Elements of Effective Coteaching

Marilyn Friend, a noted educator and author on inclusive practices and coteaching, has identified five elements that she believes must be present to achieve effective coteaching.

Factor	What is Involved
Philosophy	*Successful coteaching and support teaching teams must have identified a shared philosophy or belief system around student achievement, pedagogy and class climate. These successful professionals have discussed how their individual philosophies/beliefs about students, pedagogy, and classroom climate are aligned. If initially these were not aligned, successful teams will discuss how and when they will revisit these elements to come to a mutually agreeable partnership.*
Personal Traits	*The literature indicates the more honest and open the discussion between the team members the better prepared they are to coteach and support one another. Marilyn Friend believes by identifying strengths and concerns, the team begins to build capacity. On-going conversations should include the identification and examination of interpersonal characteristics, common knowledge and skills regarding student learning, as well as discipline/content specific knowledge and skills.*
Professional Traits	*Teams must review and be open to discuss how they will assure parity within the coteaching and supported environment. What structures will they put in place to discuss roles, responsibilities, class environment? When and where will they communicate about the lessons and student progress? How will they continue to build the respect and trust necessary for this coteaching relationship?*
Classroom Dynamics	*If the team members do not come to consensus on classroom dynamics, they can be setting themselves up for a rocky beginning. They must be in agreement on roles, responsibilities, instructional interactions, student success, and how they will reflect on their practice.*
External Supports	*If cotaught and supported classes are to be viable services for students, the context to which it occurs and the supports they receive are critical. The teams must have time to evaluate and discuss their work. They should also know how they might appropriately seek administrative supports, and further professional development.*