

CO-TEACHING MODEL

School Information:

Hillel Academy is an academic early childhood through 12th grade Modern Orthodox school. Over the past 5 years the student body has grown by 41% to a current enrollment of 314 students. The annual operating budget is \$3.6 million. This past year 32% of students were from families with incomes below 150% of the poverty line. The Jewish backgrounds of our students are diverse, including Modern Orthodox, Hasidic, Conservative and Reform.

Context:

The recent growth of Hillel Academy reflects the creation of our highly acclaimed early childhood center that enables Hillel to attract students from broader Jewish backgrounds who would not otherwise attend an Orthodox school. To retain these students, Hillel must offer an educational product that is competitive with those of area private and public schools, without losing focus of our core religious values. Over the past three years we built three state-of-the-art classrooms for K-2 levels that feature learning centers to facilitate small group instruction, allowing for seamless differentiation, project-based learning, and the creation of a dynamic learning environment.

The “learning center model” in the younger grades enables the integration of Judaic and Secular curricula. Unlike traditional school models with Judaic and Secular studies taught separately at different times, our new program requires Judaic and Secular Studies teachers to continually collaborate and integrate their lessons. The close cooperation between faculty facilitates cross-curricular projects that enhance our student’s learning.

The Idea:

Hillel Academy is developing a novel integrated curriculum across all grades that incorporates concepts and learning objectives from both Judaic and Secular studies, replacing the divided dual curricula model common in nearly all day schools. Examples of the integrated curriculum with Judaic and General studies teachers in the same class:

Results:

Hillel’s transformative integrated curriculum replaces current educational models that are insufficient to meet the goal of infusing Torah-based values throughout secular studies. Our goal is to graduate Torah-observant young Jews who achieve great success in their professional careers with a strong and unbreakable belief in God and a love of Torah. Our experience with an integrated curriculum in the younger grades demonstrates its practicality and sustainability.

