Welcome to CLM100

Course Objectives:

By taking notes on the handout and successfully answering assessment questions, participants will meet the following objectives as a result of taking this course:

- Identify characteristics of multiage education
- Compare multiage education to the traditional graded-classroom approach
- Identify potential benefits to students of multiage education
- Identify cognitive, social-emotional, and psychomotor characteristics of children at various developmental levels
- Demonstrate understanding of recommended strategies for classroom management and discipline in the multiage environment
- Demonstrate understanding of strategies for classroom organization in the multiage environment
- Demonstrate understanding of various learning strategies that are effective in the multiage environment, including peer tutoring, cooperative learning, heterogeneous grouping, and self-directed learning
- Identify effective assessment methods for the multiage environment

At one point in this course, participants are expected to reflect and write about topics related to their own learning and teaching experiences in relation to course content.

References:


Additional Resources


CLM100: Teaching Multiage Groups

What Is Multiage Education?

Use the space provided to record important information from the course.

What is multiage education?
The Difference Between the Graded and the Multiage Classroom

Graded classroom:

Multiage classroom:

Environment and Curriculum

Multiage Instruction: Historical Perspective

Similarities

Differences

The Association for Childhood Education International (ACEI) also lists 11 benefits of multiage classrooms:

Factors That Affect Outcomes of Multiage Grouping

Unique Elements of a Multiage Class

Accommodating Student Developmental Levels

Cognitive Domain
The Three Phases of Classroom Management and Discipline

Phase 1: Preparing for the Beginning of School

Arranging the Classroom

Identifying Expectations of Behavior

Establishing Consequences

Phase 2: Beginning the School Year

Teach Students Appropriate Behavior

Consider Student Concerns

Lead the Class
The Teacher as Role Model

Phase 3: Maintaining Good Discipline

Monitoring and Handling Inappropriate Behavior

Class Rules and Consequences

Classroom Organization and Management

Storing Personal Belongings

Storing Curriculum Materials and Supplies

Divide the classroom into functional areas

Hang labeled and color-coded mobiles in each area

Try This!

Have the students make the mobiles as an art activity during the first few days of school. It is an easy way to involve students in setting up the room or area. In addition, clear labeling can reduce the demands students make on teachers for help.

Provide a place where students can learn about new individual assignments. This might be a bulletin board tree where students can find new individual assignments written on index cards and pinned
on the limbs. Library pockets glued on the outside of a file folder could also be used.

Try This!

Put library card pockets or hand-made construction paper pockets on a large oak-tag board or corkboard. Student names on the outside of the pockets make refilling easier. Also, have a series of file boxes, organized by skill level or subject matter, that contain work assignment folders for each student.

Try This!

Make up a game that involves points, fun activities, or something your students will like whenever materials areas are especially well taken care of. For example, many teachers have found that students enjoy being read to, and they use this as positive reinforcement throughout the year. The positive reinforcement activity needs to be something the students want to participate in. It will be different for each class. Find what works best for your situation.

Managing Instructional Time

Try This!

Helping Hand

Designate a “helping student” for each day. This will generally be an older student who is able to answer basic questions, get materials, or explain instructions. Create an outline of a hand with a magnet on the back. In the center of the hand place a picture of the helping student for that day. The hand is placed in a central location in the room and students needing help go to the person. This strategy allows pre−reading students to get help with written instructions or other needs without disturbing the teacher. This also fosters trust between older and younger students.

Instructional Organization

Scheduling

Learning Strategies

Peer Tutoring
Cooperative Learning

Heterogeneous Grouping

Define *heterogeneous groups:*

Self-Directed Learning

Evaluation: How Will I Know If The Students Have Learned?

Spiral Evaluation
Webbed Evaluation

Bridged Evaluation

Try This!

Talking Journal

Begin the day with the children assembling in a central location (e.g. rug). Children and adults take turns telling the group something of personal importance. Sometimes children share special articles brought from home. Active listening is an important part of Talking Journal time. Students are encouraged to comment and ask questions. To evaluate the Talking Journal, take note of the frequency and nature of the children’s talk as well as their comments and questions. Some behaviors to watch for are: clear, audible voice; eagerness to share; ability to speak without a prop; interest in others’ presentations; quality of questions and comments; and ability to actively listen.

Try This!

Morning Message

A message to the children is written on large chart paper and presented to the combined classes. Five or six words are left partially blank with only the beginning sound or blend given. Read the message aloud, deciding together which words will make sense in the blanks. The message often suggests the focus of the day's activities. As the content of the message is discussed, note word meanings and usage, conventions of grammar, and other stylistic features of the writing. Next, students volunteer to spell the missing words. As the message is being reviewed, invite the children to point out interesting things they have noticed. The students’ observations can lead to discussions on a wide variety of literacy concepts: word patterns, rhymes, homophones, vowel combinations, blends, mechanical features of punctuation and capitalization, etc. A copy of the message can be sent home each day to provide parents with information about daily school activities.

As one of the teachers is leading the Morning Message discussion, another teacher/adult can be making notes about which children are actively listening and contributing to the chart discussion. Document the children who suggest words for the message, provide sound spellings, supply conventional spellings, or notice significant things on the message. Older students can also take turns being observers writing notable occurrences on a checklist. At the end of the message discussion, both the teacher and student observers comment on the discoveries or behaviors of the group.

Try This!

Choice Time

As the children enter the classroom in the morning, have them sign up for an activity to do later at “Choice Time.” There are a wide variety of choices; some of them are teacher ideas and others may have been suggested by the children. Examples include: blocks, puzzles, games, reading, writing, drawing, painting, clay, and dramatic play. The Choice Time period is structured so that children may work and play either independently or in groups. It offers children opportunities to make decisions, to work on relationships, and to learn on their own. Choice Time also gives children the freedom to acquire skills, to attain concepts, and to practice in academic areas of their choice. Once every two weeks, schedule each student to meet with the teacher for a goal-setting conference during Choice Time.

When observing the children during Choice Time for evaluation, note both social and academic development. Over time, note the quality and degree of self-direction, creativity, decision making skills, problem-solving ability, cooperation, and responsibility for materials that each student is exhibiting. Also note individual gains in reading, writing, math, and other content areas.

Try This!

Investigations Workshop

During this time (45-minutes works well), students work on math and science through theme related activities. The themes studied can be based on a three-year cycle of the district’s science curriculum for the ages taught. The workshops include large-group, small-group, and individual projects. Sometimes the teachers determine the groupings; other times the students choose the group or activity in which they wish to participate. Hands-on activities that demand that the student’s problem solve, experiment, and do research are a major component of the Investigations Workshops. Each child has an Investigations Log in which s/he records significant findings.
The teacher should observe the problem-solving and research strategies used by each student during the Workshop. Recognize and record incidences of scientific curiosity as well as student choices of collaborative groupings and how each group conducts its investigations. The student Investigations Log serves as a record of individual learning.

Try This!

Literature Groups

Literature Groups are groups of five to seven students and one adult who meet together to enjoy and discuss a book of their choice. The teacher selects examples of quality literature, as many titles as there are groups. On sign-up day the teachers give short book talks to introduce the students to the upcoming Literature Group selections. The teacher makes up the Literature Groups according to the students’ choices. The Literature Groups meet for two, 45-minute sessions each week. Groups meet for four weeks, for a total of eight sessions.

During the sessions the groups work on listening and speaking goals, as well as a variety of literacy activities. Some possible Literature Group activities are: reading and comparing different versions of the story; listening to related books; partner reading; studying character, plot, setting, and style; vocabulary study; and retellings. Finally, the group works together to plan a culminating project to share with the other Literature Groups.

Leaders (older students and/or teacher) evaluate reading and listening comprehension, as well as the use of reading and writing strategies, during Literature Group activities. During discussions, the leaders also observe the quality and frequency of students’ participation. Collaboration and cooperation in the group are also noted. Group members also evaluate themselves on their participation.

Try This!

Math

The students are grouped developmentally for math class three days a week. Large-group lessons, small-group lessons, and individual work are all components of these classes. This developmental grouping allows the teacher to group children at similar stages for instruction in basic math concepts. The remaining two days a week are spent in Math Workshop. The students are offered a choice of problem-solving situations to work on. As much as possible these problems will be related to real-life situations.

For example, the children might be asked to decide how much pumpkin seed we need of each variety for next year’s planting. They will then compute the needed garden space and design how the pumpkin patch could be laid out. Problems developed by students are also used. The workshop time gives the students the opportunity to problem solve in multiage collaborative groups, as well as on an individual basis.

The teacher observes problem-solving strategies and successful collaborations as the children work. Note the degree of understanding of mathematical concepts. Through math goal-setting conferences, the teacher can help students recognize their strengths and set additional learning goals. Students take the appropriate math assessment test for concepts they have studied; the results are recorded on each child’s record.

Try This!

Communication Workshop

This is a daily activity that consists of a large block of time in which the students are all engaged in a variety of literacy activities. The focus is on the fundamentals of literacy: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Students work on the personal literacy goals they developed for themselves during goal-setting conferences with the teacher. Begin the workshop with a read-aloud of a picture book or a continuing chapter book. Students have input into the book selection. Quiet reading is next.

Students (and teacher/adults if modeling) choose books, magazines, newspapers, and other materials to read independently. After the quiet reading time, the reading segment of Communications Workshop continues with a variety of activities: partner reading, listen to tape recordings of books at the listening center, continue to read independently or to conduct research on self-chosen topics, and share books they have been reading with a friend (i.e. Sharing includes showing pictures, inventing a story to go with the pictures, talking about the book, or reading the book aloud).

A teacher-directed mini-lesson follows the reading time that focuses on reading/writing skills and strategies. After a break for physical education, music, art, library, or computer instruction, the Workshop resumes with quiet writing in daybooks. All children (and adults) write at this time choosing topics of personal importance to write about in the daybooks.

After quiet writing, students engage in a variety of writing pursuits as they continue the writing segment of the Workshop with topics including: personal writing (letters, notes, poems, songs, stories, etc.), collaborative writing, editing, illustrating their published works, and book responses. Periodically, a Communications Workshop with a sharing time when students/adults may read their writing or tell about a book they have enjoyed during Workshop. Listeners offer their comments and questions.

Every two weeks, regularly scheduled conferences during Choice Time help the students set appropriate literacy goals. Students should be encouraged to balance their goals so that they are working on both skills and strategies in reading and writing. During Communications Workshop the teacher works individually with children to monitor their progress on the literacy goals they have chosen. During the workshop, question the children: What are your reading goals? What writing goals are you working on? Show me how you worked on your goals in your daybook today. How did you help
During the reading segment of the workshop discuss books with children and listen to them read, noting their use of reading strategies. Evaluate strengths and weaknesses in word decoding and comprehension, and help the students apply reading strategies. Assist students in choosing appropriate books. Evaluate as you talk with students about their writing, noting their attention to their goals, their spelling, vocabulary growth, and the development of stylistic features in their writing.

Try This!

End of Day Circle

Teachers can use the last 10 minutes of the school day for guided reflection on the day’s work. The question for the day is posted on the board all day for the children to reflect on. At End of the Day Circle, a child reads the question, and those who wish to respond are called on. Some possibilities for questions are: What do you value about your work today? What did you do today to help yourself become a better reader (writer, mathematician, etc.)? What did you do today to help someone else? What will you tell your family about what you did in school today?

Answers are written down by the teacher in the End of the Day Question Book. This book is kept on a low shelf where the children can get it to read over their own and others’ responses. The teachers note the frequency with which students choose to respond to the questions, as well as the type of question that elicits the response. The children’s abilities to express their thoughts clearly and audibly are also noted. The End of the Day Question Book offers a permanent record of the children’s reflections.

Teachers assess the strengths of each student in order to show him/her what s/he can do and how to build on that knowledge. A progress report should be sent home to parents to inform them of their child’s growth. However, the best way to share your knowledge of the children is to talk with the parents. Hold conferences with parents two or three times a year and encourage them to visit the classroom or call to discuss their child’s educational growth.

Conclusion