



Beginning with Co-Teaching to Positively Impact K-6 Student Achievement

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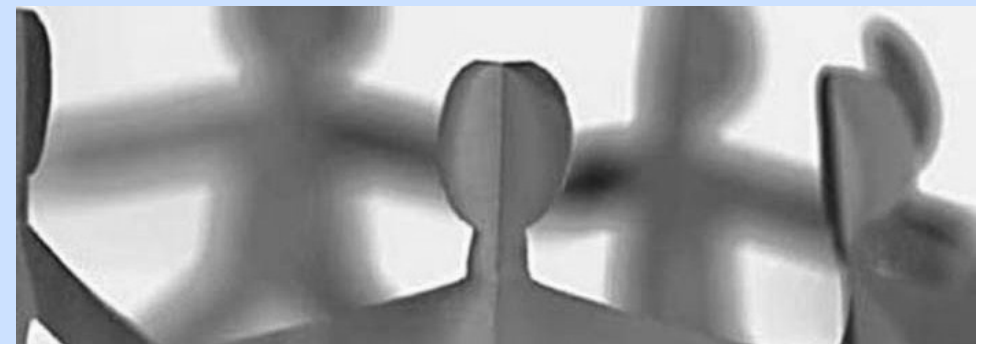
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ABSTRACT

The College of Education (COE) Teacher Education Program finished a pilot program during the 2013-2014 academic term in conjunction with the West Ottawa Public Schools. A cohort of COE students completed their teacher assisting (TA) and student teaching (ST) practicum experiences in the same placement, as opposed to the typical first practicum in District Z and the second practicum in District A. Additionally, student teachers in this cohort participated in full co-teaching practices with their assigned teachers for the K-6 students in their respective classrooms. The goal of the research project was to collect and analyze data throughout the pilot program for the development of a next generation co-teaching model, which when fully implemented, will ensure a positive impact on K-6 achievement.



RESEARCH QUESTIONS

RQ1: Does pre-service co-teaching positively impact K-6 student achievement?

RQ2: What co-teaching models emerge among teacher assistants/student teachers and classroom teachers?

METHODOLOGY

This research project utilized the Participant Observation research model, which allows for an adequate combination of involvement and necessary detachment to remain objective (Kawulich, 2005). Observations were conducted by a fulltime field coordinator. All classroom observation notes and reflective journals from pre-service teachers were qualitatively coded in NVivo 10 by the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative certified graduate assistant.

CONCLUSION



The Perception of the Student Teaching Role Changed

Early on, K-6 students perceived student teachers as “real” teachers as opposed to some type of “helper” in the classroom.

K-6 Student Performance

TAs/STs reported improved classroom performance in students in the areas of behavior management and specific academic courses, such as improved spelling, improved math skills, improved speech/pronunciations, and improved handwriting.

Increased Classroom Efficiency

Cooperating and pre-service teachers reported a 20-25% decrease in classroom management time, which meant both teachers could spend an increasing amount of time preparing lessons, teaching in the classroom without multitasking and/or taking attention away from the class to perform miscellaneous duties.

Synergistic Class Management

Cooperating and pre-service teachers reported that the additional person in the classroom allowed for more individualized attention toward specific students and reciprocal teaching via reinforcing ideas, paraphrasing, and clarifying lecture materials if students did not initially understand them.

Reciprocal Professional Development Occurred

Cooperating and pre-service teachers actively learned from one another throughout the co-teaching process—specifically regarding teacher education practices. Classroom teachers were able to offer pre-service teachers hands-on advice due to their experiences as established teachers. pre-service teachers were able to offer innovative teaching methods due to their familiarity with current teacher education literature and best practice strategies.



REFERENCES

- Cook, L., & Friend, M. (2004). *Co-Teaching: Principles, Practices, and Pragmatics*, Paper presented at the quarterly meeting of the New Mexico Public Education Department Special Education Meeting, Albuquerque, NM.
- Kawulich, B., B. (2005). Participant Observation as a Data Collection Method. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 6(2), Art. 43.

Additional references can be obtained upon request by contacting coeserve@gvsu.edu