PhD.,
Clinical Psychologist at 905-651-4156 or adibiase3@cogeco.ca

I sincerely appreciate your time and effort, and would like to thoroughly thank you for participating in my research project.

Sincerely,

Miranda MacDougall

Masters of Education Candidate

Brock University
Needs Assessment Questionnaire

Completion Date: ___________________________  Years Teaching Kindergarten: _________

FDK Role (Teacher/ECE): ________________  Gender: ___________

Please circle the response that most accurately describes the following:

1. I am familiar with The Kindergarten Document.

   Strongly Disagree  Disagree  No opinion  Agree  Strongly Agree

2. I feel my role as a teacher or ECE is clearly defined.

   Strongly Disagree  Disagree  No opinion  Agree  Strongly Agree

3. I know a full-day kindergarten teaching team that is unhappy with their partnership.

   Strongly Disagree  Disagree  No opinion  Agree  Strongly Agree

4. I know of a full-day kindergarten teaching team that has resulted incompatibility of pedagogy.

   Strongly Disagree  Disagree  No opinion  Agree  Strongly Agree

5. I am aware of strategies for how to communicate with my partner when we have differing perspectives on instructional activities and pedagogy.

   Strongly Disagree  Disagree  No opinion  Agree  Strongly Agree

6. I feel my partner and I have a successful co-teaching relationship.

   Strongly Disagree  Disagree  No opinion  Agree  Strongly Agree

7. I think acquiring more knowledge and strategies about co-teaching will be beneficial to me as an educator.

   Strongly Disagree  Disagree  No opinion  Agree  Strongly Agree

8. I think with strategies and support any two educators can have a successful co-teaching partnership.

   Strongly Disagree  Disagree  No opinion  Agree  Strongly Agree
Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability. Your answers will inform the topics addressed in the handbook.

9) Please provide details with what you know about co-teaching, or what you would like to know about co-teaching.
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________

10) What do you find most challenging and most rewarding about co-teaching?
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________

11) Please rank in order of importance what you would like to see in a handbook. 1 being most important and 5 being least important.

_______  Background information on co-teaching

_______  The different types of co-teaching

_______  Strategies to use when challenges arise

_______  Resources for how to co-teach

_______  Team building exercises
12) Please reflect on your role and personal experience co-teaching and list the top 3 components that you think would make *Successful Co-Teaching: A Handbook for Educators* as practical and effective as it could be. Think about the types of activities and information that would aid you the most in your co-teaching.

i. __________________________________________________________

ii. __________________________________________________________

iii. __________________________________________________________

13) Please record any additional comments here that you may have regarding *Successful Co-Teaching: A Handbook for Educators*.

Thank you for completing this needs assessment!
Appendix B

Evaluative Questionnaire

October 26, 2016

In September of 2016, you completed a needs assessment questionnaire in which you provided feedback and recommendations for the development of *Successful Co-Teaching: A Handbook for Educators*. I am excited to inform you that with the assistance of your comments and feedback, the handbook is now complete. Since this handbook was created based on your input, I would like to ask for your participation once again, in reviewing the contents of the completed handbook. Attached is a brief evaluative questionnaire which, provides you with the opportunity to reflect and give feedback on the practicality of the activities and resources and overall organization and presentation of the handbook.

All responses provided in the questionnaire will be **anonymous and confidential.** Please **do not** provide your name on the questionnaire or any references to your school or specific student names. Instead, a pseudonym and participant number will be assigned to each participant. Your personal identity will remain anonymous as the researcher will refer to you only by the assigned participant number and pseudonym, which will be randomly assigned to your questionnaire. If you do not wish to answer a specific question, you can leave the question blank.

Once the questionnaire has been completed, please place it in the envelope provided and seal the envelope. Please return your sealed envelope to the office. I will return to collect the evaluation questionnaires on November 9, 2016. Should you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact my advisor, Dr. Ann-Marie DiBiase, PhD., Clinical Psychologist at 905-651-4156 or adibiase3@cogeco.ca
Thank you very much for your participation in my research. Your time and contributions to this educational project have been greatly appreciated!

Sincerely,

Miranda MacDougall, RECE, OCT, B.E.C.E., B.Ed., M.Ed. (Candidate)
Masters of Education Candidate,
Brock University
Evaluation Questionnaire

*Participant No._______________ Completion Date:_____________________
(*to be completed by researcher)

Years Teaching Kindergarten:______ FDK Role (Teacher/ECE):______________

Gender:_______________

Question #1

Please circle the number which most accurately describes your position on the following statements:

a) The presentation and layout of the materials in this handbook are well organized and easy to follow.

1  2  3  4  5
Strongly Disagree Disagree No Opinion Agree Strongly Agree

b) The handbook provided a balance of information and practical activities.

1  2  3  4  5
Strongly Disagree Disagree No Opinion Agree Strongly Agree

c) The strategies, activities and resources included are resourceful and easy to understand.

1  2  3  4  5
Strongly Disagree Disagree No Opinion Agree Strongly Agree

d) After reading the handbook, I feel better equipped to be a co-teacher.

1  2  3  4  5
Strongly Disagree Disagree No Opinion Agree Strongly Agree
Question #2

Please circle the answer, which best represents your opinion. After reading *Successful Co-Teaching: A Handbook for Educators*,

a) *Do you feel that you have extended your knowledge of co-teaching?*
   
   Yes / No

b) *Do you feel that you have new strategies to try and use to strengthen your partnership?*
   
   Yes / No

c) *Do you find the suggested strategies, activities, planning sheets, and information useful?*
   
   Yes / No

d) *Would you utilize the strategies in your own co-teaching partnership?*
   
   Yes / No

e) *Do the suggested supplementary readings and recommended educational resources complement and extend professional development relating to emergent literacy?*
   
   Yes / No

f) *Do you feel better equipped as a co-teacher?*
   
   Yes / No

Comments: ______________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
**Question #3**

Please reflect on which aspect of the handbook you found most useful

Comments:____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________

**Question #4**

Please offer any additional feedback or suggestions, which can assist in further improving the handbook.

Comments:____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________

Thank you for your time in completing this questionnaire. Your feedback and contributions are much appreciated!