

Benefits of a Multi-Grade Classroom

Today, most public schools function under a one grade per classroom system. Immanuel Lutheran School functions under a multi-grade classroom system. The classroom is overseen by a head teacher, and additional instructors may assist as necessary.

Multi-grade classrooms were once very common in our country. Wisconsin was filled with one and two room school houses where student collaboration between grade levels was the rule. The mix of ages and abilities provide the multi-grade classroom with no “ceiling” on what can be taught or learned.

Advantages:

- Younger children learn from older children. Younger children overhear lessons being taught to older children - prepping their minds for future instruction. Older children hear the lessons of younger children - allowing them to review and reinforce basic concepts.
- Children learn to become sound learners, receiving a mix of both individual instruction and personal reflection/work time.
- Children’s social skills develop more quickly and earlier, as interaction with other age groups is fostered.
- Children receive an increased sense of personal responsibility.
- The multi-grade classroom is a natural extension of home life and life in the “real world.” Very rarely in the world do people work solely with others of the same age and ability level. The multi-grade classroom mimics and fosters sound relationships at home and in future adult life.
- The same teacher instructs the student for two or more years; meaning that the teacher is given greater time to get to know the student individually, together with their strengths, weaknesses, and learning habits. This increases the quality of education given and received.
- The vast majority of studies indicate that students in multi-grade settings perform as well or better than students in single grade settings.¹ Studies clearly indicate that social and psychological benefits exist from multi-grade settings. The country of New Zealand which boasts the highest literacy rate in the world still finds multi-grade classroom settings common.

¹ *Independent Together: Supporting the Multilevel Learning Community*. Minister of Education and Youth, Manitoba Education and Youth, (Winnipeg, 2003).