



Co-Teaching in "Academy- Class" Program: From Theory to Practical Experience

Yonit Nissim¹, Edni Nifeld²

Abstract

This study focuses on implementing co-teaching models in the practical experience of teacher training processes. It examines the experience models in terms of theory versus practice from the perspectives of students of education and training teachers (school and pre-school) who participated in the special "Academy-Class" program in the 2017 academic year at Ohalo College. 125 subjects participated in the study. The overriding goal of the research was to identify the dominant patterns in this unique practical experience in teachers training. The research questions sought to clarify the extent to which the six main co-teaching models described in the research literature are manifested in practical and educational terms in the Academy-Class program; offer a comparison between common teaching practices and the co-teaching models; and assess how common Synergetic Collaboration is as a co-teaching method relative to other low-level methods.

Our findings show that the co-teaching models were more dominant than the traditional teaching models among all the sample groups. The greatest difference was found in the reports of the training teachers (0.79) at the school, while the smallest difference was found among students training to become teachers (0.13). We have seen that experiencing a clinical model of co-teaching involves shared work between a training teacher and of a student of education. There is a need to change training processes, as well as expanding the theoretical approaches that describe the wide range of shared co-teaching.

Keywords: *Academy-Class, shared teaching, experience models, teachers' training;*

1. Introduction

Schools around the world have tried to apply diverse methods of co-teaching in their classes. In the last decade, many educational researchers have explored and evaluated these co-teaching models, which have changed according to the dynamic needs and trends of 21st century education. Several studies have spotlighted the significance of mutual relationships between teachers (2) Blank, 2013;(3) Cleaveland, 2015 (4); Petrick, 2015). In order to test this claim and shed more light on the subject, there is a need to expand the existing data. Accordingly, the current study aims to highlight and co-teaching models from a different angle within the framework of teacher training, by evaluating both theory and practice in a unique practical experience program at Ohalo College.

1.2 Method

The research tool was a validated questionnaire that included a series of 13 statements based on a Likert scale (1-5). For all statements, the highest value (5) represents high incidence and the lowest value (1) represents low incidence. Average values were calculated for all responses, while t-tests were used to identify significance. In the first stage, the 13 statements described the traditional model (that does not include co-teaching) as well as the seven co-teaching models detailed in the literature. The variable teaching model was divided into two sub models, in which one teacher teaches the entire class and the second teacher teaches either a small group or just one or two students.

At the end of the 2016/7 school year, a questionnaire sent via Google Drive to the participants— 140 students and 100 training teachers and kindergarten teachers— as part of their third-year practical experiment. Responses were anonymous. Of these recipients, 125 subjects completed the questionnaire, as detailed in Table 1: 36 students of education, 20 students of childhood education, 51 training teachers, and 18 kindergarten teachers.

1.3 Results

We will now present the averages of the traditional statements and the averages of the co-teaching statements. Statements 1-2, as they appear in the research questionnaire, indicate "traditional teaching" (a teaching model that does not include co-teaching at all), while the remaining statements

¹ Ohalo academic college, Israel

² Ohalo academic college, Israel



(3–13) indicate co-teaching. The figures below displays the averages of these two indices among the four groups.

Figure 1

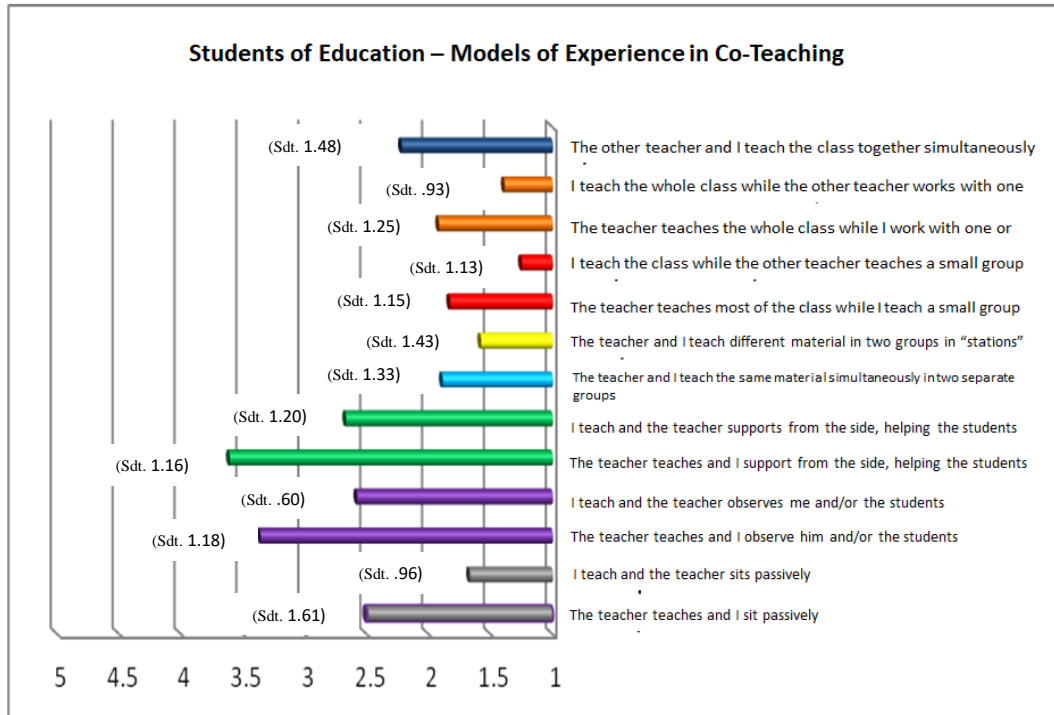


Figure 2

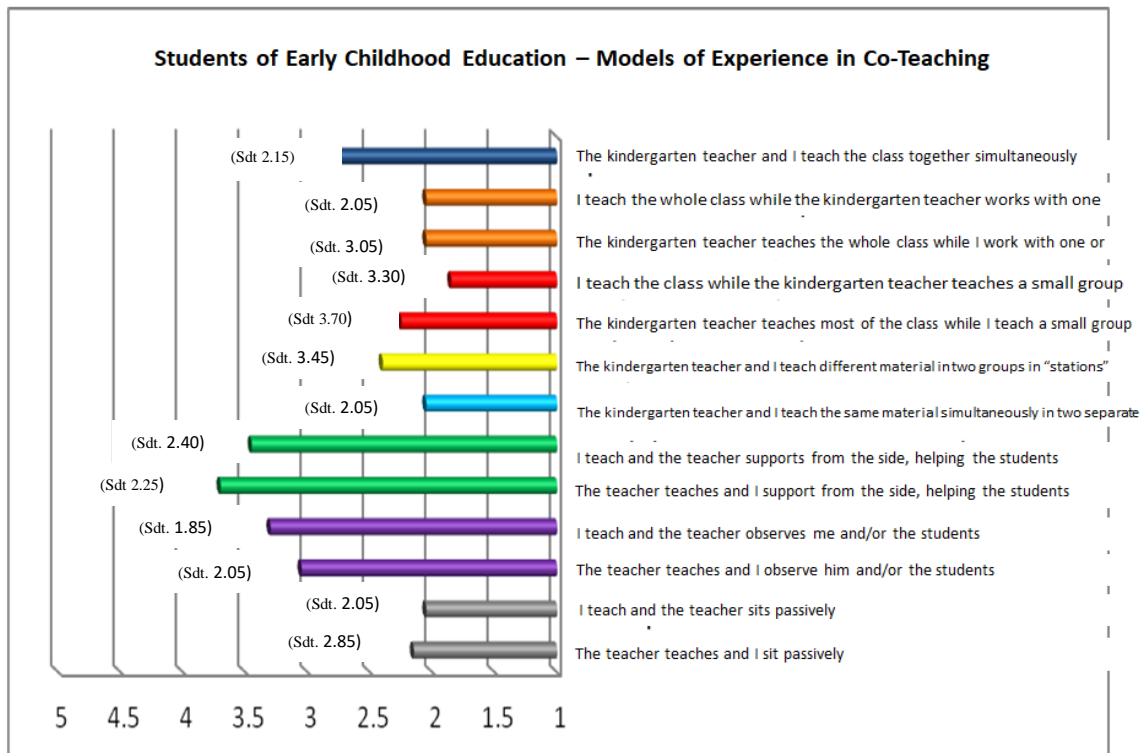
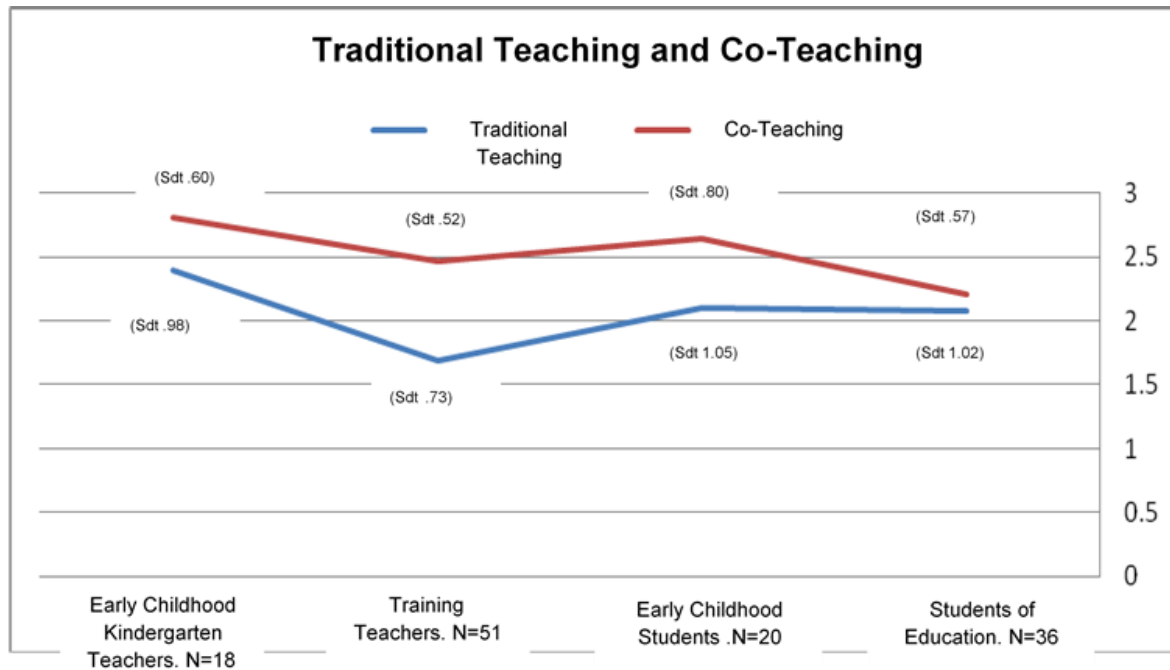




Figure 3



Higher level of incidence was found for co-teaching than for traditional teaching in all groups. In particular, the highest difference in schools was among the trainer teachers (0.79), while the lowest difference was among students of education (0.13). The t-test found significant diversity in between the teachers' group and the students' group: $t(85)=2.56, p<0.05$.

On the other hand, in kindergartens the difference among the students (0.54) was higher than the difference among the kindergarten teachers (0.42). The t-test found non-significant diversity in the co-teaching vs. traditional teaching difference between the students and the kindergarten teachers: $t(36)=0.29, p>0.05$.

Conclusions

Despite the high reported levels of co-teaching compared to traditional patterns of teaching, an analysis of the various models that exist in co-teaching still shows that the level of shared work is within the low range. In other words, despite the fact that the experience models exemplify a new approach with greater shared work in the classroom, the training teacher still plays a more significant role in leading teaching processes. He or she is the one to direct the student's role and at least for a time works mainly with the students, while the trainee student is his or her assistant. This finding is naturally clarified in light of the relationship between the training teacher and the trainee student — a more experienced veteran vs. a new teacher — but this can also be explained by the traditional pattern of training teachers, which was preserved among trainers who have more experience within the education system (1)Alian and Daniel-Sa'ad, 2013).

This model is a suitable working model for students in the 21st century, as shared work, shared information, team efforts and normal working relationships will be demanded from citizens of the future. Therefore, we greatly recommend creating a support system, a full security network that will not leave the trainee teacher alone and out of the picture, but give him or her a significant field of experience where he or she is constantly active, learning, experiencing, feeling, teaching, correcting, improving, and receiving reflective feedback to realize his or her future roles. This method will encourage interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary teaching, where several teachers teach in large classes, using more creative and diverse methods of teaching.



References

- [1] Alian, S., & Daniel-Sa'ad, A. (2013). Changing from the traditional model in practical experience to the co-teaching model – a slogan or current need? *Dapim – Journal in Educational Research*, 56, 35–59.
- [2] Blank, C. (2013). *General and special educators' perceptions of co-teaching in inclusive middle schools*. (Unpublished master's thesis).
- [3] Cleaveland, P. (2015). *A multi-case study examining co-teaching approaches and practices in high school math and literature/composition classes*. Doctoral Dissertations and Projects. Paper 1001.
- [4] Petrick Jr., D. L. (2015). *An investigation into co-teacher relationship collaboration factors: Co-teachers' perceptions*. Indiana, PA: Indiana University of Pennsylvania.