

Co-teaching agreements at ANZAC Park Public School



794

STUDENTS

39

GENERAL LEARNING
SPACES

43

TEACHERS

Anzac Park Public School

Anzac Park Public School opened in 2016 when the new facilities were completed. It is forward thinking in its educational vision and makes effective use of hub learning environments, contemporary teaching practices and co-teaching to enhance learning.

What?

Anzac Park Public School's (APPS) vision seeks to enhance a whole school culture that promotes contemporary practices in a supportive and collaborative community environment.

Learning and teaching programs utilise inquiry into key concepts to develop students' knowledge and skills. Integrated curricula enhance connections across learning areas, student success and self-regulated learning. Students are supported to

develop problem solving, and creative and critical thinking skills.

Educators and learners work together in learning hubs. These flexible learning spaces are configured and re-configured to suit the learning intentions and specific student needs for each session. Varied furniture offers increased potential learning and teaching actions, allowing students to personalise the learning environment to suit their needs.

How?

Teachers work in co-teaching partnership pairs. They also work collaboratively as year teams and stage teams. Co-teachers share ownership of two classes in one learning hub across all key learning areas.

School culture is carefully and consistently shaped to ensure there are high levels of trust and support. This enables a collaborative approach to flourish. Teachers can feel safe to be both educators and learners as they seek to improve the learning opportunities offered to students, be open to challenges and de-privatise their practice.

School structures enable collaboration across pairs, year, stage and whole staff. Meeting, planning and professional learning times all enhance the ability of teachers to co-create learning and teaching programs, effectively use flexible learning spaces as a teaching tool and use co-teaching to value-add to student learning experiences.

Co-teaching agreements

The co-teaching agreement template is a school-wide social contract used to provide co-teaching partners a structure

for establishing and maintaining a close professional relationship.

The template covers six considerations and features driving questions to guide co-teacher discussions, in initial and mid-year co-reflection sessions. The agreement template is a scaffold to support a school-wide collaborative culture based on trust, supporting on-going regular co-reflection.

This social contract builds a sense of collective ownership, responsibility and mutual support.

Establishing co-teaching pairs

The process of pairing teachers begins the year before when all staff fill out an online form. This survey asks teachers to share the qualities they're looking for in a co-teacher and information about themselves, such as teaching style, philosophy and practice they'd like to improve. Senior executives use this information, combined with grade preferences, to match co-teachers.

In this way, co-teachers at APPS are less likely to be paired up due to an existing friendship. Rather it is because they share similar values or can mutually support each other to achieve professional goals.



First co-teacher meeting

In one of the first teacher professional learning (TPL) sessions of the year, dedicated time is allocated for co-teachers to discuss aspects of their professional partnership, guided by the co-teaching agreement template.

Co-teachers deepen their understanding of each other's professional beliefs and practices, any professional goals for the year, and discuss roles and responsibilities. They then co-create a statement for each of the six considerations that will guide their co-teaching.

This process supports co-teachers to gain a sense of certainty about how their partnership will work and what their day-to-day will look like. It supports ensuring parity, consistency in managing and shaping student learning behaviours, and that a shared language is used between the co-teachers.

“The agreement helps us overcome challenges before they exist ... We can sit down and talk about our strengths as a teacher. By identifying those strengths early, we can talk about how each partner's strengths can support the other person to overcome any challenges, as a team”

Alex Still — Stage 1 teacher, ANZAC Park PS

Release from face-to-face teaching (RFF)

All co-teachers have a minimum of 2 hours off class each week together for RFF. This time off is crucial to ensuring that co-planning, co-debriefing and co-reflecting occurs effectively.

APPS runs three RFF programs – library, personal development and health, and physical education. Co-teachers are released together in a minimum of one-hour blocks of time. Quality teaching, successful students (QTSS) time sees assistant principals (APs) released individually, with an aim to align AP release with members of their teaching team's RFF time.

Co-teachers decide how they will strategically use their time together each week. It ranges from 50-75% to co-reflect on the impact of their co-teaching on student outcomes, co-assess, discuss individual student needs and how their co-teaching can address them, and co-plan for the upcoming week. The remaining 25-50% is used for solo or joint administrative tasks.

Assistant Principals (APs) and their co-teachers

The school selects co-teachers to work with APs carefully. Teachers selected for this partnership need to have a well-developed ability to respond flexibly and with initiative to changes throughout the day that may occur due to the AP's leadership responsibilities.

APs and their co-teachers have their RFF times off together. Their RFF time is crucial for the co-teaching partnership to remain high functioning and effective. APs make a concerted effort to protect that collaboration time so that their co-teaching relationship can grow and improve throughout the year

Collaborating at grade, stage, and whole school levels

One of the major investments that APPS has each term is their whole grade and stage teams co-creating all learning and teaching programs. Each term, teaching teams begin with a half-day planning to explore the conceptual scope and sequence for the following term. They unpack the 'know, do, understand' from the syllabus content to inform the learning intentions and success criteria. They follow that half-day initial planning (around week 7) with a full day of planning in the next week to co-create the program.

The collaborative planning done each term is supported by three formal regular meetings:

1. Grade meetings: each week, APs hold a 30-minute grade meeting prior to the day's lessons. This offers support to teachers and consistency across the grade team to implement programs. Teachers use the collaborative, shared programming documents to record ongoing reflections. Annotated shared programs are used to support further refinement of lesson delivery and future programs.

2. Wellbeing grade initiative: each fortnight, stage and grade teams undertake professional learning on their cohorts' wellbeing needs and
3. Analysing impact: each week, the whole staff work together in two teams (K-2 and 3-6) to explore student data and plan their response to the analysis. This occurs prior to school starting and uses a three-week cycle. Week A sees staff members explore 'foundation' data, focused on literacy and numeracy (e.g., on reading strategy). In week B, staff members explore 'belonging' data, focused on wellbeing (e.g., Sentral playground data). In week C, staff look at 'synergy', focused on student competency and the 6Cs (e.g., student self-reflective data).

These regular collaborative meetings allow co-teachers to focus their work together on delivery and how to differentiate the program to suit the learners in their hub. Co-teachers focus on selecting strategies such as which co-teaching approaches they will use; how they will use the learning environment to enhance student success; and logistical decisions, e.g., what resources they may need. These discussions and decisions are supported by other school-wide meetings and the structure offered by the co-teaching agreement template.



For more information or to provide feedback, please contact us at:

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