

Teacher Readiness for Co-Teaching in Malaysian Primary School

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ABSTRACT

Co-teaching is widely recognized as an effective instructional approach for promoting inclusive education through collaborative practice. However, empirical evidence on teachers' readiness for co-teaching in Malaysian primary schools remains limited. This study investigates teachers' readiness for co-teaching and the individual and institutional factors shaping its implementation. Adopting a qualitative interpretivist approach, semi-structured interviews were conducted with twelve purposively selected primary school teachers from five public schools in Selangor and Negeri Sembilan. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis supported by NVivo software. The findings reveal that teachers' readiness for co-teaching is multidimensional and constructed through three interrelated domains: (1) cognitive and pedagogical readiness, referring to teachers' knowledge of co-teaching models, lesson planning, and differentiated instruction; (2) affective and motivational readiness, encompassing trust, openness to collaboration, shared responsibility, and emotional confidence; and (3) institutional and collaborative support, including leadership facilitation, time allocation for co-planning, and access to professional development. Although teachers generally demonstrated positive dispositions toward co-teaching, readiness was constrained by limited formal training, unclear role delineation, and structural time pressures. Drawing on these findings, the study proposes the Co-Teaching Readiness Model (CTRM), conceptualizing readiness as a dynamic interaction among cognitive, affective, and institutional domains strengthened through reflective professional learning. This study contributes empirically and conceptually to the literature on collaborative teaching and inclusive education in Malaysia. The findings hold significant implications for teacher education, school leadership, and policy development aimed at strengthening sustainable co-teaching practices in primary education.

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1. Introduction

Co-teaching is a dynamic instructional model that supports inclusive education and enhances student learning outcomes through educator collaboration (Maldonado-Diaz et al., 2025). While its roots trace back to the concept of "team teaching", as propagated by Dean and Witherspoon in 1962, the model evolved through terms as "cooperative teaching" described by Bauwens, Hourcade, and Friend in 1989. Nevertheless, the specific term "co-teaching" was

coined by Marilyn Friend and Lynne Cook in 1995 to define the model's critical elements: two or more educators sharing instructional responsibilities within a single classroom setting (Friend et al., 2020).

Globally, co-teaching has been identified as an effective pedagogical approach for addressing diverse learning needs, fostering differentiated instruction, and promoting student engagement (Murawski, 2022). In Malaysia, this model is gaining traction in primary schools, particularly in efforts aligned with inclusive education reforms as outlined in the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013–2025 (MOE, 2013). However, successful implementation depends largely on teacher readiness, encompassing cognitive, emotional, and institutional preparedness to engage in collaborative teaching (Horne, 2025).

In contrast, teacher readiness is conceptualized as a multidimensional construct, integrating teachers' knowledge of co-teaching models, interpersonal collaboration skills, self-efficacy, and perceived institutional support (Abdul Malik et al., 2021). In the Malaysian context, despite policy initiatives to promote inclusivity and collaborative learning, many primary school teachers still face barriers such as limited professional development opportunities, unclear role delineation, and lack of administrative facilitation (Idris et al., 2021). These constraints often hinder teachers' willingness and capacity to implement co-teaching effectively (Xin and Nasri, 2024). Therefore, assessing teacher readiness is a crucial step in understanding how educators adapt to pedagogical reforms and identifying areas that require systemic and professional support.

Recent studies suggest that teachers' readiness for co-teaching correlates strongly with their professional experience, collaborative attitudes, and prior exposure to inclusive practices (Manogharan et al., 2018; Raja Al-Amrat, 2024). Readiness also depends on institutional culture which is schools that promote open communication, shared leadership, and joint professional development tend to exhibit higher levels of co-teaching success (Plaku and Leka, 2025). Furthermore, research emphasizes that co-teaching readiness should not be viewed as static but as a developmental process that evolves through continuous practice, mentorship, and reflection (Zuzana et al., 2024).

In Malaysia, however, limited empirical research exists examining the interplay between teacher readiness and co-teaching practices at the primary level. Most existing studies focus on inclusive education broadly (Salleh and Woollard, 2021), with minimal attention to how teachers perceive their preparedness to engage in collaborative instructional models (Zuo et al., 2025). Given the Malaysian Ministry of Education's commitment to improving educational equity, it is timely to investigate the readiness of primary school teachers for co-teaching as part of the nation's inclusive education agenda. This study, therefore, seeks to explore Malaysian primary school teachers' readiness for co-teaching through a qualitative lens. It aims to answer the following research questions:

- a. How do primary school teachers perceive their readiness to implement co-teaching?
- b. What factors influence their preparedness for co-teaching in inclusive classrooms?
- c. What institutional support and challenges shape the implementation of co-teaching models?

By addressing these questions, the study contributes to the broader discourse on teacher professional development, collaborative pedagogy, and inclusive education in Malaysia.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Concept of Co-Teaching in Primary Education

Co-teaching is increasingly recognized as a transformative instructional model promoting inclusion, collaboration, and differentiated instruction within diverse classrooms. Defined by Cook and Friend (1995), co-teaching occurs when two or more educators jointly plan, deliver, and assess teaching to a heterogeneous group of students (Horne, 2025). This instructional partnership fosters mutual accountability and shared expertise, providing a platform to meet varying student needs (Murawski, 2022). In primary education, co-teaching supports the integration of students with diverse abilities by offering flexible instructional strategies, individualized support, and cooperative classroom management (Ni, 2025).

The Malaysian Ministry of Education has endorsed inclusive teaching through the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013–2025, emphasizing that quality education must be accessible to all learners regardless of background or ability (MOE, 2013). Co-teaching, as a practical embodiment of inclusion, encourages professional collaboration that transcends traditional teaching boundaries (Cook and Friend, 1995). However, effective co-teaching requires more than policy mandates (Sharma, 2025), and it depends on teachers' readiness to engage in sustained cooperation, shared responsibility, and reflective practice (McTigue et al., 2023).

2.2 Teacher Readiness and Professional Competence

Teacher readiness represents a key factor influencing the success of co-teaching. It encompasses teachers' knowledge, attitudes, and self-efficacy in collaborative teaching environments (Hamzah et al., 2025). Readiness is multidimensional, involving cognitive (knowledge of co-teaching models), affective (attitudes toward collaboration), and behavioral (willingness to implement shared teaching) domains (Metsapelto et al., 2021). According to Soeharto et al. (2024), teachers' readiness levels vary depending on their prior training, exposure to inclusive education, and the level of institutional support they receive. Teachers who undergo systematic professional development programs exhibit greater adaptability to co-teaching practices (Alsudairy, 2024).

Rytivaara et al. (2019) emphasize that co-teaching readiness develops progressively through experience and reflection. Novice teachers often experience challenges related to communication and role negotiation (Forsman, 2024), while experienced educators tend to demonstrate higher confidence and collaborative competence (Guise et al. 2023). Eryilmaz et al. (2025) found that teacher readiness correlates significantly with job satisfaction, school culture, and administrative backing. The findings suggest that co-teaching readiness should be nurtured through both initial teacher education and continuous professional learning opportunities.

2.3 Institutional Support and Collaborative Culture

Institutional culture plays a pivotal role in shaping teacher readiness for co-teaching (Ronn-Liljenfeldt et al., 2025). Supportive school environments characterized by open communication, shared leadership, and professional learning communities enhance teachers' willingness to engage in co-teaching (Frelin et al., 2025). Conversely, rigid school structures, unclear administrative policies, and limited collaboration time can discourage teachers from adopting shared teaching models (Fitria and Dewi, 2025). Studies in Malaysian schools indicate that institutional encouragement through leadership and collaborative planning time significantly increases teachers' readiness and confidence to co-teaching (Mohd Tahir, 2021).

Globally, successful co-teaching initiatives often integrate systemic support such as co-planning sessions, peer mentoring, and continuous assessment of team dynamics (Murawski, 2022). For Malaysian schools, creating such a culture of collaboration aligns with national efforts to promote inclusive learning environments (MOE, 2013). However, McTigue et al. (2023) caution that without sufficient resources and administrative coordination, co-teaching may be perceived as an additional workload rather than a collaborative opportunity.

2.4 Challenges in Implementing Co-Teaching in Malaysian Context

Despite policy-level support, Malaysian teachers continue to face challenges in operationalizing co-teaching practices. Research highlights obstacles such as lack of co-teaching training, insufficient communication among teachers, and ambiguous role definitions (Hussin and Hamdan, 2016; Ling and San, 2025). Teachers also report difficulties balancing individual and shared responsibilities (Adnan et al., 2024), particularly in managing diverse classrooms with limited instructional resources (Isa et al., 2020). Additionally, cultural factors such as hierarchical school relationships and differing perceptions of teaching autonomy may affect teachers' readiness and participation in co-teaching (Paramita et al., 2023).

Zuo et al. (2025) suggest that ongoing mentoring and reflection can mitigate these challenges, helping teachers internalize collaborative values. Continuous professional development programs that integrate co-teaching

simulations and peer observations can also improve readiness levels (Maniam et al., 2025). The literature thus underscores that teacher readiness is both a precondition and an outcome of successful co-teaching implementation.

2.5 Research Gap

While numerous studies at global stages have examined co-teaching and teacher collaboration, empirical evidence focusing on Malaysian primary education remains limited. Most existing research emphasizes secondary education (Sirkko et al., 2024) or special education contexts (Ioannidi, 2023). Therefore, there is a paucity of studies exploring how mainstream primary school teachers perceive their readiness and how institutional support structures influence their preparedness. This gap underscores the need for qualitative inquiry into teachers lived experiences to better understand the complexities of co-teaching readiness within Malaysian classrooms.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study employed a qualitative research design grounded in the interpretivist paradigm (Creswell, 2002) to explore primary school teachers' readiness for co-teaching in Malaysia. The qualitative approach was chosen to capture participants' subjective experiences, beliefs, and attitudes toward collaborative teaching practices (Creswell and Poth, 2018). Through in-depth interviews (Morris, 2015), this research sought to understand how teachers perceive their readiness, the factors influencing their readiness, and the institutional support or challenges they encounter in implementing co-teaching. The design emphasized context-specific understanding rather than generalization (Patton, 2014), aligning with the educational study's exploratory nature (Cohen et al., 2011).

3.2 Population and Sampling

A purposive sampling strategy (Creswell and Poth, 2018) was employed to select participants who possessed relevant teaching experience and exposure to co-teaching or collaborative instructional practices. The sample consisted of twelve primary school teachers (six males and six females) from five public schools in Selangor and Negeri Sembilan. Participants were chosen based on the following criteria: (a) at least three years of teaching experience, (b) involvement in inclusive or team-teaching programs, and (c) willingness to share professional insights. Pseudonyms were assigned to all participants to ensure anonymity (Creswell, 2002). The demographic distribution of participants included teachers aged between 27 and 50 years, representing diverse subject areas in KSSR (Kurikulum Standard Sekolah Rendah) syllabus - Bahasa Malaysia, English, Mathematics, Moral or Islamic Religious Education, Physical and Health Education, and History (MOE, 2013). All participants held at least a bachelor's degree in education, and four received prior professional development training related to inclusive education.

3.3 Data Collection Procedures

Data was collected through semi-structured interviews (Edwards and Holland, 2013) conducted between October and November 2025. Each interview lasted approximately 45–60 minutes and was conducted either face-to-face or through video conferencing, depending on participants' availability. The interview protocol was developed via adaptation and modification based on prior studies on teacher readiness and co-teaching implementation by Cook and Friend (1995) and Hussin and Hamdan (2016). Key questions included:

- a. How do you perceive your readiness to engage in co-teaching?
- b. What experiences have shaped your preparedness for co-teaching?
- c. What institutional support or challenges have influenced your readiness?
- d. How do you view collaboration with other teachers in your school?

All interviews were audio-recorded with participants' consent and later transcribed verbatim for analysis (Cohen et al., 2011). Ethical approval (Punch, 2009) was obtained from the City University of Malaysia Research Ethics Committee, and participants provided informed consent before the interviews (Dey, 2003).

3.4 Data Analysis

The interview transcripts were analyzed using thematic analysis (Krathwohl, 2009) following Braun and Clarke's (2021) six-phase framework: (1) familiarization with data, (2) initial coding, (3) searching for themes, (4) reviewing themes, (5) defining and naming themes, and (6) producing the report. Thematic analysis was selected due to its flexibility and capacity to uncover patterns in participants' narratives (Creswell, 2002). NVivo 15 software was utilized to organize and code the data systematically (Bazeley, 2007). Eventually, three primary themes emerged from the data: (a) cognitive and pedagogical readiness, (b) affective and motivational readiness, and (c) institutional and collaborative support. These themes reflected the multidimensional nature of teacher readiness and provided rich insights (Creswell and Poth, 2018) into the professional realities of co-teaching implementation in Malaysian primary schools.

3.5 Credibility and Trustworthiness

To ensure trustworthiness, the study adhered to the criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability as outlined by Lincoln and Guba (1985). Credibility was enhanced through member checking, where participants reviewed their interview transcripts for accuracy. Triangulation was achieved by comparing findings across teachers from different schools and subject areas. Dependability was maintained through an audit trail documenting the research process, while confirmability was supported by reflective journaling to minimize researcher bias (Creswell, 2002).

3.6 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were central to this research. Participants were assured of confidentiality and informed that their participation was voluntary, with the option to withdraw at any stage (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Creswell, 2002). All collected data were stored securely and used solely for academic purposes. The study followed the ethical guidelines of the City University of Malaysia review protocols.

4. Results

4.1 Overview of Emergent Themes

The thematic analysis of interviews with twelve primary school teachers revealed three dominant themes describing their readiness for co-teaching: (1) cognitive and pedagogical readiness, (2) affective and motivational readiness, and (3) institutional and collaborative support. These themes reflect both individual and systemic dimensions of teacher readiness for implementing co-teaching practices in Malaysian primary schools.

4.2 Cognitive and Pedagogical Readiness

Participants demonstrated varied levels of cognitive understanding and pedagogical competence regarding co-teaching models. Many teachers expressed awareness of co-teaching as a collaborative instructional approach but admitted to having limited formal training. Teachers who had participated in professional development programs were generally more confident in applying co-teaching strategies.

"I understand co-teaching as working together with another teacher to help students with different learning levels, but I've never had a formal course about it. I just learn from experience." (Teacher A: Female, English teacher, 34 years old)

“We need workshops or practical sessions to see how co-teaching works in real classrooms. Without guidance, it’s difficult to plan lessons together effectively.” (Teacher F: Male, Science teacher, 42 years old)

These findings suggest that cognitive readiness is influenced by teachers’ exposure to professional learning opportunities and their understanding of co-teaching pedagogies. Teachers with broader professional experience appeared more adept at integrating collaborative planning and differentiated instruction into their practice.

4.3 Affective and Motivational Readiness

Emotional and motivational readiness emerged as a central factor influencing teachers’ willingness to engage in co-teaching. Most participants expressed positive attitudes toward collaboration but also noted feelings of apprehension related to role ambiguity and interpersonal dynamics.

“I like the idea of co-teaching because it allows us to share ideas, but sometimes it’s hard when our teaching styles clash. It takes time to adjust.” (Teacher D: Female, Mathematics teacher, 30 years old)

“When co-teaching works well, it’s very motivating. We support each other and the students feel positive energy. It reduces stress and makes lessons more dynamic.” (Teacher H: Male, English teacher, 45 years old)

The data indicates that while teachers are generally open to co-teaching, affective readiness is contingent upon interpersonal trust, mutual respect, and compatibility between teaching partners. Emotional resilience and open-mindedness were cited as essential qualities for successful collaboration.

4.3 Institutional and Collaborative Support

Teachers consistently identified institutional support as a crucial determinant of co-teaching readiness. The presence of supportive school leadership, administrative flexibility, and collaborative culture significantly influenced their motivation and capability to engage in shared teaching.

“Our school head encourages collaboration and allocates time for co-planning. That helps us feel supported. Without this, it’s very difficult to maintain co-teaching practices.” (Teacher K: Female, Special Education teacher, 37 years old)

“We often lack time to plan together. The timetable is packed, and co-teaching becomes extra work instead of teamwork.” (Teacher B: Male, Bahasa Melayu teacher, 33 years old)

These findings align with previous research emphasizing the role of leadership and organizational culture in fostering collaborative readiness (Lim et al., 2021; Mohd Tahir et al., 2021; Rahman et al., 2023; Fitria and Dewi, 2025). Teachers in schools that institutionalized collaborative meetings and peer mentoring reported higher readiness and greater confidence in applying co-teaching methods.

4.4 Interrelation of Themes

The study found that cognitive, effective, and institutional factors are deeply interconnected. Teachers with stronger pedagogical knowledge displayed greater emotional confidence, particularly when supported by a collegial school environment. In contrast, teachers lacking training or administrative support often reported lower motivation and perceived readiness. This suggests that readiness for co-teaching is a dynamic process shaped by continuous interaction between personal competence and institutional context.

4.5 Summary of Findings

The analysis underscores that teacher readiness for co-teaching in Malaysian primary schools is multifaceted, involving intellectual understanding, emotional engagement, and environmental support. While teachers generally

show positive attitudes toward co-teaching, the lack of systematic training and institutional facilitation remains a barrier. The findings highlight the need for structured professional development, leadership involvement, and collaborative time allocation to enhance readiness and sustainability of co-teaching practices.

5. Discussion

This study investigated primary school teachers' readiness for co-teaching in Malaysian contexts, revealing a complex interplay of cognitive, affective, and institutional factors. Overall, teachers expressed generally positive attitudes toward co-teaching, but actual readiness varied substantially according to prior training, interpersonal dynamics, and school-level support. These findings align with recent work indicating that willingness to collaborate is necessary but not sufficient for successful co-teaching implementation (Govindarajoo et al., 2023; Ni, 2025).

First, cognitive and pedagogical readiness (knowledge of co-teaching models, lesson design, and differentiation strategies) emerged as a foundational requirement. Teachers who had participated in targeted professional learning felt more confident in planning and executing shared lessons, consistent with evidence that formal training increases teachers' competence in collaborative instruction (Murawski, 2022; Guo et al., 2025). This suggests that, while experiential learning in schools builds some capacity, structured pre-service and in-service modules specifically on co-teaching methods accelerate readiness and reduce uncertainty about role allocation and instructional design.

Second, the affective dimension such trust, mutual respect, and openness to negotiate pedagogical differences has been proved critical. Several participants reported apprehension when teaching styles clashed, echoing literature that highlights interpersonal chemistry as a predictor of co-teaching success (Lim et al., 2021). Emotional readiness (willingness to share control and receive peer feedback) therefore complements technical skill; professional development must explicitly attend to communication, conflict management, and team-building competencies rather than only instructional techniques.

Third, institutional and structural support strongly moderates readiness. Schools that allocated co-planning time, promoted collaborative leadership, and established mentoring pathways fostered higher readiness among teachers (Rahman et al., 2023). Conversely, rigid timetables, heavy administrative loads, and unclear policies reduced teachers' capacity to sustain co-teaching. This finding reinforces Hornyak's (2025) and Mbabazi et al. (2025) perspective: teacher motivation must be supported by system capacity and appropriate conditions for practice.

Taken together, the results indicate that readiness for co-teaching is not a single attribute but a developmental, contextually embedded construct. It develops when teachers have (a) clear conceptual understanding and practical experience, (b) affective resources (trust, openness, resilience), and (c) institutional scaffolds (time, leadership, policy clarity). Without any one of these, co-teaching risks remain episodic or superficial rather than transformative.

6. Implications

6.1 Implications for Teacher Education and Professional Development

Integrate Co-Teaching into Pre-Service Curriculum: Teacher preparation programs should include experiential modules (micro-teaching, simulations, and co-planning exercises) that familiarize novices with common co-teaching models and role negotiation. Embedding co-teaching early prepares teachers to enter schools with baseline competence (Al-Amrat, 2021).

Design In-Service Programs Emphasizing Relational Skills: Professional development should combine instructional techniques with teamwork skills specifically communication, shared reflection, and conflict resolution to strengthen affective readiness (Rodriguez and Castillo-Valdez, 2023).

6.2 Implications for School Leadership and Management

Protect Collaborative Time: School leaders should revise timetables to include regular co-planning sessions and peer observations. Even short, consistent planning slots significantly increase feasibility (Rahman et al., 2023).

Foster a Culture of Shared Leadership: Principals and heads of department can model co-teaching values by encouraging team decision-making, recognizing collaborative achievements, and setting clear role expectations (Plaku and Leka, 2025).

6.3 Policy Implications

Incorporate Co-Teaching Readiness into Teacher Standards: The Ministry of Education could adopt co-teaching competencies within national teacher frameworks, including indicators for collaborative practice and institutional supports (Cook and Friend, 1995; Ni, 2025).

Allocate Resources for Scaled Professional Learning: Policy initiatives should fund accessible, sustained PD programs and provide incentives for schools that institutionalize co-teaching practices (Xu and Shi, 2025).

6.4 Implications for Research

Longitudinal Studies on Readiness Trajectories. Future research should track how teacher readiness evolves with experience, mentoring, and structural changes. Readiness is dynamic; longitudinal designs will clarify causal pathways.

Multi-Site and Mixed Methods Research: Comparative studies across urban/rural, school types, and subject domains can identify context-specific enablers and barriers, while mixed methods can connect readiness measures to student outcomes.

7. Limitations

Several limitations temper the generalizability of the findings. First, the study relied on purposive sampling of twelve teachers from a limited geographic area (Selangor and Negeri Sembilan), which may not capture the full diversity of Malaysian primary schools. Second, qualitative design prioritized depth over breadth; findings illuminate perceptions and processes but cannot estimate prevalence of readiness attributes nationally. Third, self-reported data may be influenced by social desirability or retrospective bias. Finally, while interviews probed experiences, classroom observations and student outcome measures would strengthen claims about the effectiveness of co-teaching readiness in practice.

8. Recommendations

Based on the findings and implications, the following recommendations are proposed to enhance teacher readiness for co-teaching in Malaysian primary schools:

8.1 For the Ministry of Education (MOE)

Embed Co-Teaching Competencies into National Teacher Standards: MOE should explicitly define co-teaching competencies (planning, collaboration, shared instruction, and reflection) within the Malaysian Teacher Standards (Standard Guru Malaysia). These indicators can guide teacher appraisal, professional growth, and certification.

Develop National Co-Teaching Framework and Guidelines: A standardized framework should outline co-teaching models suitable for diverse school contexts (general-SEN integration, large class management, and bilingual classrooms). Guidelines should clarify teacher roles, co-planning expectations, and monitoring mechanisms.

Provide Funding for Professional Learning Communities (PLCs): Establish PLCs focused on collaborative teaching, mentoring, and lesson study. Financial incentives and workload adjustments should be allocated to schools that sustain such initiatives over multiple academic years.

8.2 For Teacher Training Institutions

Integrate Co-Teaching Modules into Pre-Service Curriculum: Teacher training institutions should include compulsory modules that provide theory and practice in co-teaching models (One Teach-One Assist, Station Teaching, Parallel Teaching). Micro-teaching sessions and peer teaching can cultivate both cognitive and affective readiness.

Foster Reflective and Team-Based Learning Approaches: Pre-service programs should use collaborative lesson planning, peer observation, and feedback cycles to nurture openness, empathy, and shared accountability as key affective attributes of readiness.

8.3 For School Leaders and Administrators

Allocate Structured Time for Co-Planning and Reflection: Administrative timetables should reserve joint planning periods. Even a weekly 30–45-minute slot can sustain continuity, communication, and role negotiation among co-teachers.

Cultivate a Culture of Shared Leadership and Trust: Principals should promote distributed leadership, encourage open dialogue, and recognize collaborative achievements. Celebrating co-teaching success stories can motivate wider adoption.

Establish Mentorship and Coaching Systems: Experienced co-teachers can mentor novices, providing guidance on lesson adaptation, student grouping, and interpersonal collaboration. Such systems also support emotional readiness and professional identity building.

8.4 For Future Research

Conduct Longitudinal and Experimental Studies: Future research should track changes in readiness over time, linking professional learning interventions to classroom outcomes. Mixed-method approaches can triangulate teacher perceptions with student learning data.

Expand Research to Diverse Contexts: Comparative studies across urban, rural, and special education settings will help policymakers design differentiated readiness-building strategies aligned with Malaysia's diverse educational landscape.

9. Proposed Model of Co-Teaching Readiness in Primary School

Drawing from this study's findings and supported by recent literature, the Co-Teaching Readiness Model (CTRM) conceptualizes readiness as the interaction of three interdependent domains consisting of Cognitive, Affective, and Institutional besides shaped by continuous professional learning and reflective practice.

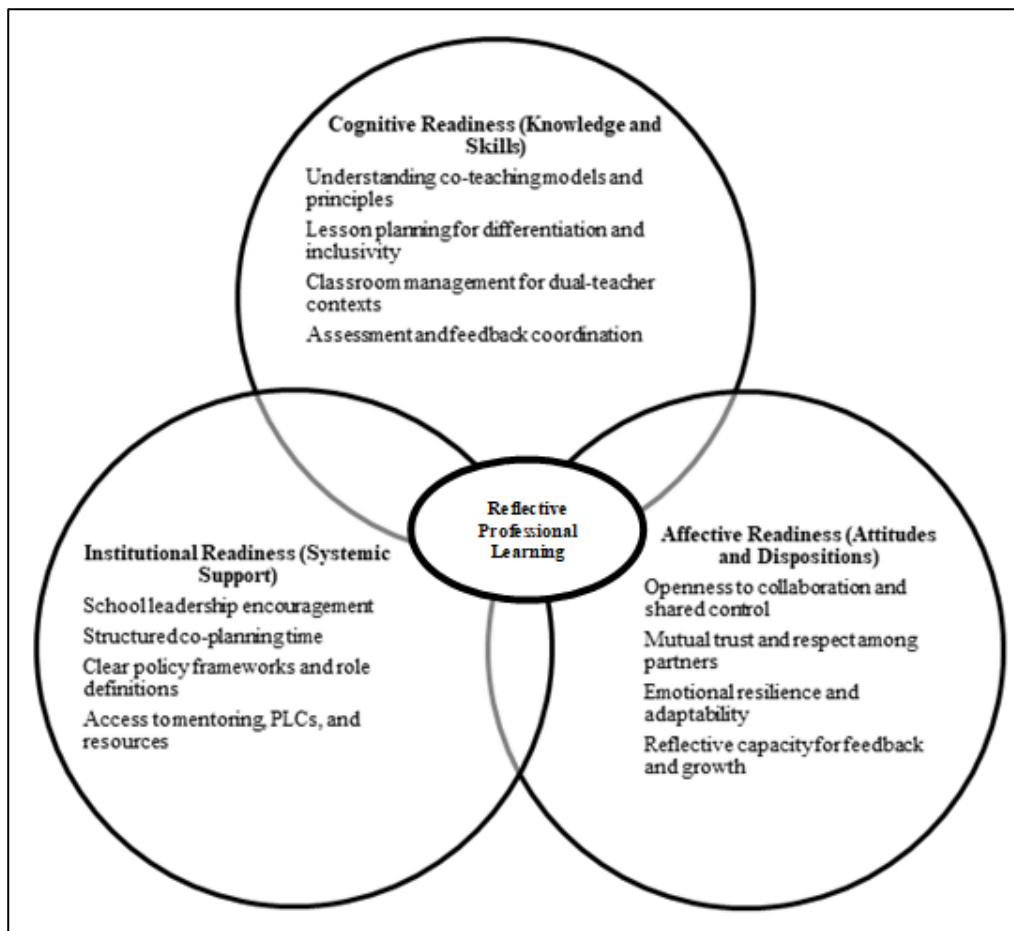


Figure 1: Co-Teaching Readiness Model (CTRM)

Figure 1 illustrates the Co-Teaching Readiness Model (CTRM), a conceptual framework that explains the multidimensional nature of teachers' preparedness to engage effectively in co-teaching practices. The model is structured around three interrelated domains of readiness such as Cognitive, Affective, and Behavioral/Contextual Readiness which collectively influence the effectiveness and sustainability of co-teaching implementation.

The Cognitive Readiness component represents teachers' professional knowledge and instructional competencies required for successful co-teaching. This includes understanding various co-teaching models and principles, the ability to plan lessons collaboratively with differentiation and inclusivity in mind, managing classrooms with dual-teacher dynamics, as well as coordinating assessment and feedback practices. This domain highlights that effective co-teaching is grounded in strong pedagogical and content knowledge.

The Affective Readiness domain reflects teachers' psychological and emotional disposition toward co-teaching. Key elements such as openness to collaboration, willingness to share control, mutual trust and respect between teaching partners, professional commitment, and confidence in working within a shared instructional environment are emphasized. This dimension underscores that co-teaching is not only a technical practice but also a relational and attitudinal process that requires positive interpersonal orientations.

The third component, Behavioral/Contextual Readiness, refers to the external and practical conditions that support or constrain co-teaching. This includes institutional support from school leadership, availability of time for joint

planning, access to resources and professional development, supportive school culture, and clear role delineation between co-teaching partners. This domain reflects the ecological perspective that teacher readiness is also shaped by organizational and systemic factors.

The arrows linking the three domains in the model signify that readiness is dynamic and interdependent, rather than linear or isolated. Cognitive competence enhances affective confidence, while positive attitudes encourage deeper engagement with collaborative practices. At the same time, institutional and contextual support strengthens both knowledge application and collaborative dispositions.

Overall, the CTRM proposes that effective co-teaching occurs only when all three forms of readiness which is cognitive, affective, and behavioral/contextual are simultaneously developed. A deficiency in any one's domain may weaken the overall implementation of co-teaching. Thus, the model provides a comprehensive framework for guiding teacher training, professional development, and school-level interventions aimed at strengthening co-teaching practices.

10. Conclusion

This study explored Malaysian primary school teachers' readiness for co-teaching, revealing that effective implementation depends on a multidimensional interplay of cognitive, affective, and institutional readiness. Teachers generally expressed positive attitudes toward collaboration but faced practical challenges linked to limited training, time constraints, and ambiguous role expectations. These findings suggest that teacher readiness is not a static trait, but an evolving construct shaped by ongoing reflection, collegial interaction, and systemic support. The proposed Co-Teaching Readiness Model (CTRM) encapsulates these insights by illustrating how readiness develops through three interrelated domains which is cognitive (knowledge and skills), affective (trust and collaboration), and institutional (school and policy support) are all reinforced by reflective professional learning. This model contributes to current literature by framing readiness as both an individual and collective capacity, emphasizing that effective co-teaching arises when all three domains align within supportive school ecosystems. Furthermore, the study underscores the critical role of teacher education institutions, school leaders, and policymakers in cultivating readiness. Structured professional development, mentoring, and shared leadership practices can transform co-teaching from an administrative arrangement into a pedagogical partnership that enhances student learning outcomes and teacher professional growth. Ultimately, building teacher readiness for co-teaching is both a pedagogical necessity and a systemic responsibility. Sustainable co-teaching in Malaysian primary schools requires alignment between teacher competencies, emotional dispositions, and institutional infrastructures. When these elements converge, co-teaching becomes a powerful strategy for inclusive education, promoting not only instructional quality but also a culture of collaboration and continuous improvement.

Declarations

Competing Interests

None.

Ethical Approval

Ethical considerations were central to this research. Participants were assured of confidentiality and informed that their participation was voluntary, with the option to withdraw at any stage (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Creswell, 2002). All collected data were stored securely and used solely for academic purposes. The study followed the ethical guidelines of the City University of Malaysia review protocols.

Author's Contribution

Author¹: Conceptualization, Data curation, Formal analysis, Writing – original draft

Author²: Methodology, Resources, Software, Writing Validation, Visualization – review and editing

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