

Stronger Together: PLCs and Co-Teaching Teams for Sequenced Peer Teaching

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INTRODUCTION



Professional Learning Communities

• **Why:** Pedagogical decision-making, peer collaboration, and coherent instruction are essential skills for preservice and in-service teachers. Professional learning communities (PLCs), promote shared inquiry and responsibility for student learning (Vescio et al., 2008).

• **Current Challenge:** Teacher preparation programs often prioritize individualized unit and lesson planning practice, peer teaching, and reflection. Although valuable, this structure can limit skill development for successful PLC membership and coherent unit-level instruction.

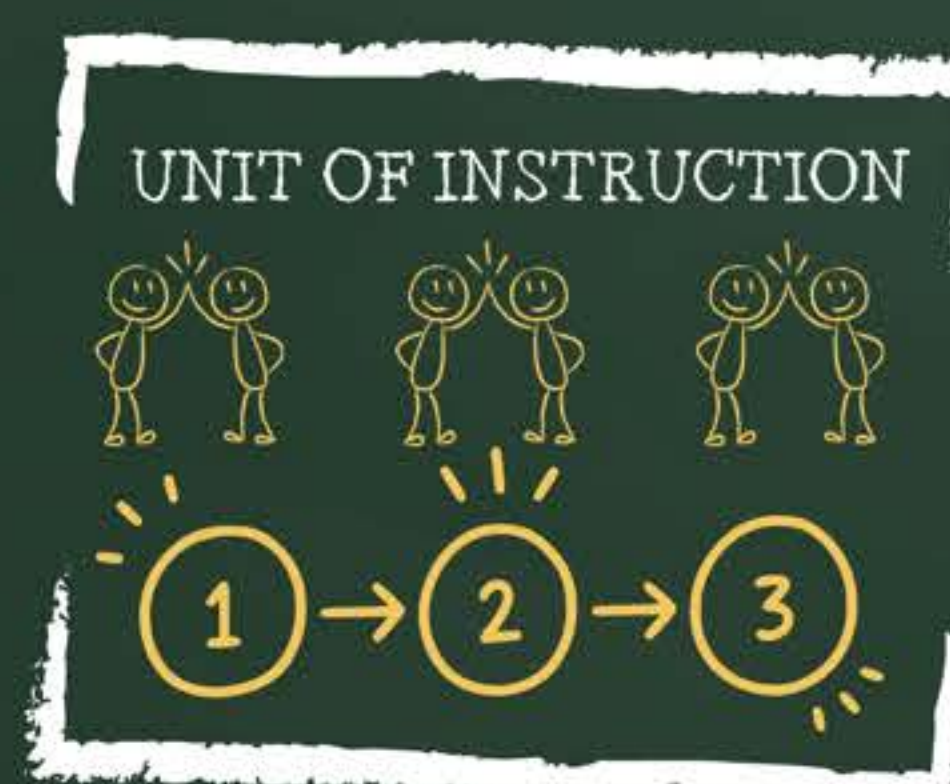
• **Innovation:** PLCs and co-teaching teams give preservice teachers structured opportunities to collaboratively plan, teach, receive feedback, and reflect on a sequence of connected lessons. This provides targeted practice with core teaching tasks (Grossman et al., 2009).

NEED & CONTRIBUTION

• **Need:** Backwards design emphasizes coherence among goals, assessment, and instruction (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005). However, disconnected peer teaching experiences may not provide sufficient practice designing coherent units of instruction.

• **Contribution:** PLC teams consisting of three co-teaching teams collaboratively develop coherent units. Co-teaching teams then co-plan and teach a lesson within the unit sequence.

• **Intention:** Move peer teaching from isolated individual lessons toward collaborative, coherent unit-level instruction.



GOALS



- **Discourse:** Provide structured opportunities for discourse.
- **Practice:** Strengthen planning skills through practice with unit planning, lesson planning, teaching, and reflection.
- **Coherence:** Reinforce coherent instructional sequencing across a unit.



CLARIFY TASK



Introduce the PLC/co-teacher approach during the initial class meeting.

Establish PLC and co-teacher teams, and establish team norms.

MODEL UNIT COHERENCE



Model a sample unit and three-lesson sequence to demonstrate how lessons connect across a unit. Introduce instructional routines such as entry/exit routines and accountable talk routines.

Analyze how the sample lessons build toward shared unit goals. Debrief the learning sequence and review provided unit and lesson plans.

DEFINE SUCCESS CRITERIA



Review sample unit plans, lesson plans, teaching videos, and rubrics to build a shared understanding of quality work.

Apply success criteria to planning, teaching, and reflection tasks.

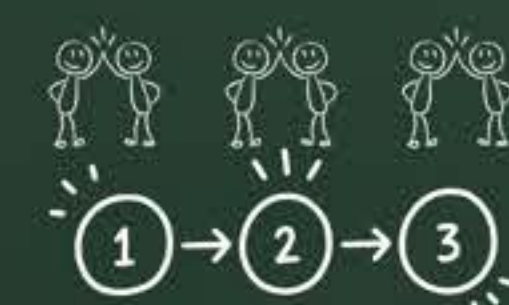
PLAN THE UNIT AND LESSONS



Provide templates, resources, feedback in the design phase prior to teaching. Monitor and adjust scaffolding as the term progresses.

PLCs develop the unit plan. co-teacher teams design one lesson within the unit sequence and make revisions based on feedback.

TEACH IN SEQUENCE



Observe peer teaching and manage feedback transitions between lessons.

Co-teacher teams teach their lessons. Audience members participate.

REFLECT AND GIVE FEEDBACK



Facilitate reflection and feedback mechanisms.

Co-teacher teams complete a whole-class verbal and an individual written reflection. Classmates provide plus-delta written feedback.

RESULTS

This innovation has been tested on 27 credential candidates in their AGED 5524 – Instructional Process in Agricultural Education course. Cohort 1 (completed fall 2025) with Cohort 2 (in progress, fall 2026).

• **More peer teaching:** More peer-teaching lessons fit within the term.

• **Stronger Design Skills**

- Candidates developed and fielded units of instruction.
- Supervisors observed greater readiness to unit plan, and cooperating teachers noted greater skills in the area of unit coherence.

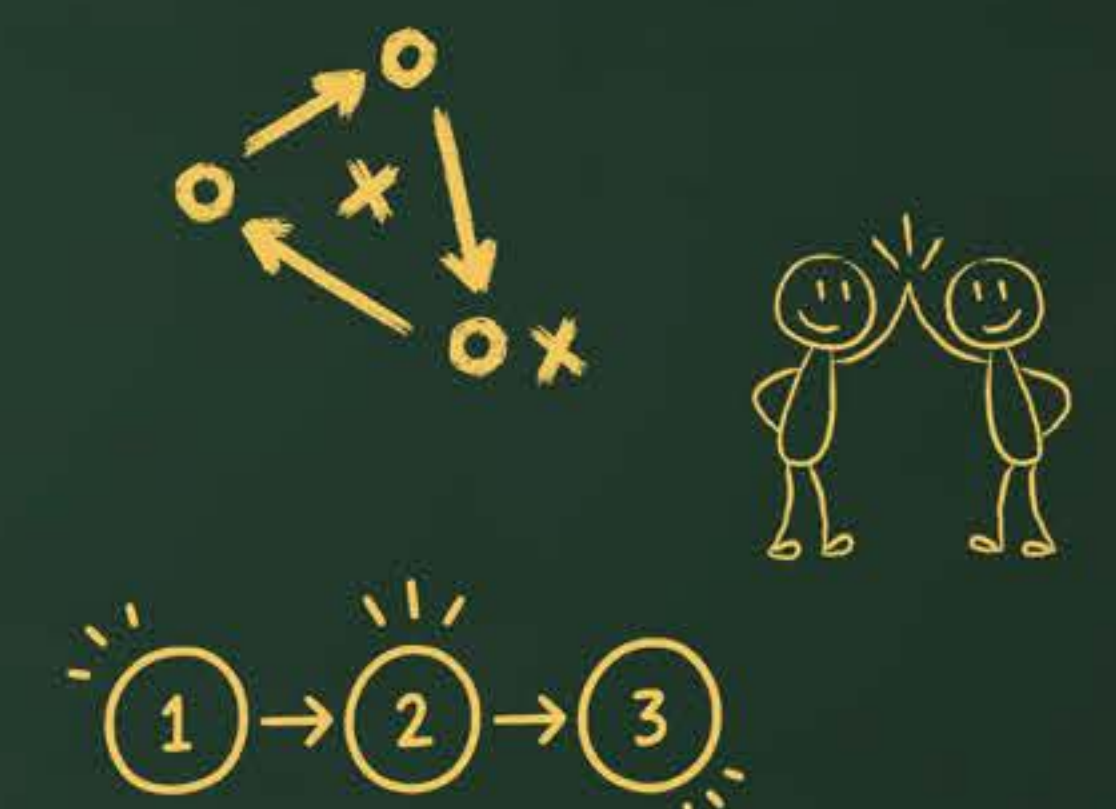
• **Informal student feedback:**

- Learners valued collaborative planning and teaching.
- Career Readiness: learners reported that the PLC collaboration strengthened their teamwork skills and gave them examples to discuss in job interviews.

IMPLICATIONS

These results suggest the model can strengthen preservice teachers' ability to

- **plan** coherent instruction,
- **collaborate** with colleagues,
- and **connect** individual lessons within a **coherent** unit sequence.



ADVICE



- **Accountability:** Assess individual skills alongside team collaboration.
- **Pacing:** Assign preparation before class to protect time for peer teaching.
- **Scaffolding:** Build teaching expectations progressively across the term.

COSTS

- **Direct costs:** estimated 2–5 hours to revise course materials and co-teaching supports.
- **Indirect costs:** in class time for modeling, peer teaching, feedback and reflection.

Abstract & References

