Multi-Aged Classes

A multi-age class is composed of students from separate grades who work within one classroom setting. When working on specific skills, students are combined according to individual needs rather than grade levels. In other cases, curriculum is arranged so that the whole class may study the same or similar material. Montessori philosophy encourages multi-age classes and the curriculum is designed so that students of varying abilities can learn at their own pace.

For your information, class size limits are set by the Ministry of Education according to the lowest grade in the class:

- Kindergarten = 22
- 1, 2, 3 = 24
- 4-12 = 30

How is it different from a “Split” class?

The one room school house was the first example of “split” grades, grades 1-8 shared a room, but were taught as separate and distinct groups. In more recent situations, two grades shared a classroom, but were taught their curriculum independently, one grade receiving instruction, the other doing seatwork. In a “multi-age” class, the focus is on shared learning outcomes and common curriculum, with instructional groups being determined by skill level not age.

What are the benefits to a “multi-age” class placement?

Research and teacher experience suggests many benefits to “multi-age” class placements:

- opportunities for leadership and modelling
- opportunities to experience social and emotional ranges
- opportunities for review and challenge
- opportunities for a broader range of experiences
Will students miss or repeat curriculum material?

In British Columbia, curriculum strands within subject areas are common from Kindergarten through Grade 7, and Learning Outcomes within the strands are very similar, being extended rather than changed as students move up the grades.

The role of the teacher in both multi-age and one grade classes is to teach students the identified processes and strategies appropriate to a subject area, rather than to a grade level. The selected content material is the vehicle through which these skills are learned. While content material is indicated by the Ministry of Education for specific grades and subject areas, there is latitude for choice as long as the Learning Outcomes are being met.

Teachers of combined classes must be sensitive to the past and future curriculum experiences of their students, and select material that is appropriate but not repetitive.

Teachers also meet grade level requirements in combined classes by adjusting the depth, focus and evaluation of a topic. Students from both grade levels, for example, may study the theme of fantasy in literature, but the reading level of the material, the complexity and length of the assignments and the assessment of performance would be grade specific.

How are students selected for a “combined” class?

Many areas of the student’s growth are considered by a team of teachers. Factors such as academic achievement, social skills, physical size, independence in work habits, leadership skills, self-motivation, personal initiative, learning styles, teaching styles, previous placements and organizational ability are all given consideration.

Information on Multi-age classes

FAQs - Montessori Program

Benefits of a Multi-Aged Class

Multi-Aged Montessori Classes