

# Benefits of Multi-Grade Classrooms

## 1. 10FACTS

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1. There are many, perhaps more opportunities (because of the nature of the multigrade classroom) for children to work and develop at their own level on a continuous basis.
2. The flexibility of grouping is beyond the normal range of ages and abilities and can benefit those children who are working below (or above) grade-level in certain skills.
3. Students are continuously exposed to re-teaching, as they listen in on, and benefit from, lessons being given to younger students. This review of the basics reinforces and clarifies a child's understanding, even when they may be working at a more advanced level.
4. Students are also exposed to pre-teaching ("eaves-dropping" on teacher's lessons and discussions with older students). This both prepares and stimulates the younger child's thinking.
5. Academic, physical, and social competition between peers is reduced, as is the anxiety and pre-occupation of having to compete. Consequently, discipline measures are needed less frequently. The learning and social atmosphere is cooperative rather than competitive.
6. Pro-social behaviors and expectations are modeled by older students. The teacher plays a key role (as all teachers do) in modeling and intentionally teaching these skills, but in a multigrade classroom, many models are available for younger students.
7. Multigrade classrooms are less homogenous than single-grade classrooms, therefore differences are the norm and more easily accepted.
8. All children are expected to work independently at different times during the day. They receive more intentional training to be independent workers. Off-task behaviors diminish as self-discipline and accountability increases.
9. Lengthier time with the same teacher can increase trust, understanding of expectations, and positive relationships between teachers and students, and teachers and parents. I also believe that children retain what they have learned better because so many of their learning memories are attached to the same classroom and the same teacher. Or perhaps it is because we are more likely to refer to, and thus rehearse, our shared memories. An interesting area for research....
10. Children who are academically advanced or lagging can easily take part in higher or lower-level skills while maintaining interactions with peers.