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# Exploring the Dynamics of Co-teaching.

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# Introduction

- Background – Context and Issues
- Definition Co-teaching
- Purpose of study
- Small scale primary research
  - Background
  - Purpose
  - Methodology
- Discussion of Findings
  - Themes
- Issues, Tools & Implications
- Conclusion





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# PEP Context

## **Pre-Enrolment English Program**

Intensive

5 weekly intakes/cycles

Conditional

Academic and rigorous

Skills based

Prescribed

## **Teaching staff** - “Co-teaching” - common practice in PEP

Staff turnover

Student numbers

New teacher mentoring

Sharing responsibility and workload

Personal choice p/t or f/t

# Background to Co-teaching

- **Collaborative + teaching = Co-teaching.**
- **Collaborative** – “Produced by or involving two or more parties working together” (*Oxford Dictionary, 2016*)
- **Definitions**
  - *“Co-teaching is two or more people sharing responsibility for teaching some or all of the students assigned to a classroom. It involves the distribution of responsibility among people for planning, instruction, and evaluation” (Villa et al., 2013, p 3).*
  - *“Two or more individuals who come together in a collaborative relationship for the purpose of shared work” (Wenzlaff et al. 2002, cited in Ferguson & Wilson, 2013, p52).*
  - *“Two teachers working together with groups of students and sharing the planning, organisation, delivery and assessment of instruction, as well as the physical space” (Bacharach et al., 2003, cited in Bacharach et al., 2008, p 9).*

# “Co-teaching” in the PEP

<b>Bacharach, Heck &amp; Dank’s definition</b> <i>(2003, cited in Bacharach et al. 2008, p9)</i>	<b>“Co-teaching” in the PEP</b>
“Two teachers working together with groups of students”	Majority of classes allocated two teachers
“Sharing the planning”	Expected & essential Regular practice Some scheduled time
Sharing the “organisation”	Teachers share equal responsibility
Sharing the “assessment of instruction”	Marking Moderation Final assessment
Sharing the “delivery and the physical space”	Program Expectations – consistency = ‘virtual’ shared space Alternating instruction

# **“Co-teaching” in the PEP- redefined.**

*A collaborative partnership involving co-planning, organisation and evaluation, with alternate teaching instruction, in a “virtual” Co-teaching context!*



# Many Questions about Co-teaching!

- What things do we, as teachers, bring to the teaching partnership that interfere with and enhance the teaching and learning process?
- What factors have an effect on the success or failure of a teaching partnership?
- How do we manage a teaching partnership in order to provide students with consistent feedback?
- What practices can best help to deal with issues that arise in our collaboration with teaching peers and our communication with students?

# Small scale primary research Survey

- **Why?**

- Consistency in marking project
- Assisted the Education Program Manager
- Questions
- Past experiences

- **Purpose**

- Explore issues
- Consider tools used and needed to enhance consistency.
- Implications

- **Methodology**

- Survey - Likert scale + short open ended questions
- 170 PEP students + 20 co-teachers.
- Limitations – stage of program, no consideration of gender or culture, subjectivity of interpretation



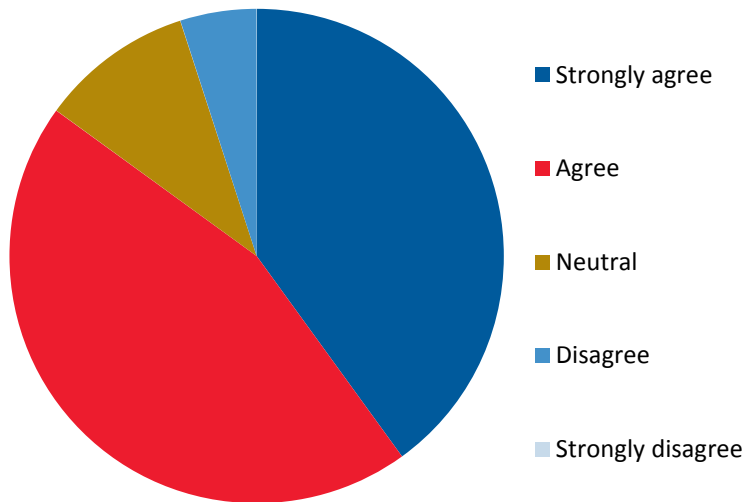
# The survey – Likert scale responses

Students	Teachers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Co-teachers worked well together</li><li>• Feedback comments</li><li>• Assessment</li><li>• Communication with the class</li><li>• Teaching style</li><li>• Teacher attitude in class</li><li>• Expectations of Students</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• My co-teacher and I worked well together</li><li>• Feedback comments</li><li>• Assessment</li><li>• Communication with the class</li><li>• Communication between co-teachers</li><li>• Teaching style</li><li>• Dealing with students' issues</li><li>• Administration</li></ul>

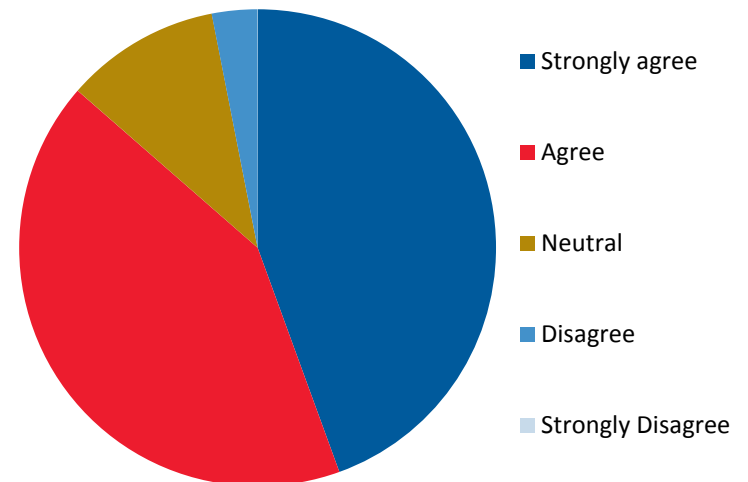
# Summary of responses

## Co-teachers worked well together

Teachers

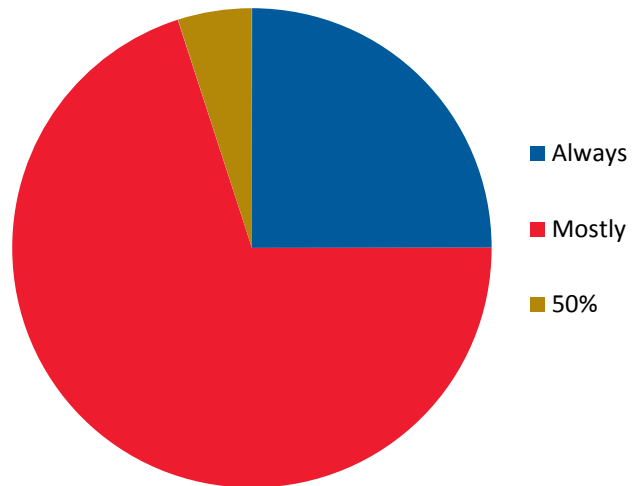


Students

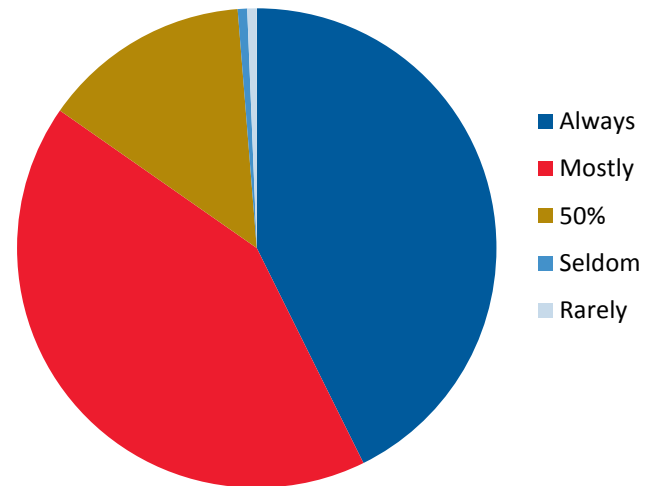


# Consistency in Feedback comments

Teachers

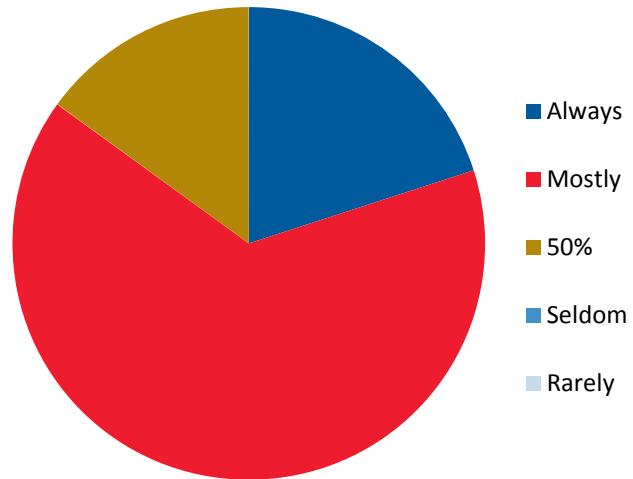


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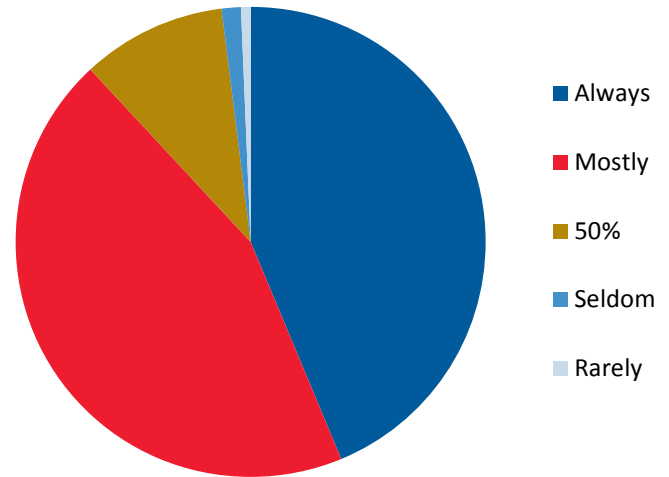


# Consistency in Assessment/Grading

Teachers



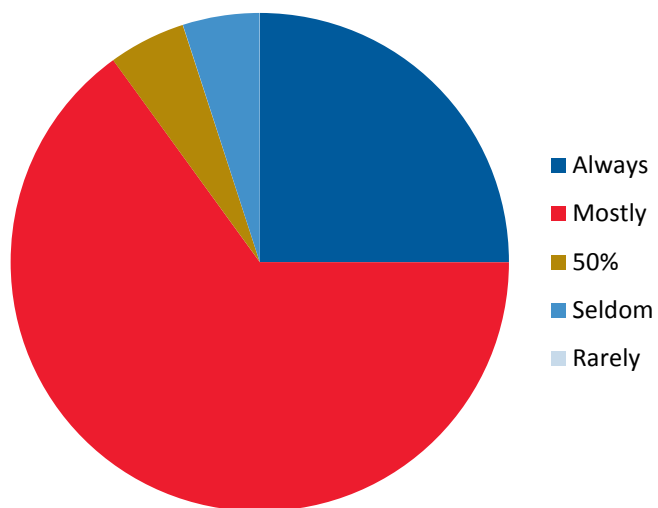
Students



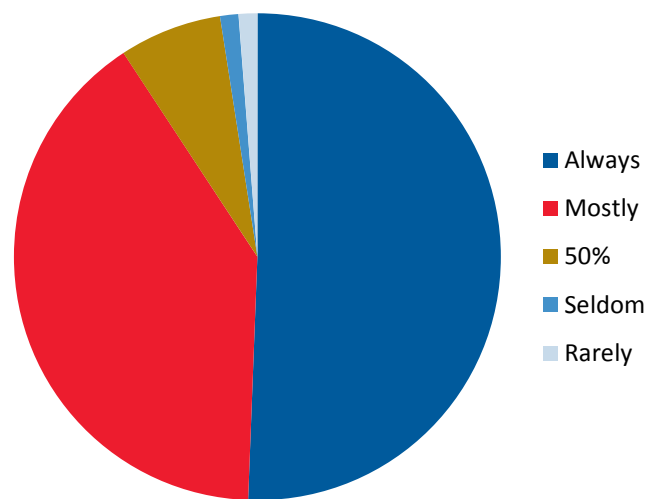


# Consistency in communication with the class

Teachers

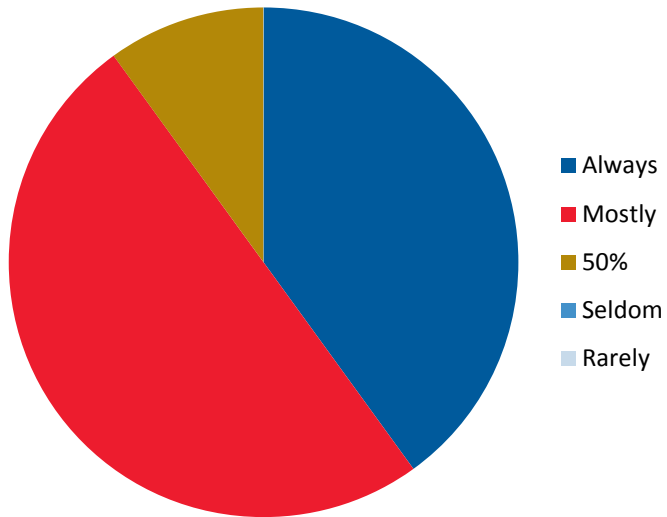


Students

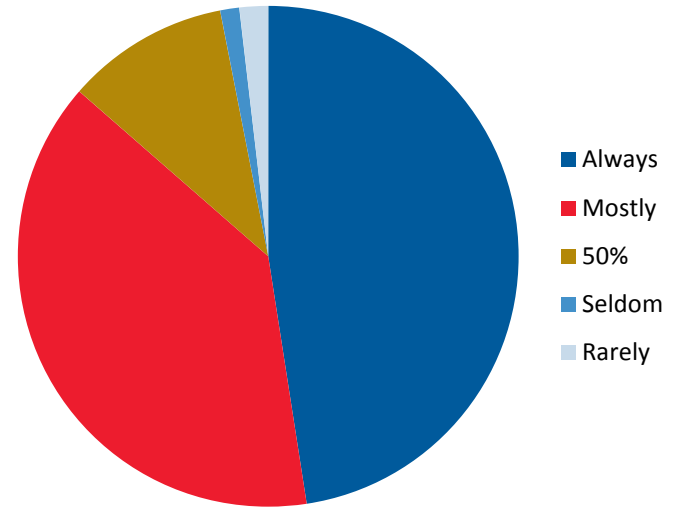


# Consistency in Teaching Style

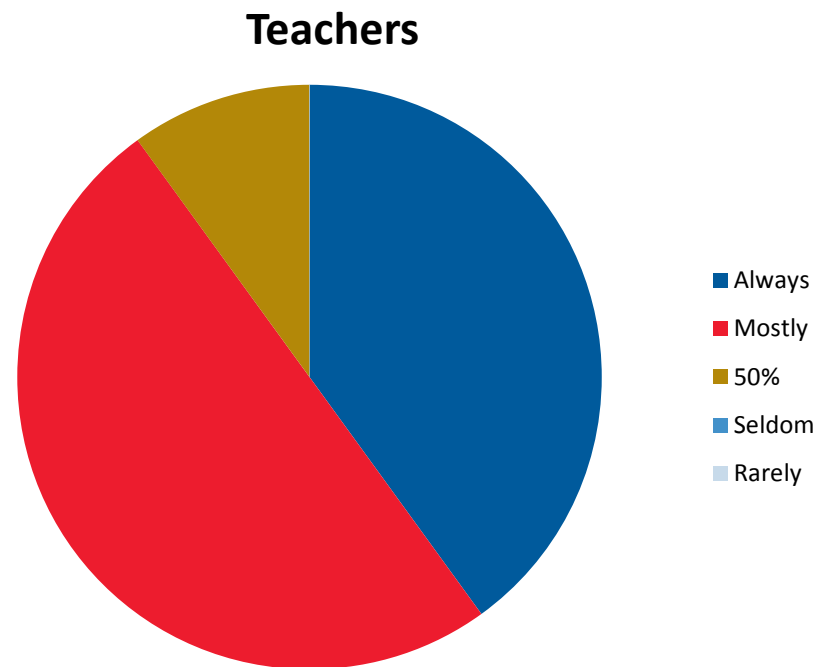
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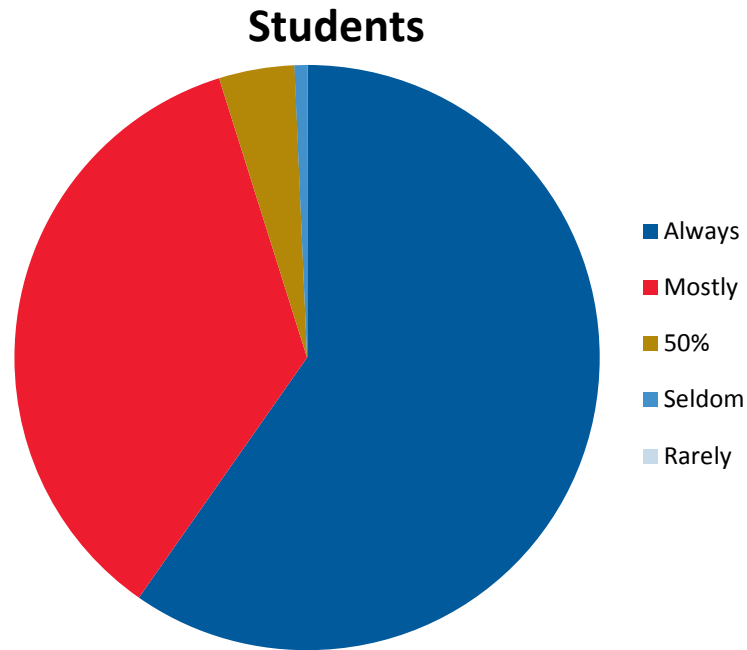
Students



# Consistency in communication between co-teachers



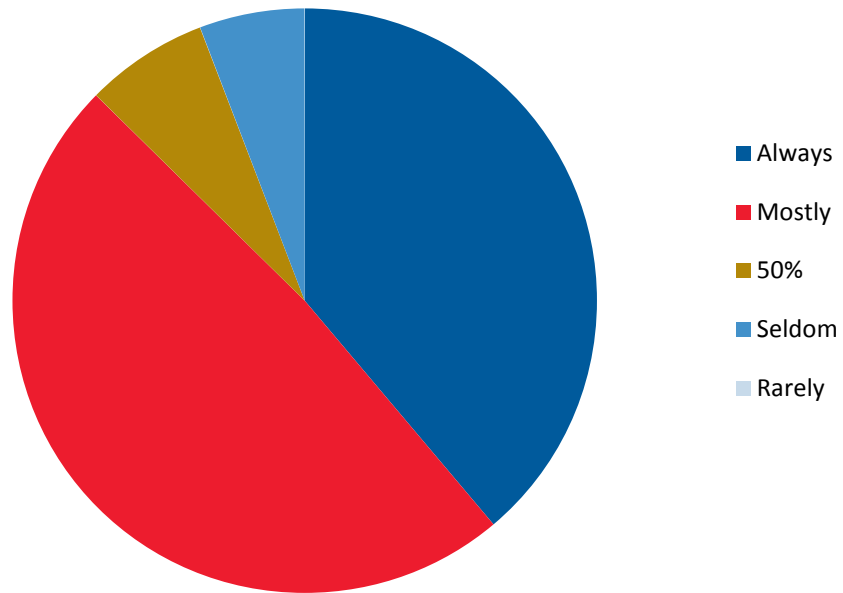
## Consistency of teacher's attitude in class (e.g. friendly, respectful, encouraging)



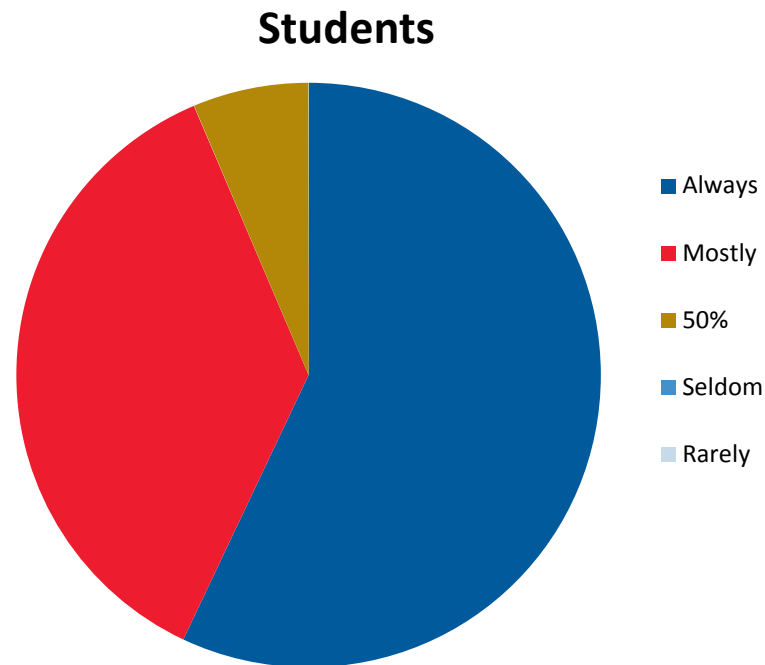


# Consistency in dealing with student issues

Teachers



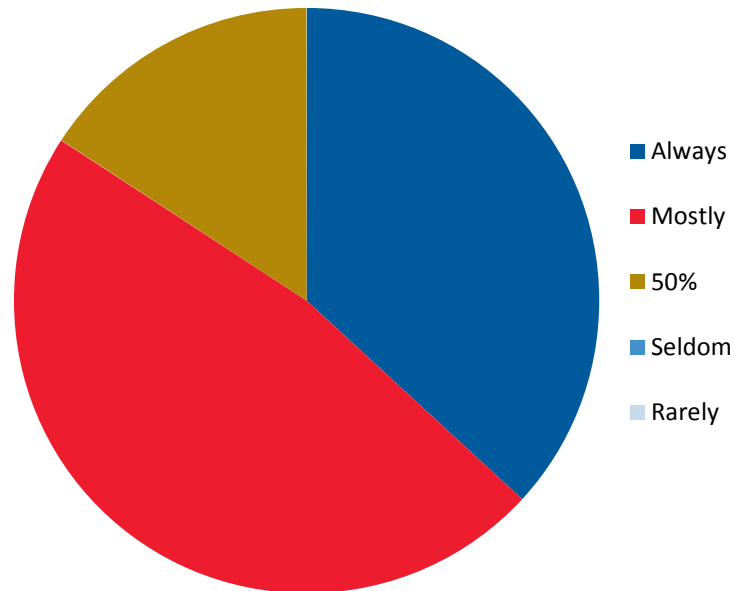
# Consistency in Expectations of Students (e.g. punctuality, English Only policy, participation etc.)



# Consistency in Administration

(e.g. planning, excel documentation of grades, filing, final assessment etc.)

Teachers



# Significant +ve themes: Teachers

## Support

"Good to bounce ideas off one another.... a second opinion."

"Worthwhile if you are a beginner at PEP."

"More talents (&) passions."

"...great for PD, feedback and support"

## Benefits the students

"Optimal way to handle the stress of the PEP."

"Professional discussion on curriculum matters."

## Handling stress

"Students... experience two points of view"

"Able to cross check marking."

"...someone to discuss issues with"

## Collaboration

"Allows you to reflect on your teaching practice (as) you need to clarify aspects."

"Builds teamwork."

"Being aware of others learning styles in the workplace"

## Reflection



# Significant +ve themes: Students

**Enhances learning**

**Different teaching styles**

**Feedback**

**Efficient**

"Have different experiences to share with students."

"More opportunities for clarification."

"Make them more energy and provide more quality class."

"Two different accents...better for speaking and listening skills."

"Balanced views on issues."

"Students can adapt to the studying environment before entering the Uni."

"Different styles...can increase students' interest."

"Suggestions or feedback ...from different sources."

"Help us adapt to different teaching styles and familiar with different accents."

# Significant Issues: Teachers

*"Hard to do all the handover over by phone or by email."*

*"Differences can be tricky – different expectations, ways of communicating."*

*"Maintaining communication; workload distribution."*

*"Not sure about how to handle strong discussion about differences of opinion when decisions have to be made."*

*"Inflexible people can ruin the whole experience."*

*"Inconsistent marking/concept of fairness."*

*"Often have to come in on "non-teaching days" to discuss matters, compare marking, results."*

# Significant Issues: Students

*"..sometimes teachers may hold different ideas, so the instructions are not clear."*

*"..they repeat or forget something because they thought the other did or did not do it."*

*"Sometimes teachers had inconsistent understanding about tasks; consequently, confusion...among students."*

*"Sometimes confusing about different assessment standards."*

*"One teacher give high quality feedback comments, while another teacher just give simple comments."*

*"Sometimes they did not exchange(d) ideas very well."*

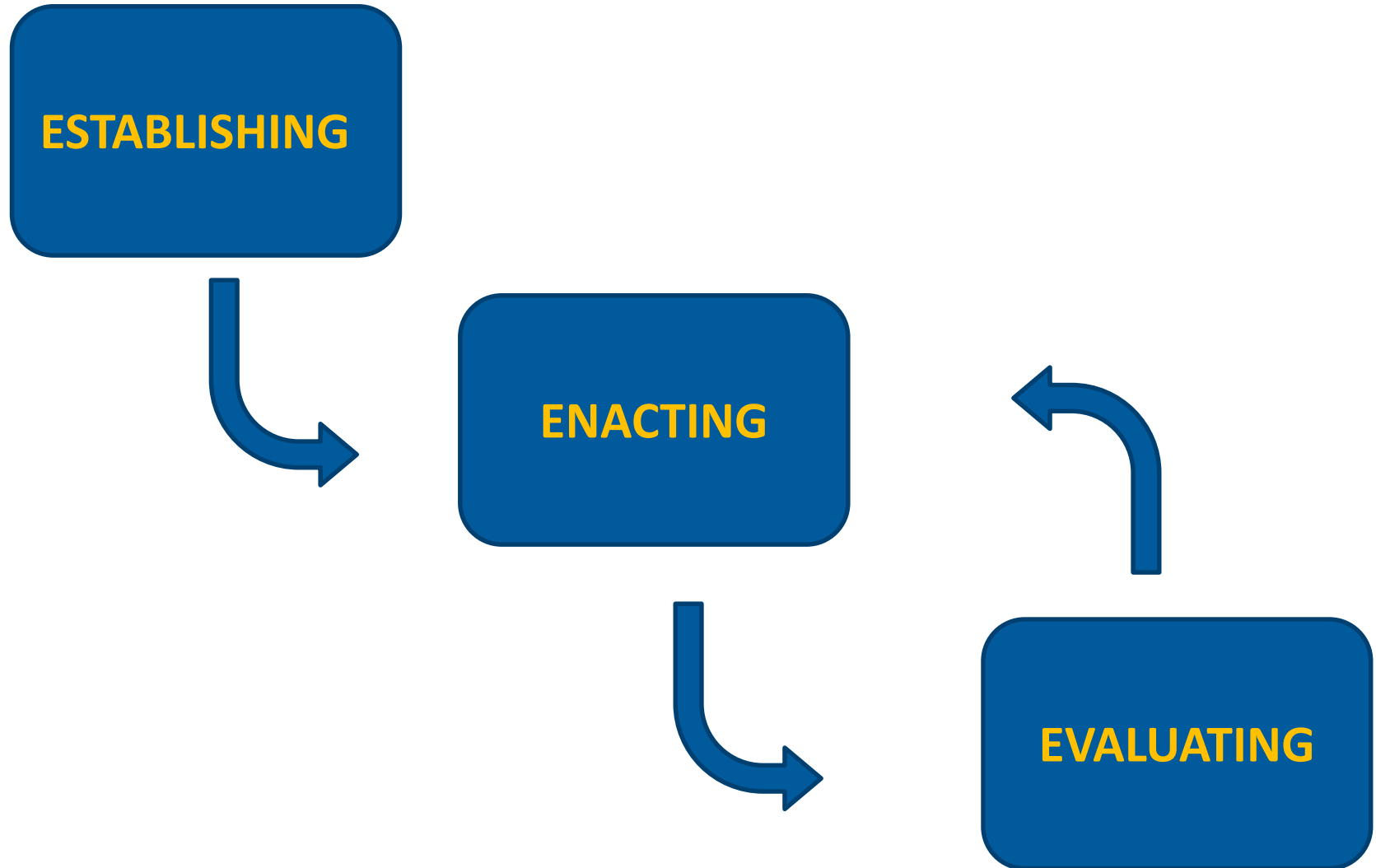
*"Don't know which teacher should be followed."*

*"Sometimes both of the two teachers think that some tasks should be done by another teacher rather than by themselves."*

*"Not fair...some teachers are strict, and some teachers are kind."*

*"Their feedback totally different, make student extremely confused."*

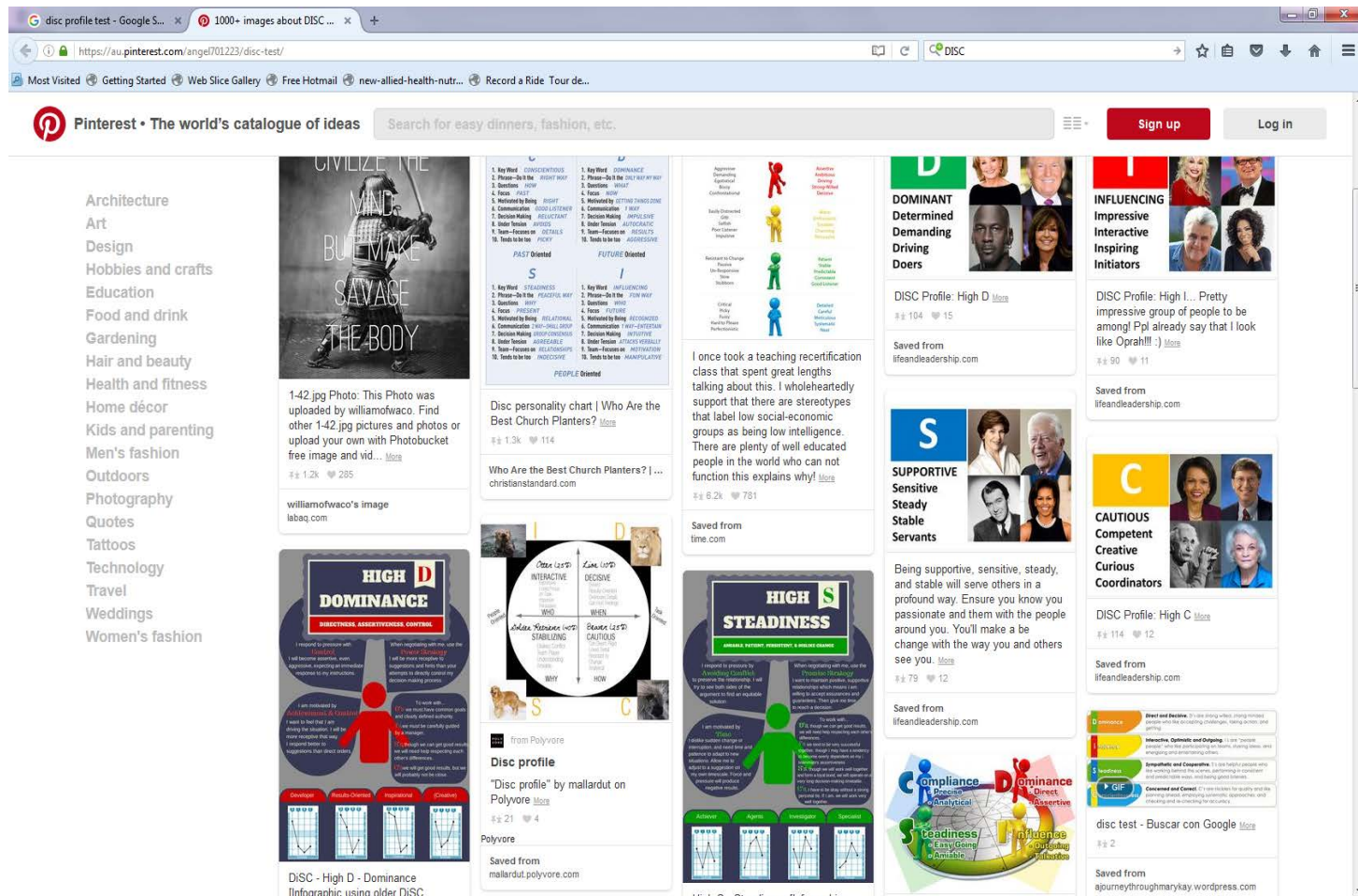
# Stages of “Co-teaching”



# 1. Establishing Stage

Issues	Tools	Implications
<b>Understanding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre-teaching GTKY</li> <li>• Behaviour/Personality tests – e.g. Myer Briggs/DISC</li> <li>• PD – communication skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shared understanding, enhanced communication, trust &amp; respect.</li> <li>• Effective collaboration in an environment of mutual support.</li> </ul>
<b>Expectations</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consistency</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre-teaching discussion</li> <li>• Teacher Handbook/policies</li> <li>• Agreement-communication</li> <li>• PEP planning meetings &amp; documents</li> <li>• Curriculum overviews</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consistent interactions and responses between co-teachers and with students.</li> <li>• Reduce conflicts.</li> <li>• Non-judgmental clarification</li> </ul>
<b>Roles</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parity (<i>Pratt, 2014</i>)</li> <li>• Power</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Negotiation- establish norms and responsibilities at the outset.</li> <li>• Divide tasks and duties equitably.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce Power Issues</li> <li>• Shared accountability for marking and administration.</li> </ul>





(Pinterest, 2016)

## 2. Enacting stage

Issues	Tools	Implications
<p><b>Co-Planning</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication</li> <li>• Administration</li> <li>• Parity</li> <li>• Time</li> <li>• Flexibility</li> <li>• Privacy</li> </ul> <p>Planning time issues cited regularly in research as the number one serious issue. (Stroglios &amp; Tragoulia, 2013 ; Knight &amp; Sulzberger, 2013).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Curriculum documents</li> <li>• PEP planning meetings &amp; documents Bi-weekly Staff meetings</li> <li>• Handover system</li> <li>• Technology Planning tools               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Conferencing tools on Canvas</li> <li>- Cloud sharing – e.g. Dropbox/Google Drive</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Use a “structured planning process” (Knight &amp; Sulzberger, 2013, p 6) – e.g. “BASE” – co-planning process (Knight &amp; Sulzberger, 2013 , p4).</li> <li>• Mediator</li> <li>• PD –conflict resolution (Pratt, 2014) .</li> <li>• &amp; Communication skills University Counselling service/PCE Courses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consistent communication with students</li> <li>• Meet program objectives.</li> <li>• Clarification</li> <li>• Enhanced communication</li> <li>• Allow for co-teachers to work on documents together (Knight &amp; Sulzberger, 2013).</li> <li>• Cyclic approach ensures no stages are missing</li> <li>• Constant evaluation and refinement</li> <li>• Assist in positive communication and reduce conflicts between co-teachers.</li> <li>• Reduce pressure on colleagues to mediate.</li> </ul>

# Structured Planning - Example:

## **“BASE” – Co-planning**

**process** *(Knight & Sulzberger, 2013 p4).*

**B** = “Define the Big Ideas”

**A** = “Analyse areas of  
difficulty”

**S** = “Create Strategies and  
Support”

**E** = “Evaluate the Process”

## 2. Enacting Stage (continued)


Issues	Tools	Implications
<b>Teaching and Learning</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consistency in communication with students.</li> <li>• Roles</li> <li>• Parity</li> <li>• Power</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policies and curriculum documents.</li> <li>• Discussion of Methodology</li> <li>• Shared resources</li> <li>• Decision Making skills</li> <li>• Shared Discourse in the classroom – Academic terms &amp; “PEP” language.</li> <li>• Students knowing “who to go to” (<i>Bacharach et al. 2008</i>)- consultations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expectations consistent</li> <li>• Awareness of differences – clarification</li> <li>• Reduce power conflicts – shared decision making.</li> <li>• Consistency in communicative dialogue/explanations of tasks and skills.</li> <li>• Shared responsibility – students less able to “play off” one teacher Vs another.</li> <li>• Allows for different perspectives on an issue</li> </ul>

## 2. Enacting stage (continued)

Issues	Tools	Implications
<b>Feedback comments</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Consistency</li><li>• Time</li><li>• Communication</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Consistency in Feedback project meetings</li><li>• Articulate storyline</li><li>• Models of rubric feedback</li><li>• Discussion with co-teacher</li><li>• New teacher mentors</li><li>• Error code</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Build awareness</li><li>• Increase consistency</li><li>• Improve students' responses to feedback</li><li>• Reduce student confusion.</li><li>• Support for teachers – able to cross check quality and quantity of feedback</li><li>• Consistency/reduced confusion</li></ul>

Lecture3

## A feedback example



Language in Use	Grade	Comments
Communicates meaning related to Sentence construction	F	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uses varied sentence and phrase clauses (including the use of <u>compound/complex/simple</u> sentence structures, <u>nominalisation</u>) <i>Over-used</i></li> <li>Uses punctuation (full stops, commas, colons, semi-colons where appropriate)</li> <li>Uses word order appropriately <i>a few errors with verbs + adverbs</i></li> <li>Includes necessary parts of a sentence (ie. does not omit necessary words) <i>some articles missing</i></li> </ul>
Communicates meaning related to Sentence construction	P	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uses varied sentence and phrase clauses (including the use of <u>compound/complex/simple</u> sentence structures, <u>nominalisation</u>)</li> <li>Uses punctuation (full stops, <u>commas</u>, <u>colons</u>, <u>semi-colons</u> where appropriate)</li> <li>Uses word order appropriately</li> <li>Includes necessary parts of a sentence (ie. does not omit necessary words)</li> </ul>
<i>- Sentence types are varied and mostly accurate</i> Communicates meaning related to Sentence construction <i>a few articles and prepositions missing throughout</i>	C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uses varied sentence and phrase clauses (including the use of <u>compound/complex/simple</u> sentence structures, <u>nominalisation</u>)</li> <li>Uses punctuation (full stops, commas, colons, semi-colons where appropriate)</li> <li>Uses word order appropriately</li> <li>Includes necessary parts of a sentence (ie. does not omit necessary words)</li> </ul>

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(My Uni, 2016)

### 3. Evaluating Stage

Issues	Tools	Implications
<b>Assessment</b> -Consistency -Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moderation – informal &amp; formal</li> <li>• Graded models of rubrics</li> <li>• Articulate storyline</li> <li>• Staff meetings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Objectivity</li> <li>• Non-judgemental clarification</li> <li>• Consistency</li> <li>• PD</li> <li>• Fairness</li> </ul>
<b>Reflection</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At different stages</li> <li>• Informal eg. discussion, PD modules, self evaluation</li> <li>• PDR</li> <li>• Report-review</li> <li>• Formal - PEP Review - whole staff</li> <li>• Review for Co-teachers?</li> <li>• Student E-Selts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Reflection enables teachers to improve their Co-teaching relationships and instructional practices” (Pratt, 2014).</li> </ul>



# Conclusion

- Teaching partnerships - beneficial to both teachers and students when well managed
- Issues
- Existing tools/tools needed & implications
- Effective communication = enhance consistency
- Value of modelling to students & mentoring/PD for teachers
- Further exploration needed

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