Having FUN in the Co-Taught Classroom

Patrick Schwarz & Paula Kluth

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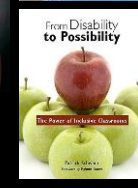

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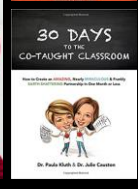

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- former professor of education & K-12 inclusion facilitator

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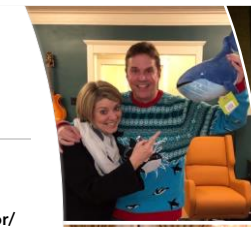
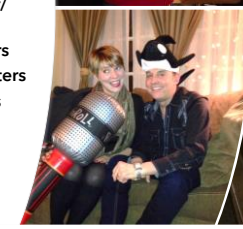
- teacher/ student
- supervisor/ teacher
- co-teachers
- co-presenters
- co-authors





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How can 2 (or more) partners boost creativity, joy & FUN in the classroom?

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set a date

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Teambuilding Activity Checklist

Choose at least one activity for a one-time outing, one activity you would like to engage in at least twice a year and one activity for weekly or monthly teambuilding. Start by highlighting any activity that you think would be potentially useful or fun. Next, put a (#) by your idea for a one-time outing, a (✓) by anything you might try twice this year and a (!) by something you might want to use on a regular basis.

- coffee klatch
- potluck lunch
- walk and talk/ run and talk
- before-school breakfast
- off-site professional development seminar
- collaborative webinar tune-in
- collaborative tweeting/ Facebook posting/blogging
- off-site lecture
- book club (personal or professional)
- after-school board game tournament
- geocaching
- department or grade-level charades
- sing along/karaoke
- paint ball
- intramural sports
- bowling
- hiking
- dance chaperoning
- laser tag
- fieldtrip site scouting
- classroom decorating or arranging
- crafting/scrapbooking
- co-volunteering for charity (e.g., school blood drive)
- buddy-themed movie night (e.g., *Thelma & Louise*, *Turner & Hooch*)
- concerts in the park
- Pinterest pin party
- knitting circle
- bake-off/cook-off

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sample questions: school stuff

- What is the most important thing for me to know about you?
- What is one of your favorite lessons/concepts/units to teach?
- What are your strengths?
- What are your pet peeves?
- What is the best/most challenging part of co-teaching?
- Describe your teaching style.
- What are your planning preferences?
- How will we interact with parents?

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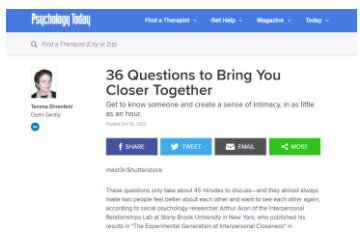

- Arthur Aron: "The Experimental Generation of Interpersonal Closeness"
- "One key pattern associated with the development of a close relationship among peers is sustained, escalating, reciprocal, personalistic self-disclosure."

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FIGURE 1.2
20 Questions for Co-Teachers

Use this list of questions as a way to get to know your co-teacher. Revisit these questions and others like them throughout the year to become personally and professionally acquainted with your partner.

1. *What do you think will be the best thing about our co-taught classroom?*
2. *Why did you become a teacher?*
3. *What is the last book you read? What is the last magazine you read? What is the last cereal box side panel you read?*
4. *Do you like candy corn? Why or why not?*
5. *What is your favorite lesson of the year?*
6. *What is one school supply you cannot live without?*
7. *What is your worst habit?*
8. *What is your favorite movie? What is your favorite movie about co-teaching?*
12. *What do you like about the first day of school?*
13. *What is your favorite classroom tech tool (e.g., website, app, piece of assistive tech)?*
14. *Fill in the blank: "I wish I was better at _____."*
15. *Fill in the blank: "I am ..._____."*
16. *Fill in the blank: ..._____."*
17. *In one word, wh... education?*
18. *What was your pro... been?*
19. *If you wrote a book for other teachers, what would the title be?*

Put in your plan book & ask/ answer a question every now & then (to start a mtg, end the week).

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add rituals

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co-teaching rituals: examples

- integrating props (e.g., soap box, pencil for 2)
- greeting students at the door
- ending the day with a community building exercise (e.g., "In a word…")
- introducing "characters" (e.g., Holmes & Watson)
- whole class selfies to celebrate milestones

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make a moment

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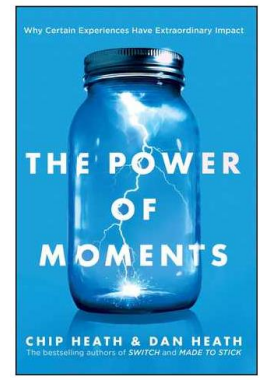

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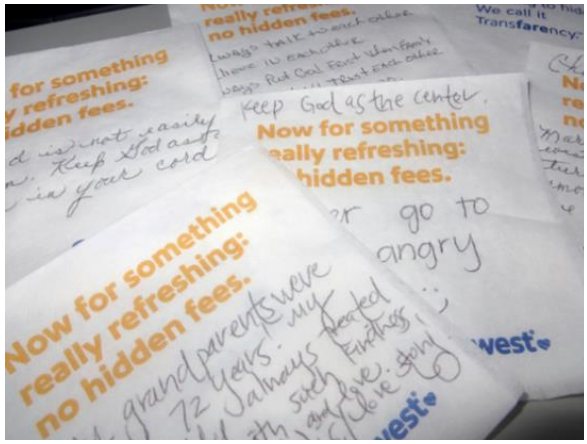

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"making a moment": examples:

- elevation: lift students out of normal routines (e.g., Harlem Renaissance dance party)
- insight: provide clarity (e.g., innovation day)
- connection: defining social moments (e.g., coffee talk)

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Recruiting Interests ENGAGEMENT

• Minimize Threats & Distractions

Day 114

Make A Moment

If we think about our own schooling career, it's hard to recall most lessons. When we do remember a learning experience, it's typically a moment from that lesson that stands out--holding a snake during a study of reptiles, learning to jitterbug as we are introduced to the Harlem Renaissance, or arriving at a classroom "book tasting" to find faux candles and checkered tablecloths on desks. In their popular book, *The Power of Moments*, Chip and Dan Heath (2017) discuss the magic of these memories. They explore why certain experiences stay with us and how to create more of these special moments in our lives and in our lessons.

According to the Heath brothers, there are several ways to make moments. One is to focus on pride. You can celebrate group and individual achievements with students and allow them to share special skills or areas of expertise with the class.

Moments can also be made with elevation. Elevate by boosting the sensory appeal of an experience as in the aforementioned example of the thoughtfully planned book tasting. You can also elevate by adding a game or goal of some kind. A band director might get her students to work hard on a complex piece if they know they may secure a spot in their city's holiday parade and a business education teacher might challenge students to use their marketing knowledge to double profits in the school store. Surprises also work as an elevation tool. Kick off a unit on WWII by co-teaching with a "DJ" (a student volunteer) who plays song clips (e.g., "Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy") during your lesson. Get a hamster for your first-graders to teach them about living things.

Connection can "make moments" too. You might call each student at home during the year to review their strengths in math class or make a content-related meal for students' families to celebrate the end of the semester.

Kluth, P (2020). *Universal Design Daily*. KDP.

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get all
matchy-matchy

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- Get dressed!
- Possibilities are endless (e.g., prey & predator; character & setting; acute angle & obtuse angle, bee & flower, related historical figures).

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celebrate

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Celebrate when you & your partner have:

- taught a great lesson
- achieved a breakthrough with a student
- connected with a family
- made great progress toward a co-teaching goal
- role-shared in a new way
- bonded with new classroom turtle

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for more on celebrating co-teaching [inclusionrules.com: videos]

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