

Lutheran Schools have long implement mixed-age classrooms. Immanuel's teachers are familiar with and experienced in the mixed-grade approach.

It is also common in rural areas for public schools as well. Most research on the benefit of mixed-grades is conducted by school boards nationwide. Some of our findings are listed below.

If you still have concerns, speak with the teacher about their class structure or attend an Open House and speak with current Immanuel parents.

What Are the Advantages and Disadvantages of Multi-Grade Classrooms?

Background

Multi-grade classrooms are common in both rural and urban areas. In many cases, these classrooms accommodate students in two adjacent grades, such as three/four, or four/five. Less frequently, however, there may be three or more grades in one classroom. Multi-grade classrooms are used when:

- There are too few students in one grade to make up one-single-grade class.
- There are too many students in a grade for one single-grade class, but not enough to make up two full single-grade classes.

Teaching in a multi-grade classroom is different from teaching in a single-grade classroom. Classroom organization, grouping and instructional strategies may be different, for example:

- Teachers can effectively use thematic approaches that cross grade levels. In writing class, all students in the room might write on the same theme, but there are different expectations: grade one students are expected to write a few lines or a few words, while grade six students are expected to write a short essay with a beginning, middle and end.
- Peer or cross-age tutoring can be used to advantage. Before students can tutor someone else they must understand the material thoroughly themselves.
- Students are expected to take more responsibility for their own learning. This might require the development of an individualized learning plan with each student and frequent conferences with students.

Most teacher education programs prepare preservice teachers to work in single-grade classrooms, not multi-grade. Thus, teachers may need inservice education to support them in developing the knowledge and skills needed to teach successfully in a multi-grade situation. The most important thing that school boards can do to promote student achievement in multi-grade classrooms is to ensure that teachers receive training to work effectively in this environment. School divisions can develop their own programs, partner with other school divisions, or support teachers to

participate in short courses and workshops. This training can be in a traditional face-to-face classroom situation, online, or through mentorship programs with more experienced teachers.

Most research shows that students in single-grade and multi-grade classrooms do not differ significantly in educational outcomes. Academically, students in multi-grade classrooms fare neither better nor worse than students in single-grade classrooms. *However, there is a significant body of research which suggests that students do better socially and personally in multi-grade classrooms than in single-grade situations. Students in multi-grade classrooms have better attitudes toward school, higher self-esteem, and more positive social relationships than students in single-grade classrooms.*

Conclusion

Students in multi-grade classrooms do as well academically as students in single-grade classrooms, and better socially and personally. The key to successful multi-grade instruction is equipping teachers with the knowledge and skills needed to teach effectively in this situation.

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For more info visit:

www.choosingmultiage.com/faq.php

www.countryschoolassociation.org/Mixed-Age_Classrooms.pdf

www.slclassicalacademy.com/site/assets/Mixed-gradeClassrooms.pdf