

Co-Teaching: Ideato Implementation



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Idea

From a university perspective, it can be challenging finding field experience placements with quality mentor teachers. The field experiences we provide help shape (positively or negatively) the development of pre-service teacher candidates (PTCs). Our university is fortunate to have, as one of our field experience sites, a K-5 university Charter school in which faculty work closely with K-5 teachers. Together, faculty and teachers are able to provide meaningful experiences. As one of our field experiences, we require all EC-6 PTCs to experience a semester in the university Charter school. A benefit of this university and Charter school relationship is that the university is able to control the mentor teachers in which we work with and the experiences we provide our PTCs.

Perhaps the biggest challenge our field experience faces is accommodating our PTCs in the limited number of classrooms at the Charter school field placement. It is not uncommon to have as many as six PTCs placed with a given mentor teacher. How do we provide a meaningful field experience while keeping all PTCs actively engaged in their field experience?

Our initial question led us down the path of co-teaching. Cook & Friend (1995) describe co-teaching as "Two or more professionals delivering substantive instruction to a diverse, or blended, group of students in a single space". Co-teaching was a topic somewhat unfamiliar to us as field supervisors. After embarking on additional literature review and consulting with our Department Chair, we soon found co-teaching to be a topic of interest.

Training

To learn more about co-teaching we attended a Co-Teaching: Train the Trainer Workshop in Minneapolis during summer of 2016. The training was provided by The Academy for Co-Teaching & Collaboration through St. Cloud State University and TWH Consulting. The training was designed to provide a foundation in co-teaching. The training provided insight into the following co-teaching models originally developed by Cook & Friend (1995):

- **Station Teaching.** Students are divided into groups with each teacher delivering part of the lesson at a station. Independent work occurs typically occurs in one of the stations. Students rotate through all stations, allowing teachers to work with all students;
- **Parallel Teaching.** Students are divided into two groups. Each teacher works with a teacher. The teachers may present information in different ways or they may choose to present the same information;
- **Alternative Teaching.** One teacher works with the majority of students, while the other teacher instructs a small group to reteach, enrich, assess, pre-teach, or another purpose;
- **Teaming.** Students remain in one group, while the teachers co-instruct throughout the lesson;
- **One-teach, One-assist.** Student remain in one group, with one teacher leading instruction while the other teacher briefly interacts with students to focus attention, answer questions, further explain concepts, and so on; and
- **One teach, One observe.** One teacher leads instruction while the other teacher collects data pertaining the one or more children.

The training also provided an opportunity for co-teaching teams to interact with other universities, districts, and schools to learn how co-teaching could be used.

The training was geared toward a mentor teacher and student teacher working as a co-teaching pair. While we found the training to be beneficial, we were left wondering how to facilitate the idea of co-teaching with one mentor teacher and as many as six PTCs being placed in a single classroom.

Planning

After numerous discussions, we decided to pair PSTs as co-teaching pairs. Together, we make up two of five field experience sections. As part of our field experience course, all PTCs are required to teach lessons related to mathematics and science.

We decided to let participants in our sections of the field experience self-select a peer to form a co-teaching pair. These co-teaching pairs would act as co-teachers for the duration of the semester, while implementing six models of co-teaching as it relates to the science and mathematics lessons they were to teach.

In order to prepare students for a peer-to-peer co-teaching field experience, we needed to train our PSTs about the different models of co-teaching. We designed a co-teaching orientation for PTCs enrolled in our section of the field experience. The orientation was co-taught by both of us, providing an overview of the co-teaching models. Our field experience also includes a one-hour lab that meets once a week. We decided to conduct our labs together, as co-teachers, to showcase the different models of co-teaching. Each training, orientation and individual lab class, was facilitated by both of us, as field supervisors, using one or more of the six different models of co-teaching. Modeling of the co-teaching models allowed each PTC to participate in the co-teaching models prior to the planning and implementing the components in their field placement. We soon came to the realization that WE are also co-teachers.

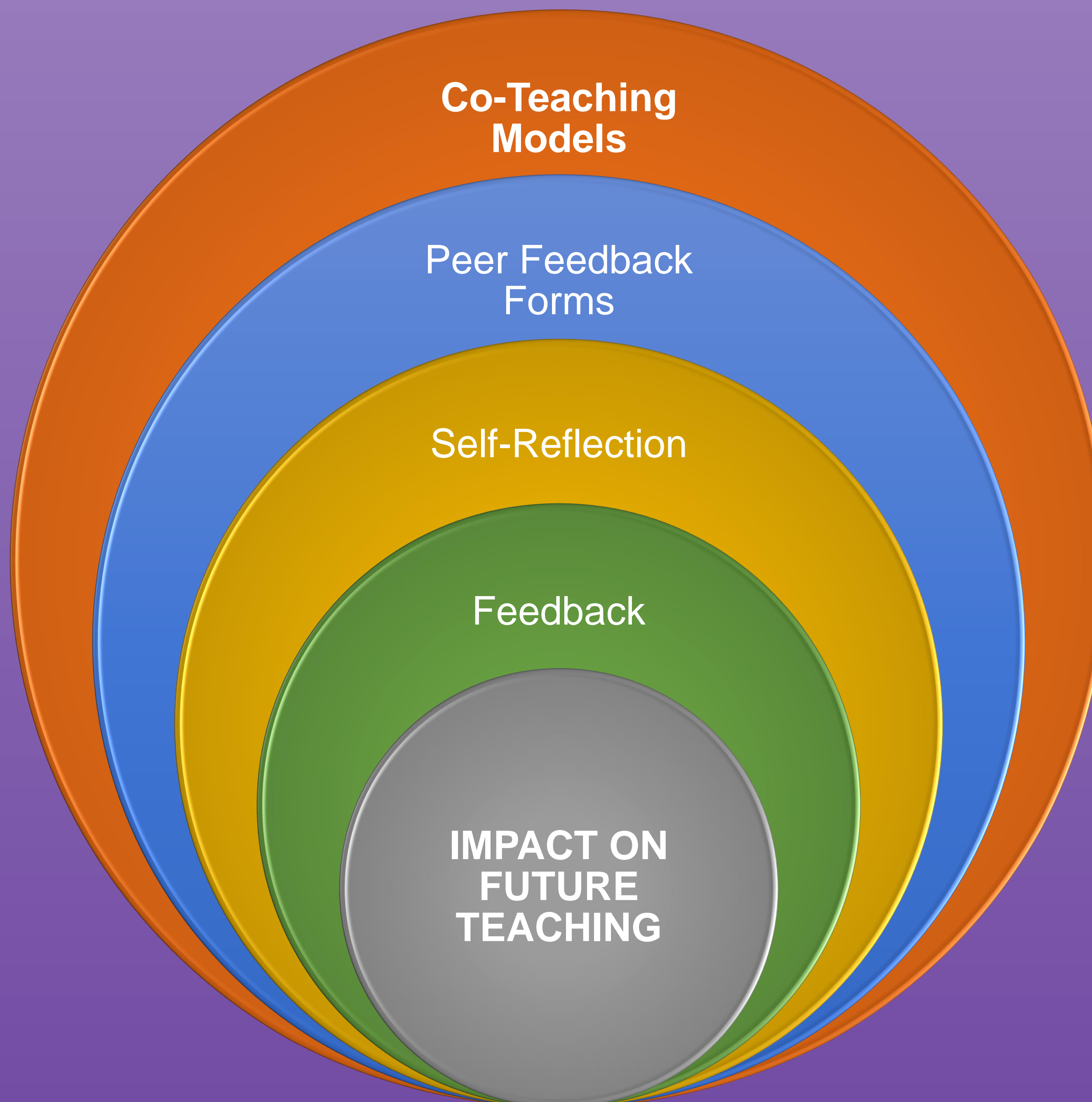
In an attempt to collect data related to the co-teaching field experience, we asked for, and received permission, to use a survey instrument from our training. We wanted to gauge the perceptions of our PTCs as it relates to their experience co-teaching.

Co-Teaching Models

	Mental Mathematics	Science 1	Science 2	Mathematics	Morning Meeting
One Teach, One Assist			X		
Station Teaching		X			
Parallel Teaching	X				
Differentiated Teaching				X	
Team Teaching					X
One Teach, One Observe		X	X	X	

- **One-Teach, One-Assist** Lead teacher instructs while co-teacher assists in any way possible. This assistance includes conferring with students, monitoring progress, answering questions, passing out materials, working with small groups, or any other number of ways needed to benefit student mastery.
- **Station Teaching** The lead teacher and co-teacher are each responsible for instruction at individual stations. At least one additional station meant for independent work is required to allow PTCs opportunity to write clear and concise instructions for students to be able to follow independent of teacher input.
- **Parallel Teaching** All PSTCs are assigned small groups of students during the semester. During the execution of this model, the PTCs break into their small groups and present the same mental mathematics tasks to their group.
- **Differentiated Teaching** Lead teacher teaches whole group of students. At some point in the lesson, the co-teacher pulls out a small group of students to provide either support or scaffolding activities to help students be ready to master lesson objectives or extension activities meant to challenge students to understand lesson objectives more deeply.
- **Team Teaching** Lead teacher and co-teacher equally share responsibility for teaching and engaging with students during Morning Meeting.
- **One Teach, One Observe** On-going model used during all lessons taught by PSTCs. Each time a co-teaching pair teaches, the rest of their peers, instructor, and mentor become observers providing feedback through a variety of **Peer Feedback** forms meant to provide specific data related to the act of teaching.

Models Adapted from the work of Lynne Cook and Marilyn Friend (1995).



Peer Feedback

Through One-Teach, One-Observe Model of Co-Teaching

Effective Teaching Strategies

Identifying effective teaching strategies that the PTCs utilize within the lesson. These strategies target effective teaching for all student groups including, but not limited to, Special Education, English Language Learners, and Gifted and Talented.

Student Engagement

An indicator percent of students that are actively engaged, mostly engaged or off-task at any given time within the lesson cycle. A written explanation gives the PTC an opportunity to identify areas of instruction that need improvement.

Student Study

Specific data for what one particular student experiences during the lesson cycle. Detailed reporting of student actions allows the PTC to see the lesson through student eyes, but also identify specific areas of concern or need for the student of study.

Teacher Proximity

A classroom map with notations to show the path of the teacher during a lesson cycle. PTCs can use the data to determine areas of concern in the classroom as well as identifying whether they are equally distributing their support to all students.

Transitions/Learning Structure

Tally marks indicate the number of classroom transitions a PTC uses to gain student attention.

Learning structures utilized to help students talk and listen to one another discuss content are notated.

Teacher Questions

All questions asked to students by the PTC are recorded. Later, the PTC analyzes each question and indicates the level of Bloom's Taxonomy. Specific attention is paid to question-types and the context to determine better questioning strategies.

Vocabulary

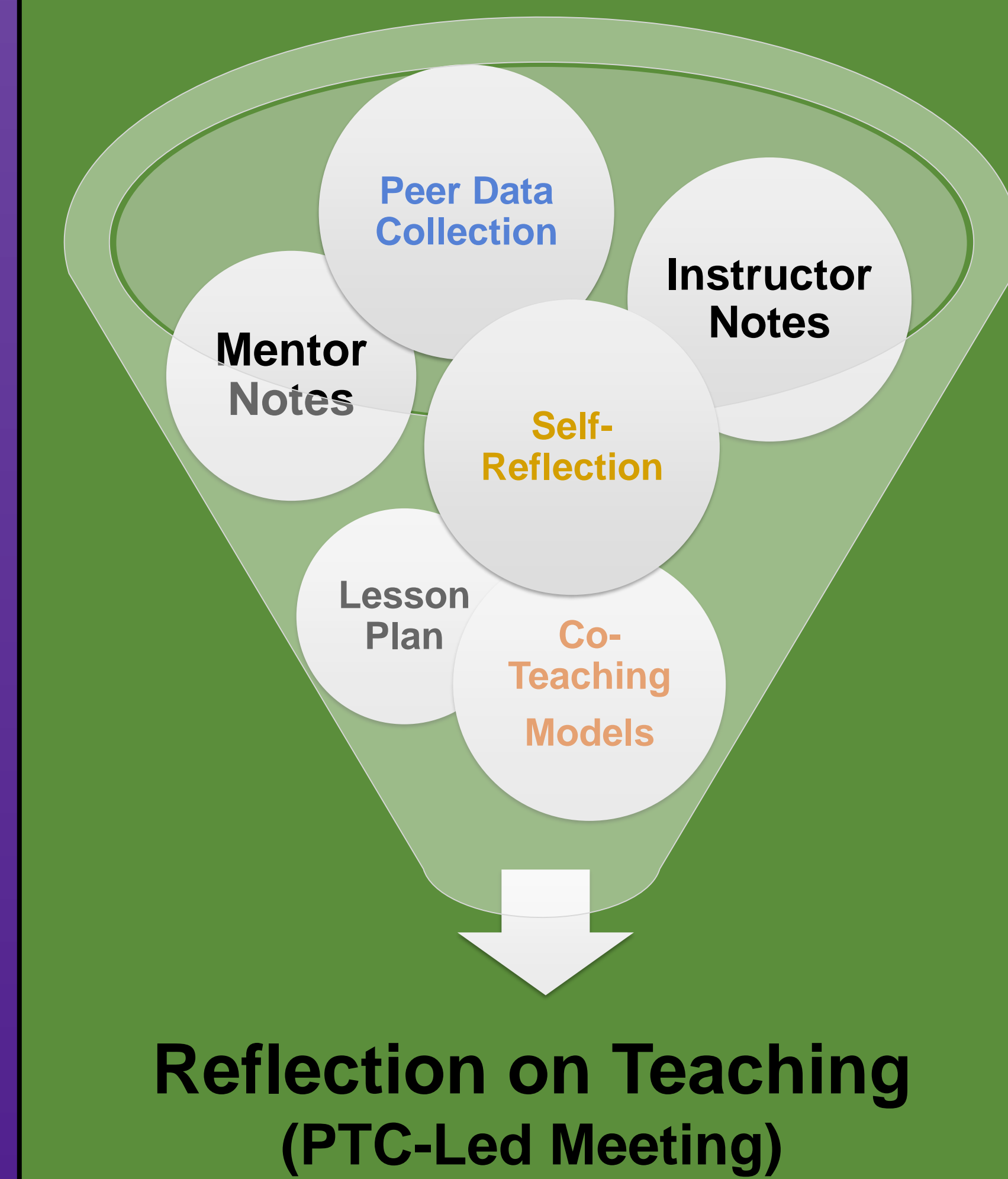
Tally marks notate the number of instances each lesson vocabulary word is said by the PTC and students separately during the mini-lesson, main activity, and seminar portion of the lesson.

Self-Reflection

Following each lesson, PTCs are given each of the Peer Feedback Forms and are asked to go home and reflect on the lesson. During this time, they analyze each of the questions they asked during their lesson, as recorded on the *Teacher Questions* form. They are then asked to complete a reflection sheet by responding to each of the following tasks:

1. Identify the strengths of the lesson.
2. Identify the weaknesses of the lesson.
3. Identify changes for future teaching.
4. Select the four Peer Feedback Forms that you felt gave you the best data and describe what specific information you learned from the data.
5. Prepare to lead a feedback meeting with the course instructor.

Feedback



Impact on Future Teaching

- The most beneficial part of co-teaching was **collaborating** with my co-teacher. This gave me more confidence for the future when I become a teacher and have to plan with the teachers on my team.
- The most beneficial thing about my co-teaching experience was being able to bounce ideas off of my co-teacher and getting a **different perspective**. It incorporated my style of teacher [sic] with her style of teaching as well as incorporating the different learning strategies for each child in the classroom.
- While co-teaching was new to me in the beginning, I felt that it was important to learn about because it is directly applicable to our future in student teaching as well as in our future as teachers. I have developed more skills in **communication and planning**, and I have gained TWICE as much teaching experience this semester! I saw value in being a "lead" teacher and a co-teacher. I am confident that I will use these models in my future.
- I learned how to **work well with another teacher**.
- Co-teaching gave me **support** when I needed extra help in my lessons with setting up materials or conferring with students. My co-teacher was a big help with keeping students on tasks [sic] and helping with student questions if necessary.
- I liked the fact that it (co-teaching) **challenged** me to work with and around another teacher. It also made me realize how other people can interpret your lessons differently unless you explain it to them.