Collaboration and Co-Teaching: Professional Models for Promoting Authentic Engagement and Responsive Teaching

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ABSTRACT

The review aims to consider the theoretical approaches of collaboration and co-teaching, motivational factors, pedagogical implications, and barriers, thus contributes to the literature in the field. To that end, a literature search has been conducted from different libraries and scholarly platforms, which included Medline, ERIC, PubMed, and Google Scholar. The studies that have discussions on the implication of co-teaching or collaborative teaching strategies were selected. A comprehensive scrutiny process was applied to filter out relevant and quality studies. 12 articles, inclusive of original and review article, have been finalized for systematic analysis. The selected articles have shown that positive outcomes are closely associated with the collaborative teaching or co-teaching methods, and have a closer relevance to the students' and teachers' achievements. Joint work, teamwork, and co-teaching approaches also support the teachers for their professional development and enhance their learning abilities. Moreover, the results have shown that interest in co-teaching has been intensified considerably in most of the educational milieus including special education to accommodate the students' special needs. Collaborative and co-teaching approaches play an important role in improving students' strengths, beliefs, and values, especially in the field of English language teaching, therefore, teachers who are dissatisfied with the outcomes of traditional learning methods are willing to apply collaboration and co-teaching models.

Keywords: Collaborative teaching, co-teaching, learning objectives, pedagogical implications, professional development

INTRODUCTION

Collaboration refers to a process of decision making, joint planning, and problem solving for the achievement of a similar goal. Similarly, co-teaching refers to the restructuring of teaching procedures, in

which two or more educators; possessing distinct sets of skills, work in a coactive and coordinated fashion to jointly teach a group of students. The concepts of collaboration or co-teaching are not discussed widely within the educational sector. Therefore, the attempts to apply the concepts of collaboration and co-teaching is still new at the global level despite the fact that these concepts have been developed earlier. Before the development of these concepts, there were many traditional techniques and approaches that were used to gain maximum outcomes. Such traditional approaches in the academic domain are mainly used to target EFL students.

From the perspective of English language for EFL students; various traditional methods and models are applied to gain positive outcomes. Grammar Translation Method (GTM) is used for the analysis of grammatical rules of the language. This method provides learners with the ability to master grammar, vocabulary, and writing skills. However, this model has also gained partial success. Afterwards, Direct Method (DM) is also applied within the educational sector. Direct Method emphasizes the use of target language only (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). However, issues of rigidity along with lack of comprehension have been raised after the application of this method. Afterwards, the audio-lingual method is applied, which has focused on the memorization of a series of dialogues (Griffiths, 2004). Similarly, grammar-based and situational language methods are also applied; however, all of such methods have

limited scope. Therefore, the concept of collaborative teaching and co-teaching has emerged to resolve current issues.

Collaborative teaching takes place when two or more teachers work together to co-plan, co-instruct, and co-assess a group of heterogeneous students to meet their needs (Dove & Andrea, 2017). It takes place when a group of learning community work together to achieve a common goal to meet the needs of students in a classroom. Co-teaching tends to illustrate the complexity of the concepts by teaching in a collaborative environment. The teachers try their best to implement this approach in their teaching methods; despite of the hurdles. Collaboration and co-teaching are associated with the joint efforts of teachers to retrieve effective academic solutions in regards of existing problems or issues to achieve a common goal (Solis et al., 2012).

Kison (2012) had presented a model in which the collaboration was discussed thoroughly. The model had mentioned that general and special education teachers should provide instructions to improve collaboration in a single classroom. The study showed that the inclusion of this effective method motivated teachers to continue participating in co-teaching process. It also helped in identifying the factors that were likely to interfere in the continuation of co-teaching programs. Similarly, Kaur (2017) had mentioned that teachers must recognize and realize the learning mode of students; therefore, relevant approaches must be taken into consideration for improving learning environment. Gabarre

and Gabarre (2010), had also supported the use of collaborative teaching to assure better academic achievements of students, and Fung (2011) had identified beneficial outcomes because of collaborative tasks.

The rationale behind the development of pedagogical implications is mainly associated with the future recommendations to improve the educational processes. Similarly, the analysis of the finalized articles is used to derive conclusive remarks about the significance of co-teaching or collaborative teaching along with the motivational factors, which result in the adoption of such strategies. Therefore, the present study has mainly focused on the theoretical approaches of collaboration and co-teaching, as discussed in previous studies, and thus, contributes to the literature in the field by the scrutinized and quality studies it reviews and by the conceptual framework it provides. Moreover, it has also attempted to discover what motivates teachers to join and carry on with cooperative team teaching by providing examples. The study has further attempted to identify the advantages along with the complexity that teachers may experience in their application of collaboration and co-teaching models. Further sections have provided the conceptual framework, methodology, review findings, and conclusion.

Conceptual Framework

Teamwork plays a major role within any organization to achieve respective goals and objectives. Similar implications are assured in the educational sector to have proficient collaborators. The trend of applying collaboration and teamwork models is not new; however, its implication within educational settings in terms of collaborative and co-teaching models plays a major role in the development of transformed students (Slavit et al., 2011). It is said that co-teaching or collaboration among teachers would be helpful for the students to develop their skills and capabilities by keeping their teachers as role models. While understanding the concept that proficient collaboration could be among teachers, co-teaching contributes to the implementation of student-centered, innovative, and collaborative learning environment. This concept has been genuinely supported by several studies (Slavit et al., 2011).

In a similar context, the conceptual framework has also shown that responsive teaching along with a better engagement has four basic advantages, which entail that the educational sector must adopt the strategies related to co-teaching or collaborative teaching. The four basic advantages mainly include better environment within schools and classrooms, better learning opportunities for the students, transformation of students after adopting positive behaviors from their teachers and progressed educational sector. All of these four key advantages have a direct relevance to the educational goals that are generally created by the governments. Therefore, it is said that this conceptual framework would allow the investigators and other educationists to develop strategic co-teaching or collaborative teaching strategies.

Based on a comprehensive analysis of previous studies, models, and perceptions of professionals; a conceptual framework has been developed (Figure 1). The model has highlighted certain factors, which have assured the implication of collaborative and co-teaching models for the promotion of engaged and responsive teaching. The following model has argued that there are three elements, which usually urge the need for collaborative teaching and co-teaching approaches. The three elements include lack of support, professional development and students' development. Lack of support from the administration or schooling management results in the need for teachers to adopt different methods or models, related to co-teaching or collaboration.

Implications of these manifestations would certainly result in responsive teaching within the classrooms. The significance behind the engaged and responsive teaching is that the better engagement between the teachers and students would certainly result in the overall achievement of the educational goals and objectives. Moreover, responsive teaching would also allow the students to assure their personal development within academic settings. Therefore, literature has indicated that responsive teaching along with better engagement is directly associated with the students' development and improved educational outcomes. In a similar context, the conceptual framework has also shown that responsive teaching along with a better engagement has four basic advantages, which entail that the educational sector must adopt the strategies related to co-teaching or collaborative teaching. The four basic advantages mainly include better environment within schools and classrooms, better learning opportunities for the students, transformation of students after adopting positive behaviors from their teachers and progressed educational sector. All of these four key advantages have a direct relevance to the educational goals that are generally created by the governments. Therefore, it is said that this conceptual framework would allow the investigators and other educationists to develop strategic co-teaching or collaborative teaching strategies.
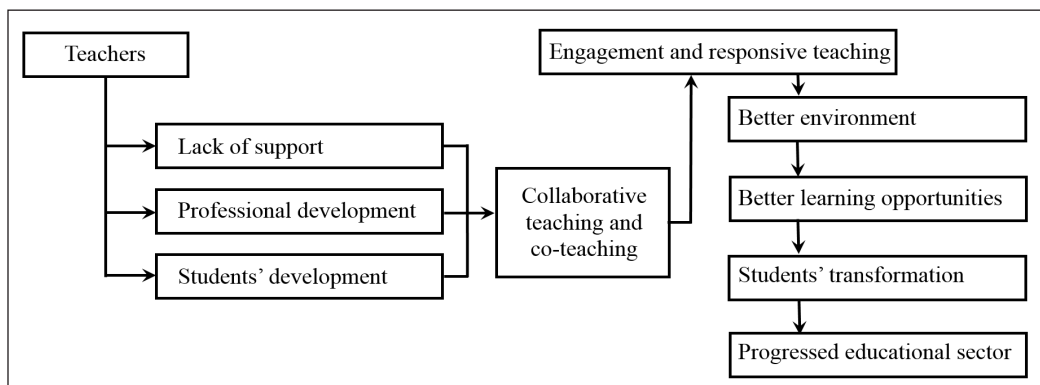

Figure 1. Conceptual framework

METHODS

A literature search has been carried out at a broad spectrum from different libraries and scholarly platforms. Specifically, Medline, ERIC, PubMed, and Google Scholar have been explored to retrieve quality studies, which have argued or discussed the implication of co-teaching or collaborative teaching strategies. Some of the common keywords included 'co-teaching', 'collaborative teaching', 'need for co-teaching', 'benefits of co-teaching', 'perceptions about co-teaching', 'significance of collaborative teaching', 'teaching problems', 'lack of support in teaching', 'improvements in educational sector', 'role of co-teaching', and 'professional development of teachers'. Only the research articles along with the reviewed articles have been considered; the rest of all other categories, have been excluded. All the articles that aimed for academic improvements, and related to educational domain, or teachers' perspective, have been included in the review. Moreover, only studies published during the 10-years duration (2009-2018) have been considered. Case reports, essays, and blogs have been excluded because of reduced reliability and authenticity.

The literature search has started comprehensively in all of the aforementioned platforms. Initially, 2750 abstracts have been searched based on the keywords. These abstracts were retrieved by considering the inclusion and exclusion criteria. A two-staged process has been deployed for the regulation of the entire review process. At the start, each abstract was evaluated by the investigator along with an academic professional. The reason for such a comprehensive scrutiny of the abstracts is to select the most relevant articles. Only those abstracts, which have any correlation with the collaborative teaching or co-teaching models for the development of educational domain, have been promoted. The first phase has resulted in the exclusion of 88% of the articles (2420 abstracts). The remaining articles have been promoted for the second phase of scrutiny. In total, 330 abstracts have been promoted, in which the articles were read completely to get the in-depth analysis. The inclusion criteria were again applied very strictly on such 330 articles, which has resulted in the retrieval of 53 articles in total, eliminating around 277 articles. The remaining articles were assessed on the basis of developed conceptual framework to assure the direction and significance of this study. In this phase, 41 articles have been eliminated due to less authenticity or relevancy with the identified variables. The excluded articles had focused on one obstacle instead of multiple and investigated obstacles from the perception of either teachers or students. In such a way, selection of 12 articles has been finalized, which were used for systematic review analysis. A pictorial depiction has been presented in Figure 2.

While reading full-text versions, the relevant data were evaluated on the basis of scientific quality. The following measures have been considered for finalizing and excluding articles:

- General information: The assessment was initiated from study title, year of publication, and research context.

- Topic: The topic was assessed to identify the core focus of the article.

- Research design: Research design has been assessed to analyze objectives, research design,

methods, intervention, and data analysis.

- Research population: Sampling method has also been focused, in case of the original articles.

- Overall results: Findings were comprehensively evaluated to retrieve relevant outcomes.
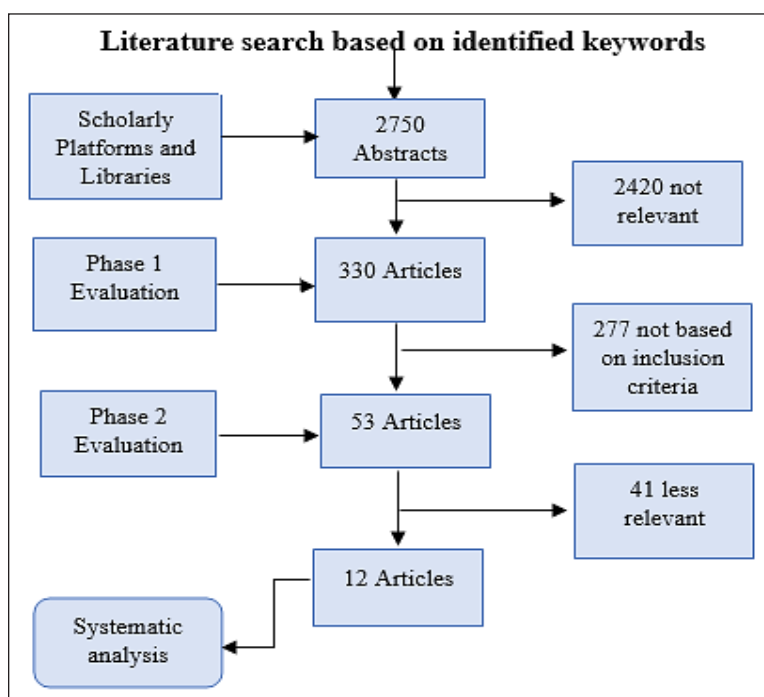

Figure 2. Literature search process

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The review is completely based upon 12 finalized articles; all of which have completely focused on the strategies, advantages, willingness, perceptions, and barriers for co-teaching and collaborative teaching. The review has also comprised two major sub-sections; the first sub-section is related to the analysis of finalized articles,

and the second sub-section has provided certain pedagogical implications, based on quality literature.

Summary of Finalized Articles

12 articles have been finalized, based on a comprehensive scrutiny process, which were inclusive of primary and secondary research (see Table 1). The

rationale behind the selection of the 12 articles is to identify theoretical approaches of collaboration and co-teaching. Moreover, different factors along with the advantages of collaboration have also been identified. Preston and Barnes (2017) had indicated that successful leadership was necessary to be developed, which could be achieved through collaborative environment within educational settings. Moreover, it is indicated that the implementation of collaborative teaching models requires a variety of instructional arrangements as the general education teacher works with the special education teacher. Gast, Schildkamp and van der Veen (2017) had also mentioned that the educational institutes must focus on team based professional development of their teachers, which would increase the level of the learning environment positively.

De Rijdt, Stes, van der Vleuten et al. (2013) have highlighted that the lack of promotion of collaborative or co-teaching approach is due to lack of support from the management or administration. Thus, it is concluded that the transfer of learning could be improved through collaborative approach. Heldens, Bakx and den Brok (2016) had mentioned that collaborative approach had a positive influence on the development of better learning environment within schools, which was significantly helpful for the students to improve their skills and capabilities. Similarly, Doppenberg, den Brok and Bakx (2012) indicated that joint work, collaboration, teamwork, and co-teaching approaches would surely support the teachers for their professional development, and also

supported the students to enhance their learning abilities.

Liu and Tsai (2017) further mentioned that adoption of collaborative or co-teaching approach would improve students' learning. Ronfeldt, Farmer, McQueen et al. (2015) had also supported the concepts, and concluded that collaboration approaches would be helpful for the teachers to have better achievement gains. Miquel and Duran (2017) had analyzed the implication of professional development and collaborative program.

The study has mentioned that collaborative program has a positive impact on teachers' learning, attitudes and concepts. Therefore, the learning environment is witnessed to be improved through the developed program. Moolenaar, Sleegers and Daly (2011) stated that when teachers had better collaborative attitudes and well-connected professional relationship with colleagues and fellow teachers, they would retrieve better students' achievement. Similarly, Slavit et al. (2011) concluded on the basis of the findings that honest team interactions, structural and instructional support from the principal, and discussion of various students' learning data have a direct impact on better teachers' development and students' achievement. Likewise, Truijen, Sleegers and Meelissen et al. (2013) indicated that the significance of task interdependence, transformational leadership, and effective teamwork within educational domain was helpful for the teachers to assure their regular work practices.

Table 1
Systematic review

Ref #	Author Name and Year	Title of Article	Methodology	Results	Conclusive Remarks	Support of co-teaching or collaborative teaching
1	Preston and Barnes (2017)	Successful leadership in rural schools: Cultivating collaboration.	Document analysis	It has been evaluated that successful rural principals have promoted people focused relationships among students, parents, and teachers. The study has also supported to promote the collaborative approach within teaching domain.	Successful leadership can be developed with the help of developing collaborative environment within educational settings.	Yes
2	Gast, Schildkamp and van der Veen (2017)	Team-Based Professional Development Interventions in Higher Education: A Systematic Review.	Systematic review	Team based professional development among teachers is dependent upon six major factors that include self-efficacy, attitudes, professional identity, motivation, commitment, and availability.	Higher education must focus on team based professional development interventions for teachers and students to enhance their skills and competence.	Yes
3	Datnow (2011)	Collaboration and contrived collegiality: Revisiting Hargreaves in the age of accountability.	Qualitative design	The article has focused on Hargreaves' ideas related to teacher collaboration. Collaboration has both positive and negative outcomes; however, there is a need to ensure that only positive educational benefits can be retrieved with the help of collaborative approach.	Collaboration approach should be adopted by Hargreaves' idea to gain positive educational outcomes.	Yes
4	De Rijdt et al. (2013)	Influencing variables and moderators of transfer of learning to the workplace within the area of staff development in higher education: Research review.	Research review	Lack of support has been identified as a major factor that usually results in the collaboration among teachers. Therefore, it is said that transfer of learning can be improved in higher education through collaborative approach.	The development of higher education is dependent on certain variables, which are helpful to promote collaborative or co-teaching approach.	Yes

Table 1 (*continue*)

Ref #	Author Name and Year	Title of Article	Methodology	Results	Conclusive Remarks	Support of co-teaching or collaborative teaching
5	Heldens, Bakx, and den Brok (2016)	Teacher educators' collaboration in subject departments	Exploratory analysis	Teacher learning can be occurred with the help of implementing collaborative approach within school settings. However, strict focus is required from administration and teachers to improve their working practices.	Collaborative approach has a major impact on the improved learning environment within schools.	Yes
6	Doppenberg, den Brok and Bakx (2012)	Collaborative teacher learning across foci of collaboration: Perceived activities and outcomes.	Mixed research design (qualitative & quantitative)	Educators' collaborative network would be helpful to gain more coherent professional relations, which significantly results in the better learning environment.	Joint work, collaboration, teamwork, and co-teaching approaches are significantly helpful for teachers to enhance their abilities.	Yes
7	Liu and Tsai (2017)	Teachers' Experiences of Collaborating in School Teaching Teams.	Qualitative approach	Certain barriers and factors that result in the adoption of collaborative or co-teaching approach. Such factors mainly include team discussions along with lack of curriculum leadership. It is also shown that experience sharing would improve students' learning as well.	Collaborative environment is significantly helpful for the teachers to ensure their learning experiences.	Yes
8	Ronfeldt, Farmer, McQueen et al. (2015)	Teacher collaboration in instructional teams and student achievement.	A survey approach	Teachers and schools, which have applied quality collaboration approaches, have shown better achievement gains through increased engagement and reflective learning.	Collaboration approaches would be helpful for the teachers to have better achievement gains.	Yes
9	Miquel and Duran (2017)	Peer Learning Network: implementing and sustaining cooperative learning by teacher collaboration.	Quantitative research design	The results identified positive effects of collaborative program on teachers' learning on attitudes and concepts. Moreover, the learning environment is also improved through developed program.	Cooperative learning within classrooms is a major benefit of applied program.	Yes

Table 1 *(continue)*

Ref #	Author Name and Year	Title of Article	Methodology	Results	Conclusive Remarks	Support of co-teaching or collaborative teaching
10	Moolenaar, Sleegers and Daly (2011)	Teaming up: Linking collaboration networks, collective efficacy, and student achievement.	Empirical evidence	Well-connected teachers or teachers, having better collaborative attitudes, have retrieved better students' achievement.	Collaborative approach is significantly helpful for the teachers to improve their students' capabilities and achievements.	Yes
11	Slavit, Kennedy, Lean et al. (2011)	Support for professional collaboration in middle school mathematics: a complex web.	Quantitative research approach	The results have shown certain characteristics, which are core for using collaborative approaches or co-teaching approaches within educational environment. Such characteristics include honest team interactions, structural and instructional support from principal, and discussion of various students' learning data.	Collaborative environment is helpful for teachers' development that would assure students' achievement.	Yes
12	Truijen et al. (2013)	What makes teacher teams in a vocational education context effective? A qualitative study of managers' view on team working.	Qualitative approach	The results have highlighted the significance of task interdependence, transformational leadership, and effective teamwork within educational the domain.	Collaborative approach or co-teaching would certainly result in the better academic achievements.	Yes

All of the selected articles in the table have clearly shown that there are significantly positive outcomes that are closely associated with the collaborative teaching or co-teaching approaches. Cooperative team teaching has been identified as a contributing factor in the responsive teaching, which in turn results in the professional development of the students. The benefits of collaborative teaching have a closer relevance to the students' achievements as well. It is identified that professional development of teachers through the implication of collaborative environment would certainly improve learning experiences of students, which in turn be helpful for the progress of educational sector.

Special Teaching Needs

The special education teachers are likely to be placed in a more subordinate role across different grade levels to address students' special issues. Datnow (2011) verified that Hargreaves' idea should be implemented, which is a better option to improve learning experiences within classrooms. Hargreaves (1994)'s idea is all about the positive and negative outcomes of collaborative teaching. Its primary focus was on the reforms related to curriculum, organization, and methods of teaching. These interventions are transformed into healthy interactions within the classroom environment. It is necessary to understand the growth and development of teachers to practice the changes within a broader culture (Luo, 2014). Therefore, it is indicated that this idea should be applied with complete

focus to gain positive educational outcomes. It is also highlighted that the mode of instructional delivery for students has changed substantially, specifically among the EFL students. Therefore, different strategies and methods have been designed to make language acquisition efficiently.

Pedagogical Implications of Collaborative Teaching

The core focus of this section is on the pedagogical implications of the collaborative teaching or co-teaching approaches within educational settings. Lin, Nix and Jeng (2017) have indicated that teachers, having in-depth collaborative and co-teaching relationships, rarely wish to return to their solitary teaching experience. This is because ESL/EFL classes would optimize successful co-teaching and collaborative environment for all students. The education field currently lacks a sufficient empirical database on the overall effectiveness of applying co-teaching approaches in general teaching classrooms (Moussu & Llurda, 2008). Similarly, lack of planning and reflection time, absence of training, refusal to change, differences in teaching methods, loss of teaching and classroom-teaching independence, personality conflicts, lack of administrative support, and fear of criticism have identified as certain limitations (Raywid, 1993).

Collaborative and co-teaching approaches have been increasingly developed to design activities for better learning, and improved comprehension of all students. The collaborative and co-teaching approaches are vital to improve students'

strengths, beliefs, and values, especially in the field of English language teaching. Another implication can be easily witnessed, for example, at the English departments in UAE universities. Non-native ESL/EFL tutor could help students to apply a similar approach in practice, which would allow them to interpret key terms in their own language through collaboration and responsive teaching. Another implication is the application of co-teaching or collaborative teaching in translation classes within ESL/EFL contexts (Wang, 2013). The specialist or the native speaker can easily teach theoretical approaches, based on the theoretical knowledge given in the first lecture.

Cooperative planning is a key factor for useful co-teaching, which is helpful for reducing miscommunication. Similarly, Keefe and Moore (2004) have shown that discussion and meetings should be conducted to reduce instances of misunderstanding, and can also help teachers to focus on the efforts. Friend (2008) has mentioned certain hindrances in co-teaching that include lack of administrative support, insufficient teacher training, ineffective communication between co-teachers, inadequate planning time and delivering instruction, lack of trust between co-teachers, and ambiguous roles. Therefore, Cushman (2013) has highlighted that a cooperative process mainly includes face-to-face interaction, positive interdependence, interpersonal skills, monitoring co-teacher progress, and individual accountability.

Co-teachers need to be trusted for better delivery of high quality instruction (Mastropieri et al., 2005). Collaborative teaching is a voluntary process, which is publicly agreed-on goals, unified decision making, joint planning, and problem solving. In a similar context, Friend and Cook (1992) have shown that mutual respect is an issue of vital importance, which enables teachers to exchange diverse ideas freely, regardless of the differences in knowledge. Time constraints presented a challenge for the teachers when they attempted to work together, which seem endemic to all teaching professionals.

On the basis of the aforementioned comprehensive theoretical support for pedagogical implications in terms of collaboration and co-teaching methods; the study supports the direction provided in the literature. Co-teaching and collaboration can be applied in ESL/EFL classes, where different traditional approaches were applied to gain maximum benefits. However, traditional approaches were not able to retrieve beneficial outcomes; therefore, co-teaching methods and collaborative teaching will be helpful for the ESL/EFL students to enhance their knowledge and abilities through responsiveness and engagement. Similarly, the study also assures that co-teaching and collaboration will be helpful for the teachers, who have faced difficulties during their teaching stuff. Lack of planning and reflection time along with personality conflicts are certain limitations that can easily be reduced through co-teaching

efforts. Similarly, loss of teaching and classroom-teaching independence can also be avoided. The rate of misunderstanding within the academic domain can easily be controlled through collaborative teaching. Meanwhile, face-to-face interaction along with positive interdependence would enhance the interactive communication among teachers, which will surely retrieve positive outcomes. Non-native ESL/EFL teachers can also improve their processes and learning patterns through co-teaching efforts. Finally, lack of trust and poor communication can be easily avoided through collaborative teaching, which would improve students' capabilities, and help them achieve better learning outcomes.

CONCLUSION

The study has mainly focused on the theoretical approaches of collaboration and co-teaching, motivational factors, pedagogical implications, and barriers. The interest of teachers in co-teaching has been intensified considerably in the majority of the educational institutions. Implementing productive co-teaching requires teachers to share and shoulder similar responsibilities in instruction and also agree to redistribute their classroom leadership responsibilities and decision making. Therefore, teachers need to divide the responsibility reciprocally.

Collaborative and co-teaching in inclusive classrooms provides students with superior academic experiences, which guarantees the prospect to access students' backing for learning. Collaboration approach for the teachers' teaching the

intellectually disabled students is also vital to accommodate different needs of students in the general education classroom. Co-teaching, is usually presented to develop curriculum and educational strategies, which has the tendency to meet diverse needs of students with and without disabilities.

An effective co-teaching program requires substantial amount of planning, communication, and support. There should be more prospects for participants to provide their feedback and responses in an interview format or open-ended answers through a survey. Future studies need to conduct empirical research in general education contexts about the value of applying them in ESL/EFL classes to optimize successful co-teaching and collaborative environment for all students. Advanced research is necessary within this context to highlight more relevant outcomes along with the suggestions, and students' interests to improve the educational sector at its core.

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