

Co-teaching program: Tovi Admon

Personal Background

Israel experience: Taught Music and Judaic Studies 3 years

Philadelphia PA: Torah academy Hebrew and Judaic studies 5 Years

Charleston, SC: Hebrew and Judaic Studies, 3 years

Pittsburgh, PA: Hebrew and Judaic Studies, 5 years

Methodology

Question: How was I to teach a large co-ed class, variety of levels of religious observance and knowledge of Hebrew and *Limudei Kodesh* and with and without learning disabilities?

Methodology: Co-teaching

As I searched for a method to best teach my classes, I observed classes taught with two teachers and spoke to educators using this method.

With the advice and guidance of the Head of School Ms. Susan Weintrob, we chose a physically large classroom. We divided the two grades, first and second, into 4 small groups. We took into consideration student levels, social issues and disabilities. The General Studies teacher and I created a curriculum and lesson plans that would support co-teaching and a multi-level program.

Goals of the program:

1. The ability of two or more educational professionals to work together in a joint delivery of instruction.
2. Shared space with multi age groupings.
3. Diverse group of students.
4. Curriculum developed to include students with disabilities in the general education classroom.

5. Further enrichment opportunity for accelerated students.

Challenges:

1. Difficulties creating lesson plans for 4 groups
2. Pacing of lessons
3. Coordinating with another teacher
4. Maintaining class rules and establishing routines
5. Teaching students how to follow and complete their own work from students' individual folders.

Process: Creating a learning community

1. Every 20 minutes the groups switched.
2. Two groups worked with two teachers. Two groups worked independently.
3. Four levels and/or methodologies. Diversity of learning experiences
4. Teaching skills, problem solving, team work, independence in learning and collaborating with peers.
5. Children follow their own schedules from individual folders.
6. Art stations and free stations for enrichment

Successes

1. Students working collaboratively without any behavior or engagement issues.
2. Ability of students to work independently.

3. Reaching students on their own levels.
4. Getting to know each student
5. Children, teachers and parents partners in teaching
6. Teacher satisfaction, creativity and growth

Pittsburg Modifications

1. Established program at the Hillel Academy with the help of the principal, Rabbi Sam Weinberg
2. I became a mentor for other teachers to help establish co-teaching at Hillel.
3. K-4 grades are now co-teaching in these classrooms.
4. Individual folders for students as guides for learning.

Reflections on working within a multi-age co-teaching program

The entire school community feels much satisfaction from the establishment of this co-teaching program. As a now experienced co-teacher with established curriculum and lesson plans, I have confidence in reaching my students in Judaic Studies and Ivrit, knowing that I have found a successful way to reach all students, no matter their backgrounds, their academic levels, religious observance. I have gotten close to my students and help them achieve so much of their potential. At the end of the year, students achieve a high level of skills and knowledge.

Through diverse groupings, improved skills even in other classes, teacher satisfaction and creativity, students have learned how to be more independent, growing as leaders.

Small groupings give students the opportunities to ask more questions and receive more support. Students' confidence is not diminished as extra help occurs in their own classroom.

Folders for students are guideposts, reminding them what they have learned and helping develop independence in their work and process. When the group work is finished, students can go to the art center or other free centers for enrichment and added complexity.

We do not neglect time together as a class, having calendar and story time as a group. There is also some instruction as a class to have time to share ideas and adventures with all their peers.

I enjoy each day, seeing how much my students grow and achieve. As I know my students so much better than in previous methodology, I look forward communicating with parents to show them exactly where their children are in their growth and skills.