

TEACHING IN THE MULTI-GRADE CLASSROOM:
MY PERSONAL JOURNEY

CENTRE FOR NEWFOUNDLAND STUDIES

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Teaching in the Multi-grade Classroom:
My Personal Journey

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INTRODUCTION

Schools must change along with the society they serve ... the approach of the year 2000 has catalyzed awareness of the shortcomings of current educational practices and of the need for reform to meet these new challenges.

Joan Gaustad (as cited in Grant & Johnson, 1995)

I am a Primary Educator who has been teaching in Newfoundland for the past 14 years. For 12 of these years I have taught in various rural schools within the boundaries of School District #8, which is based in Clarenville, Newfoundland. Clarenville is a community of approximately 5,000 people and is known as the service center or 'hub' for the area. The last 11 years of my teaching career have found me on the staff at R. K. Gardner School (R.K.G.) in Sunnyside, a small rural community two hours west of St. John's and one-half hour east of Clarenville. This school, which now functions as a Kindergarten to Grade 9 school, serves the two communities of Sunnyside and Come-by-Chance. The populations of these towns are approximately 300 and 150 residents, respectively.

Since my start on staff at R.K.G. in the Fall of 1986, the school has gone through many 'physical' and staff changes. Over the past 12 years, the school has gone from being a busy K-12 integrated school with a staff of 17 and a student population of over 240 students, to a vibrant K-9 school with its present day enrolment of less than 100 students and a staff of 9 teachers (7

full-time and 2 shared with nearby schools).

My teaching responsibilities at R.K.G. have always been in classrooms with more than one grade level and have included various grade-level and/or subject combinations that usually changed from year to year. Often times I have not found out my teaching assignments until the first day or week of school. This caused much unnecessary stress and frustration for me as well as eliminated any opportunity for long-term planning. Since R.K. Gardner School opened its' doors in the early 70's, there has always been a variety of grade-level combinations or classes with more than one grade each year. Although when I started at R.K.G. my experiences appear to have been somewhat negative, I feel that over time they have developed into more positive experiences for me.

Some of my positive teaching experiences were especially emphasized after I returned to university in January 1996 to begin my graduate work in the area of Teaching and Learning. One pleasant discovery for me came when I began researching the topic of classrooms with more than one grade level. I found much literature supporting this type of learning environment not only in Canada but in the United States and other developing countries around the world. I also discovered that many of the teaching strategies and ideas I had been using in my own classroom were reinforced and supported in much of the theoretical literature I had read.

The purpose of this paper is to describe my personal journey of discovery and my experiences of growth and change as a teacher in a class of more than one grade. As well, I wish to provide some

guidance and support for teachers who might find themselves in a similar teaching situation and to demonstrate how I came to see what I initially perceived as a somewhat 'backward', 'old-fashioned' phenomenon, as a positive learning environment for all students involved.

BACKGROUND

In Newfoundland and Labrador today, as well as across Canada, the push is on for educational reform. With educational reform comes many challenges for the classroom teacher, the administrators, the school boards, and the government. They must focus on developing the best quality of education for students whether they live in a rural community or in an urban centre. During this time of declining enrolments and government cutbacks, educators are being forced to re-evaluate their belief systems regarding the classroom structure and their own way of teaching. As well, many teachers have found, and are still finding themselves, faced with having to teach in a classroom with more than one grade-level as opposed to the more dominant single-grade classroom.

Although there are many grouping practices going on around the world in such countries as the United States, Finland, and other developing nations, classrooms with more than one grade or 'multi-graded' classrooms, is the practice that is very common in rural schools of Newfoundland and Labrador. In 1992-93, the incidence of multi-grade classrooms in grade Kindergarten to grade 6 in our province was 143 schools or 38% of the province's schools with

primary/elementary grades (Mulcahy, 1993). In Canada, alone, 1 out of every 7 classrooms consists of two consecutive grades in one classroom. Also, 1 out of every 5 students is enrolled in multi-grade classrooms, with more of them being found in urban than rural schools (Veenman, 1995). The current provincial problem of declining enrolment suggests that in the next 5 years, multi-grading or 'multi-aging', a term being used in this province in recent years, may become the norm in both rural and urban areas of this province (Mulcahy, 1993; Penney, 1992).

The term 'multi-grading', and various terms associated with it (eg. split-grading, combination grading, vertical grouping, and restricted multi-aging), are generally understood to refer to a situation in which students from two or more grades are combined for instructional purposes (Penney, 1992). It was the dominant model of education in North America until the advent of the industrial revolution and large scale urbanization (Thomas & Shaw, 1992). Traditionally, learning in these types of classrooms was largely teacher-directed and children were taught in separate, distinct groups according to their age and grade-level. The multi-grade teacher attempted to teach all the curriculum in all the grades regardless of the number of students or grades within the room (Doody, 1990). It was thought to be a predominantly rural dilemma (Craig, 1991) and had, thus, become a victim of the ancient tendency to label all things rural as 'backward'.

Today, the multi-grade situation seems to be a more manageable instructional situation due to the popular changes in learning

theory and practice (eg. whole language, cooperative learning, peer tutoring, etc.). Multi-grade teachers no longer tend to have a strict physical and social division but a variety of groupings throughout the day with different grade levels mixing together for a variety of purposes (Mulcahy, 1993). Also, teachers are implementing many different and viable teaching strategies to help improve student learning. The multi-grade teacher today has come to be less concerned with the 'what' of the curriculum and more with the 'how' of delivering it (Doody, 1990).

The recently released Royal Commission Report Our Children Our Future (1992) makes reference to 'multi-aging' instead of the most popular provincial practice of multi-grading. The practice of multi-aging is presently being piloted in schools around our province and is very popular in the United States. Since I have been a teacher of classes with more than one grade, I feel that 'multi-aging', and other terms that are comparable with it (eg. mixed-age grouping, continuous progress, non-gradedness, and family grouping), share many of the same characteristics as multi-grade teaching. Both are seen as flexible, multi-year programs in which mixed ages are heterogeneously grouped or integrated with the same teacher. Advocates of either the multi-grade or multi-age classrooms think of their classes as a collective community or family of learners. This has always been the attitude I have portrayed over the years in my multi-grade/age classroom.

One major difference between multi-grade and multi-age classrooms is in their reasons for being created. The multi-age

classroom has generally resulted from the philosophical belief in the value of children of different ages learning together, as well as the recognition of the varied, stimulating environment provided by the diversity of interests and abilities in such groups (Mycock, 1972; Waite, 1977; as cited in Doody, 1990). The multi-grade classroom has usually been formed to address organizational problems caused by declining enrolments and fiscal restraints. When schools do not have sufficient enrolments to justify one teacher per grade level, they combine 2 or more grade levels in a single classroom. This has been the predominant reason behind my many different teaching situations over the past 11 years.

Another difference between the two classrooms is that in the multi-age classroom children do not fail or repeat but master skills and content at their own pace before moving on (Grant & Johnson, 1995). Students in a multi-grade classroom, however, must complete specific 'graded' curricula before moving on to the next grade level. Miller (as cited in Woodlands, 1991) states that much of the research into multi-age and multi-grade applications clearly support them both as "equally effective organizational alternatives to single-graded instruction" (p. 2).

MY LIFE AS A TEACHER

My teaching career, which began in September 1984, has given me experience in both the single-grade and multi-grade classroom situations. However, of the 14 years that I have been in the teaching profession, 11 years have been in classrooms with more

than one grade. Over the years I have often said, or been told by my friends, family, and colleagues, that I should write a book about my teaching experiences. Also, as my teaching career proceeded in the mixed-grade setting, I felt that both my instructional and planning techniques were gradually moving from the traditional multi-grade format to be more in line with the present day philosophies of multi-aging. Today I define my multi-grade classroom as that in which students of different ages, abilities and grade levels are combined in a single classroom. It is a classroom in which I am able to use a variety of grouping and teaching techniques daily to deliver an effective program of instruction while, at the same time, promoting an atmosphere of 'community' and self-worth among my students.

My very first introduction to the Multi-grade classroom situation came in late September 1986 when I accepted a replacement position at St. Alban's School, Gooseberry Cove, Newfoundland. It was a small, rural K-2 school with 2 teachers on staff, myself included, and a population of approximately 30 students. This term position lasted until the December/Christmas Break and involved me as homeroom for Kindergarten, teaching the Kindergarten curriculum to 9 students during the morning session. In the afternoon session, I was responsible for teaching the Grade 1 Language Arts program to 9 students with some Grade 2 remedial work in Language. I was also the Principal, or "Sole Charge", of the school. The other teacher on staff was responsible for only the 12 students in Grade 2 in the afternoon. In the morning slots, she was responsible for the Grade

1/2 split group. Previous to this position I had been teaching 2 years in single-graded classroom situations in both Glovertown (Kindergarten) and Clarendville (Grade 3), with a total of 13 and 30 students, respectively.

When first approached with this multi-graded teaching situation in Gooseberry Cove, my initial reaction was "How am I supposed to do this?" I then reflected on how I had been taught during my primary school years at Brigus Academy and remembered quite clearly how my teachers had taught multi-grade then: two separate grades, in rows with each grade instructed separately from the other. The arrangement at Gooseberry Cove did not require me to instruct two distinct curriculums at the one time, as such. I only had one Grade 2 student coming out for remedial work in Language during the last 30 minutes of the day while I had the Grade 1 students for Language Arts. I would begin a Language lesson with the Grade 1 students, who would continue to work on this assignment while I worked at a separate table at the back of the classroom with the Grade 2 student. If the Grade 1's completed the assigned task early, they would have 'Buddy Reading' or 'Silent Reading' and, probably, another review sheet or related activity to complete.

I can distinctly remember this being a very frustrating time at first, mainly because I had never had training in student remediation or in running a classroom with two separate grades going on at the same time. I think my main concerns were with covering the program adequately and paying enough attention to the

needs of my Grade 1 students. When I think back on that time in my teaching career I feel that since I lacked the knowledge or teaching experience I couldn't even begin to contemplate the idea of doing a Language activity with all the students together. I had never seen it done before in my training or personal school experiences, therefore, I never had the insight to look at the Grade 2 student as being able to work with the Grade 1 students on a combined Language activity. I felt, at the time, that I had to keep both grades separate and to continue with what had been done previous to my arrival at the school. I ended up asking my fellow teacher to give me some direction on how to best remediate the Grade 2 student. She explained how the previous teacher had managed this situation and suggested other ideas or activities for me to follow. One such suggestion was to select a simple storybook to read with the student and to take sentences from the story and have the student fill in the words that I omitted or have her write the story in her own words. To this day I don't feel like I accomplished much with either the Grade 1 Language Arts or the Grade 2 remedial since, from my observations, most of the students involved were below grade-level expectations and I had been unaware of a "better way" of teaching in this type of situation or to best deal with the individual needs within the whole class. This was something that I would come to learn as my teaching career proceeded.

The remainder of the 1986-87 school year was spent in another term replacement at Matthew Elementary in Bonavista which was a

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Grade 2 class of 28 students. The make-up of this class was somewhat like my other classes: there were many students who were average, many who were below average, and others who were extremely bright or above average. I remember a few of my students not being able to read or write on their own. By the end of the school year, I felt I had successfully covered, and had the students master, the Grade 2 outcomes. However, I made a recommendation that one of the students be held back for another year in Grade 2 due to his weaknesses in the area of Language Arts. This was shunned by both the administration and the boy's parents, one of whom was an elementary teacher. I felt I had ample proof of this child's academic inadequacies and immaturity, especially in the area of Language Arts, but nothing would change the minds of those in control of the situation.

At the beginning of my replacement position in Bonavista, I felt that I had found my niche or my best grade-level position and that my teaching days in a multi-grade situation were over. Therefore, the following school year when I applied for and was offered a Primary position with Elementary Core French at R.K. Gardner School in Sunnyside, I was excited because I felt I was finally going to have my very own 'normal' classroom. A classroom like those we had many discussions about during my teacher training at university. I thought my days of multi-grade, which to me at that time was a thing of the past, were totally gone. However, that was not the case when I arrived at R.K.G. in the fall of 1987.

My first days at R.K. Gardner School were ones that I will

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never forget. I found the 17 staff members of this rural school to be very friendly, light-hearted, and helpful. The building itself was very warm and inviting with a gymnasium, a roomy cafeteria, a library, as well as 9 spacious classrooms, all around the perimeter of the gym. I could tell by the many trophies on display and banners hanging in the gym that this was a sports-minded school that was very proud of their accomplishments over the years. The over 240 students from K to 12 appeared to be very well-behaved and friendly as well as eager to meet the 'new' teacher on staff.

When I first accepted the position at Sunnyside, I was told that I would have a homeroom class of 13 Grade 2 students and the added responsibility of Core French in Grade 4 with 22 students. After arriving at the school, much to my surprise, I was given additional teaching duties which included Grade 3 Mathematics, Science, Cursive Writing, and French with 18 students while I had the Grade 2's for Mathematics, Art, and Language Arts. Also, I was assigned Grade 1 Science, with 15 students, who came out with me while my homeroom Grade 2's went with another teacher for Science. As well, I was told that I would have to teach Level I French to 16 Level I and 2 Level III students. These teaching duties [*see Table 1] were a far cry from what I had expected when I first accepted the position of 'Primary Teacher with Core French'.

I spent my first days at R. K. Gardner trying to muster up enough confidence to face my daily teaching of a multi-grade class in primary, my first-time teaching Elementary Core French, and the undue stress of teaching a high school multi-graded French class.

TABLE 1: Teaching Assignments 1987-88 (R.K. Gardner School)

GRADE(S)	SUBJECTS TAUGHT
2	Homeroom + Language Arts
1	Science
Levels I & III	French
2/3	Mathematics (to all); Spelling (Gr. 2)/ Science (Gr. 3); Language Arts (Gr. 2)/ Cursive Writing (Gr. 3)
2/3 + Challenging Needs	Art and Core French

It was at this point in my career that I came very close to quitting the profession. I voiced these strong feelings to my principal, who had hired me, and the French Coordinator with the School Board. Both gave me their full confidences and blessings and assured me that I was quite capable of doing a fine job.

These feelings, at this point, about not living up to the expectations of my principal and the French coordinator or being able to do my job accurately were still very strong. This was mainly due to the fact that I was embarking on a lot of 'firsts': first year of teaching Core French in both Grade 4 and a multi-grade class of Level I and III students; first time ever teaching High School; first time teaching in this school; and first time to have full multi-grade classroom teaching duties. I was not sold on these teaching scenarios and I felt very unsure of my teaching abilities. In early October I was given the opportunity to watch another fellow teacher instruct a high school French class, but I

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was still not convinced that I was capable of doing the same job. At the time, all I could think about was my high school years and the torture we had put our teachers through. I was looking forward to teaching Core French in Grade 4 but I felt that I was incapable and ill-trained to teach French at the High School level. I discerned that I was not 'high school teacher' material and that I should not be expected to teach at a level that I had no previous training. I had graduated from University only three years before, with a Primary Education Degree and had expected a teaching position in that area. Now here I was, a few short years later, teaching French at the senior high level! My homeroom was set-up prior to my arrival at R.K. Gardner School. Desks were arranged in rows of about 7 per row facing the chalkboard at the front, with the teachers' desk at front and center. I remember deciding that my Grade 2's should sit in the rows nearest to the windows so as to ensure the least amount of disruption between classes when the Grade 1's or 3's arrived. This was a great classroom management decision for me; however, my teaching assignments for the year were another management story in itself. At first, I remember thinking "Well, I can do this. This will be a piece of cake!"

I decided, from the start, to attempt to teach the two separate Math curricula at the same time. I remember starting class by having either the Grade 2's or Grade 3's read, complete review sheets or look ahead in their Math textbooks while I instructed the other grade. Then I would walk back to the other side of the room and proceed to instruct the other grade its lesson for the day. One

major problem I found with this was that students would be requesting my assistance from all over the classroom and I would be spending most of my time walking up and down rows, back and forth around the room. It became a very trying and nerve-wrecking experience and I felt like I was getting nowhere fast. Near the end of September I proceeded to make a few schedule changes on my own to help alleviate these problems. I changed the Grade 2 Math to the morning slots when I had the Grade 3's for Cursive Writing, and moved some of the Grade 2 Language Arts to the same slots as the Grade 3 Math in the afternoons. Sometimes it became necessary for me to have both Math lessons going on at the same time in the afternoon but that only occurred on days when I was unable to have Math with the Grade 2's in the morning. This situation seemed to work better for me, at least for a little while, until I began to feel that I was not covering the Grade 3 Mathematics outcomes properly.

Before the middle of October, I made another plea to my principal to have the Grade 3 Mathematics removed from my teaching duties all together and for him to assist me in coming up with another teaching alternative. The fear of my not covering the Grade 3 Math outcomes was stifling, however, I did not have the same fear for the Grade 2 Math since I would often have them by themselves for instruction in the mornings to review topics as needed. I felt that with the Grade 3 Math I was unable to give the necessary assistance to those who needed it due to my needing to be with the Grade 2's as well. My principal suggested that I speak to the Grade

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3 homeroom teacher to find a more appropriate subject combination. By the end of October, we decided that I would teach Health and Cursive Writing to the Grade 3's instead of Math. This arrangement seemed to work much better on both my nerves and my outlook on the multi-grade situation. Now, I could set work for the Grade 3's that they could work on independently or have them read silently while I instructed or assisted the Grade 2's with their Math and Language. Also, to ease the doubling-up, the Grade 2 Science teacher arranged to take the Grade 2's out for Science in the afternoons so I could avail of some time to teach the Grade 3's by themselves. I finally was starting to feel I had a grip on the situation and that things would run more smoothly in the days ahead.

I remember thinking back to my previous year in Bonavista when I asked another university classmate of mine, who was teaching a multi-grade class in Elliston at the time, how she did it. My friend showed me her plan book and explained to me how she drew a line down to separate the plans for the two grades for Math and Social Studies or the Core subjects (she had a class of Grade 1 and 2 students). At a later date, she took me on a tour of her classroom, at which time I saw first hand how she had centers set up around the classroom and how she kept things together. I remember thinking and asking her "Where do the Grade 1's sit?" to which she replied that she taught the class mostly all together through 'center' activities. These activities, she informed me, consisted of setting up four or five separate tables/centers around

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the classroom for groups of about 4 or 5 students. Students were put into these groups more for need than grade level. They would usually take 2 or 3 days to complete all of the center activities and the students sat where ever they needed to sit for the daily activity. This was my friend's second year at multi-grade instruction, so I felt that she pretty well had a handle on how to make the best of this type of teaching situation.

With the memory of my friend's classroom in Elliston, I went about planning for and setting up my own classroom in a more comfortable and functional manner for me. From the start of my teaching career I had always felt that the teacher was not the only knowledgeable person in the classroom. I always wanted to make sure that my classroom portrayed this idea and that students would realize they were 'teachers' and able to help fellow classmates just as well as I. Therefore, I wanted the rows out and a more open-classroom arrangement put in place, with center activities and places for students to work and talk more easily to each other. I know that I experimented with moving students into rows of four desks coming out from three walls so I could manoeuvre more easily among students. This idea I had seen in a classroom I worked in at St. Andrew's School in St. John's when I was completing a Math course at university.

Also, I experimented with putting four desks together in a 'pod' or 'cluster' in which students were more easily able to work on group projects or discussions. As well, it was much easier for me to get around to each group or to any student who needed

immediate assistance. Also, I could easily see which students were working together and who did need extra help or review. I began to see students, probably due to this seating arrangement, trying to solve their own problems or questions together before asking or seeking my assistance. The 'community' effect I had been looking for all along was finally starting to come together in my multi-grade classroom. It was at this time, as well, that I came to the realization that some Grade 2 students were capable of and enjoyed doing Grade 3 work, and vice versa. I, therefore, began to look for other possible ways of getting rid of grade-level labels or, as I saw them, grade-level hindrances.

By the end of November, I had made many new strides in my multi-grade teaching experience at R.K. Gardner. I began teaching the same French and Art lessons to the Grade 2's and 3's, along with 3 Challenging Needs students. I would look at all the outcomes for each subject and plan a lesson around a theme we were working on at the time. My planning time seemed to be, literally, cut in half and I found that I was becoming more flexible and better able to make scheduling changes as needed. An example of this would be if I noticed that some Grade 2 students needed extra review of a concept they were having difficulty with, I would do it when I had the Grade 2 group by themselves. Also, I could do the same with the Grade 3's when the Grade 2's were out for Science in the afternoon. By the end of the year, I was feeling much better about my multi-grade instruction and teaching situation, as well as my own classroom management skills.

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Each year at R. K. Gardner School, after my tumultuous first year there, always found me being presented with a different multi-grade teaching surprise or challenge upon the opening day of school in September. The 1988-89 school year was no different, if anything it was probably one of the most hectic. I was assigned homeroom Grade 1/2 with 14 and 17 students, respectively [see Table 2]. I was responsible for Math, Art, and Social Studies in both grades, as well as Grade 1 Language Arts (in the afternoons) and Science. I also had the Grade 2's along with 16 Grade 3's (1 of which was Special Needs) coming together for Religion, Health, and Family Living. As well, I had responsibility for 17 students in a Grade 4 Core French class. During this year I continued to separate instruction for the Grade 1 and 2 Math and Social Studies; however, I had begun to combine instruction for Grade 1 and 2 Art, French, Religion, Health, and Family Living.

The combining of these curriculums in my Grade 1/2 split class was made easy by the fact that most grade-specific outcomes for both were very similar or very broad. In Art, for instance, I would choose a topic (eg. 'colour') and look for an appropriate project from either the Art in Action Grade 1 or Grade 2 text or some other art resource. The activity would be related to a theme we were working on at that time and all students would complete it. Each student maintained their very own Art Projects Scrapbook which I would use for evaluation purposes throughout the year. Sometimes I would have an activity set up as one of our Center Activities and

students would complete the activity in a smaller group situation instead of a whole-group.

For French, which was not a required course for K-3 students in our school or district, I used the Grade 4 French program, Adventures I which I was teaching at the time in Grade 4. I had noticed that much of the vocabulary could be easily taught to primary students and the knowledge of these words would be very beneficial to them when they reached Grade 4 to start studying French. I took much of the vocabulary and sentence structures from the Grade 4 program and completed daily French activities with my Grade 1/2 split. I volunteered to do this mainly because I saw how the primary students were soaking up the necessary French vocabulary and their keen interest in the French culture/language. This was another major step in my multi-grade teaching career: combining different grade-level materials with success.

For Social Studies I experimented with different ways of teaching two separate curriculums. I first started by trying to teach the two curriculums independently: having one grade read on in the text while the other group was instructed, then we would switch. This, I felt, was a waste of time since I was still spending too many hours planning and too much time moving from one group to the other. The period would be over before I had a chance to complete even one activity or discussion successfully. I then started to see the similarities between the grade-level outcomes and proceeded to teach a specific topic (eg. 'family') to all of the Grade 1's and 2's using ideas from both of the specific graded

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texts. Since there was a lot of overlapping of curriculum outcomes and topics, I felt this was a good way of insuring that they were not repeated. During the following years I would know which topics were covered successfully or which were not introduced and could pass on this information to the next teacher.

TABLE 2: Teaching Assignments 1988-89 (R.K. Gardner School)

GRADE(S)	SUBJECT(S) TAUGHT
1/2	Homerom + Mathematics, Art, and Social Studies
1	Language Arts (p.m.); Science
2/3	Religion, Family Living, Health, and Core French
3	Library
4	Core French

In the 1989-90 school year I, again, had a change in my multi-grade classroom situation. I was homerom Grade 2, with a total of 14 students, and responsible for Grade 4 Core French, with 15 students [see Table 3]. I had the Grade 2's by themselves for Language Arts, Science, and Art; however, they were to be joined by 16 Grade 1's for Math, Social Studies, Religion, Health, Family Living, and French. I again carried out my Math and some of the Social Studies curriculum separately, with distinct grade-specific instruction. One major change I did make this year was with Religion, Health, and Family Living in which I had begun to teach it using the 'Thematic' approach.

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As I had noticed the previous year, there were a lot of primary outcomes or topics covered repeatedly throughout the Primary years, especially among Religion, Family Living, and Health. With this in mind I set about teaching the major topics, while always keeping in mind items previously covered with the Grade 2's. If we were completing a theme on 'Friendship Around the World', I would gather all the outcomes on topics like friendship and diversity and plan various center or class activities to explore the different countries, levels of friendship, etc. This theme would then be covered in one block of time during one school year instead of coming up each year when the curriculum called for it. I was starting to feel more comfortable with my multi-grade instruction as the year progressed.

TABLE 3: Teaching Assignments 1989-90 (R.K. Gardner School)

GRADE(S)	SUBJECT(S) TAUGHT
2	Homeroom + Art, Science, and Language Arts
1/2	Mathematics, Core French, Social Studies, Religion, Health, and Family Living
4	Core French

My fourth year at R.K. Gardner (1990-91) saw many new changes in my multi-grade instructional format and attitude, as well as another different, yet manageable teaching assignment [see Table 4]. I was given a homeroom of 30 Grade 2/3 students, 16 and 14 respectively, which was to be my biggest multi-grade class ever!

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After the first few days of school, I could see a clash of characters and personalities forming within the class due to the fact that some students were from broken homes, many were Welfare recipients, and some were related (eg. 2 were sisters, 4 were first-cousins). Throughout the year, I found myself wondering if I would ever make it to the end of the school year. It was during these first few months of the school year that I started "mouthing off" about what I thought was my most horrendous classroom situation yet. I was in luck since a good friend and university classmate of mine, Lori Lane, had come to work at our District Office as the Primary Language Arts Coordinator.

TABLE 4: Teaching Assignments 1990-91 (R.K. Gardner School)

GRADE(S)	SUBJECT(S) TAUGHT
2/3	Homeroom + Core French + all subjects (except Music and Physical Education)
4	Core French

In early October, Lori sat me down and told me about her recent visit to another teacher's multi-grade classroom within our District and how she had helped her organize and cope with it more efficiently and effectively. Since this was really the first year for the 'Whole Language' approach to learning to be implemented in our province, as well as being explained to me, she demonstrated how to use this approach to teach. I found this strategy to be very successful in my multi-grade classroom. Whole language uses the

language connection to strengthen learning and make it more meaningful to the students. It identifies and builds on the natural connection between verbal and symbolic language. Some examples, which I came to use quite often, included the shared reading of big books with the whole class, group/individual storytelling, and the writing, publishing, and reading by students of their own books.

Curriculum integration, or thematic approach, was another important strategy that was relayed to me by my friend and that is frequently suggested in the literature on multi-grade instruction (Cushman, 1990; Miller, 1994; Mulcahy, 1993). The link is generally made around a specific theme or topic, integrating the many subject areas within the curriculum through activities that bring real meaning to all student experiences. The broader the theme and the more involved the students are in designing the activities, the more successful it will be in engaging their minds. As a multi-grade teacher, I felt it was very important for me to take time to see what association students make as they hear the ideas of others which, in turn, assisted me in meeting individual needs within the classroom. My friend showed me how to plan and set up learning centers using the thematic approach. Since I had been dabbling in this approach over the previous few years she felt, with such a large number of students and responsibilities for teaching all subjects to them, this would be a more comfortable approach for me to take. We had four large wooden learning centers constructed by the District Maintenance Department, which I painted with bright colours the following summer. By Christmas I had my themes planned

for the remainder of the school year and many interesting center activities to go along with each. I will always be grateful to my friend who was a valuable resource in giving me articles on classroom management and organization, as well as different theme packages to help me survive what started out to be a most trying year.

During this same year of drastic changes in thought and classroom set-up for me, I felt the need to come up with another name for my classroom with more than one grade level. I felt that labelling my group as 'Grade 2/3' was still emphasizing grade-level distinctions which were slowly becoming obsolete in my new found approach to multi-grade teaching. I introduced the terms "Upper Primary" for my Grade 2/3 split and "Lower Primary" for my colleagues Grade K/1 split. The new 'titles' were quickly accepted by my administration and colleagues as well as at our District Board Office, however, I had some work to do with my students and their parents. Parents, especially those with siblings or relatives in the same class, still made a distinction between the grade levels and would often ask me about grade-level expectations and differences. I have no reasoning as to why I wanted this change or what force was behind my feelings on the matter. All I think I was trying to do at this point in time was to get rid of the "graded" classroom distinction and to put forth a sense of family and community of learners. In my mind I had devised a great way of helping to overcome some of the negative attitudes towards multi-

grade classroom instruction and to let others see it as an autonomous grouping of students that had many positive benefits.

This 1990-91 school year was really my very first of multi-grade teaching in which I was solely responsible for teaching all subjects in my multi-grade class, with the exceptions of Music and Physical Education. I had started to use the thematic and whole language approaches to learning more often and I had planned a full year of themes and learning center activities. In my plan book I was writing in place of the usual "Social Studies (Gr.2)/Social Studies (Gr.3)" the words "Group Instruction" to denote the whole group lesson plan for all students. For some reason, I continued to keep the Math work separate, however, I did do most of my initial Math instruction on the carpet with all students present. I was finally feeling that I had a handle on this multi-grade situation, thanks to my good friend at the District Office, and that I had made a few breakthroughs with my multi-grade teaching.

For the next 2 to 3 years I was generally given the responsibility of teaching a Grade 2/3 split class, with Core French on the side. The 1991-92 school year was somewhat similar to my teaching situation the previous year [see Table 5]. The only difference was that I had my first encounter with a Special Needs student who was fully integrated into all subject areas with a teacher aide present for most of that time. My class enrolment was down from last year with 11 students in Grade 2 and 13 students in Grade 3. My daily "Group Instruction" continued as I would teach subjects to the class as a whole, all except Math. Again, I would

keep graded outcomes in mind when planning themes or center activities, however, most instruction was done with the whole class. In Math, I was combining similar chapters/units together. I would, for example, plan a unit on 'Measurement' and have all the students work on this for a block of time, taking into account the different outcomes for each grade level. I also made a habit of not stopping any student from completing any of the activities they wished, even if it wasn't at their specific grade level.

The 1991-92 school year also found me planning and implementing learning centers almost on a daily basis. I especially remember one enjoyable theme unit I completed with my class about "Space". I had been very creative this particular year and introduced the theme by first spending a few days discussing and putting up a display of our solar system. Then I spent one night turning over any moveable object in the classroom and leaving a pink construction paper rendition of a mystery planet named 'Gorb' in the display of planets. I distinctly remember the students arriving in school the next morning and eagerly trying to figure out what had happened. It was hilarious listening to their guesses on what had hit our classroom. The very next day a note was found at the back of the room by an over-turned garbage can. It was written in purple marker on pink paper and each word was written backwards. Before the day was out, one of the students had figured out that the note could be read when placed in a mirror. Another student discovered that we could read it when it was turned over and held up to a light source. The notes continued daily for about

2 weeks and the students learned about all the planets in our solar system as well as their new alien friend, 'Dorgon', from the planet 'Gorb'. They even got into the act of writing Dorgon almost on a daily basis and receiving letters from him as well. Even one of the parents got involved by making a sketch for the class of what he thought Dorgon might look like, as well as writing a letter to the alien using the backwards letter technique I had devised. To this day these same students, now much older, still ask if Dorgon has visited our classroom lately. I remember this particular school year as one of my most enjoyable and fulfilling experiences. It was a joy to come to school each day with a full day of activities and learning experiences that I knew the students would have fun completing.

TABLE 5: Teaching Assignments 1991-92 (R.K. Gardner School)

GRADE(S)	SUBJECT(S) TAUGHT
2/3	Homeroom + all subjects + Core French (except Music and Physical Education)
4/5	Core French

In 1992-93 I was again homeroom Grade 2/3 with 8 and 11 students, respectively. I had two minor changes in my teaching assignments from the previous two years: (1) responsibility for four Grade 1 students that came in with my Grade 2/3 class each afternoon for Religion, Family Living, Health, Buddy Reading, French, and Art; and (2) responsibility for Core French in Grade 6

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 and Grade 7 [see Table 6]. Within my Grade 2/3 split class, much was the same as last year except that I had done much of my theme planning during the summer months. I first made a list of possible themes to be covered during the year, using the Nelson Language Program from both Grade 2 and 3 as a resource. Then I gathered books, magazines, and other useful resource materials and placed them in a file folder for each theme. Over the summer, if I had the opportunity to read an article or visit the Curriculum Materials Center at Memorial University, I would photocopy other necessary ideas and activities and place them in the theme files. When the school year began in September I had compiled a wealth of resources and materials for a very productive year.

TABLE 6: Teaching Assignments 1992-93 (R.K. Gardner School)

GRADE(S)	SUBJECT(S) TAUGHT
2/3	Homerom + Language Arts, Mathematics, and Core French
1/2/3	French, Buddy Reading, Religion, Family Living, Health, and Art (p.m.)
6	Core French
7	Core French

I had now begun to make yearly theme plans which generally involved sitting down with a calendar and mapping out a block of time, either weeks or days, into thematic units. Most themes were planned monthly unless there was an overlap of a holiday, at which

time I would plan two themes for that month. At first, I recorded my subject unit plans on a form entitled "Across the Curriculum Planner" [see Appendix A], which I had obtained previously and had never found use for until now. This form was much like a web in which the theme title was written in the middle and all the subjects listed around it. This form worked for me for a while, only that with two lots of subjects to be covered I needed a lot more space and ended up devising my own, larger form based on this same idea.

Later in the fall, our new District Primary Language Arts Coordinator, Linda Doody, also met with me and showed me another way to put themes together on paper along with the appropriate units using the teacher guide books for each subject. I would cut and paste each subjects chapters/units under the theme that they best suited, making sure to write in the appropriate grade. When the 8" x 14" sheet was filled in [see Appendix B], I would photocopy each sheet for my records. Any chapters or units that didn't fit any theme would be placed on a "Miscellaneous" page to be scheduled in at a later date or to be taken into consideration when planning themes for the following year. I found that this process made it much easier to see, at a glance, which units had to be covered, as well as help me to become better organized. Sometimes it would occur that not all textbook materials would be covered as planned or that I had to omit certain chapters when I felt they had already been covered using another resource. 'Resource Base' teaching was becoming a part of the regular routine

in my multi-grade classroom, so much so that no theme idea or activity was safe from me!

My teaching assignments for the 1993-94 school year at R.K. Gardner School were, again, not much different from the previous year [see Table 7]. One change was my being responsible for a Grade 1/2 homeroom class of 9 and 6 students, respectively. I would again be responsible to teach all Grade 1 and 2 subjects, except for Music and Physical Education, and to continue instructing Core French in the Grade 3/4 split class of 23 students. The biggest change I saw in my daily plan book was the 6-day schedule I had put together. For the first time I did not designate the grades for a block of time, instead I recorded the subject to be taught during that period to the whole class [see Appendix C]. The only subjects identified on the class schedule were Mathematics, Language Arts, Art, French Fun, CORE (which designated the combining of common outcomes in Religion, Family Living, and Health), and Library, as well as Core French in Grade 3/4. I was, again, trying to eliminate the infamous grade labels for my own sake as well as for my students. I wanted them to see themselves as a 'community' of learners who could work closely together and feel free to help each other no matter what particular 'grade' they were in. When gathering students together for a learning activity or discussion time I would refrain from making statements such as "All Grade 2's come sit down" or "Would all Grade 3's gather around my desk". Instead, I would use statements like "All those people wearing purple come sit on the carpet" or other similar comments. Over the

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years, I had come to realize that grade level labels do not reflect exactly where children are in their everyday learning and development. In my daily task of meeting the individual needs of every student in my class I found it easier to do this when I dropped the grade labels and expectations and looked at each student on an individual needs basis.

The 1993-94 school year was also the first year for our primary students to have an extended day. They were now being dismissed at 3:05 p.m. instead of the usual 2:30 p.m. It was a long day, for some, especially the Grade 1's, so it was necessary for me

TABLE 7: Teaching Assignments 1993-94 (R.K. Gardner School)

GRADE(S)	SUBJECT(S) TAUGHT
1/2	Homeroom + Core French + all subjects (except Music and Physical Education)
3/4	Core French

to schedule a 10-15 minute break/recess for students in the afternoon. I still continue with this break today with whatever grade level combination I have.

I, also, found this particular school year to be one of my most relaxed and less hectic years of teaching. I think one of the advantages I had was the low number of students in my class. I planned many worthwhile themes and center activities, as in previous years, and had a lot of fun completing different class projects. Since the overall theme for the entire K-12 school year

was "THE HANDICAPPED", my class and I had many visitors to our classroom, including a paraplegic and a Visual Itinerant teacher who brought lots of interesting materials for us to discuss. The high point of the year was a concert by Terry Kelly in our gymnasium. The whole year brought about many creative expressions by my 1/2 split class, so much so that it overflowed into my planning for the following school year.

My 1994-95 school year at R.K. Gardner saw many surprises and transformations occur both in the school as a whole and in my teaching. Since our Kindergarten teacher was taking on the duties of Vice-Principal, I was to remain homeroom Grade 1/2 for another school year while she took responsibility for Grade Kindergarten. I had 13 students in Grade 1 and 10 students in Grade 2, with the addition of a student who had been diagnosed with Attention Deficit Disorder (A.D.D.). This student was a very likeable little boy who had a tendency to be very physical, often trying to break pencils, rulers, or anything he could get his hands on. Also, he would often be found poking other students as he walked by or hugging them very tightly. It seemed for awhile that whenever I turned my back he was quickly up, out of his seat, and running out of the room or hiding under the tables in our room. His behaviour was quick and very unpredictable, which was something I had not been accustomed to in my years of teaching.

My teaching duties this year included all subjects in Grade 1/2, except for Music, Physical Education, and Computers [see Table 8]. I, also, would not be required to teach outside of my homeroom

which was a nice change. This was a great cut in my work load, however, the added strain of having an A.D.D. student in my class without any assistance was to take this away. My thoughts of a relaxing year fell through the floor on the very first day of school when the A.D.D. student arrived in my classroom without any warning or any previous inservicing on this particular learning disability for me. Also, he arrived without any prior knowledge by our school board so I, therefore, was given no support in the form of a teacher aide. I was also given the added responsibility of giving him a Ritalin pill each day at 12 noon. I remember on the second day of school, my going to the principal's office and pleading with him (I literally got down on my hands and knees) to please get some assistance for me with this child. I was given a booklet on A.D.D. by the District Special Education Coordinator, which I read diligently, and was told that nothing could be done for me at this point in time. I would have to wait to see what the school board could come up with.

During the second week of school I was given the opportunity to meet with the child's social worker, since this student was also living in a foster home. The social worker spoke to me about Attention Deficit Disorder and informed me of this child's previous experiences at school. She told me that in the past, if he misbehaved in any way he was immediately removed from the classroom and placed in another room with the Special Needs teacher. Here, one-on-one, he would be allowed to play with blocks and other toys. The social worker was not impressed by this set-up, but did realize

TABLE 8: Teaching Assignments 1994-95 (R.K. Gardner School)

GRADE(S)	SUBJECT(S) TAUGHT
1/2	Homeroom + Core French + all subjects (except Music, Physical Education, and Computers)

that it had been the school's policy at the time. The classroom teacher could remove the 'problem' from her classroom and not have to deal with it herself. I believe that this child had come to learn to associate his bad behaviour with good rewards for punishment.

In my classroom, on the other hand, there was a whole new scenario for this student. He was now in a multi-grade class of 23 Grade 1/2 students and sitting at a table with four other students, two of which were very well-behaved. Within my classroom there were also a few students who were very rough and tough and, as I came to find out later, had other things in mind for this new student (eg. edging him on to a fight). Most of these children had come to see him as a weakling and quickly realized that they could get him going and have all the blame lie on his shoulders. After I caught on to this way of thinking by some of my students, I began taking them aside and reprimanding them for their unnecessary behaviour.

After a few weeks I seemed to become climatized to this new student and his behaviours. When he misbehaved on his own I immediately removed him from the group and placed him in his seat for a 'Time Out' of approximately 5 minutes. This was made easier

by the fact that I often had center activities going on at the time and the rest of the class could continue on with no interruption. I could sit by him, away from the other groups, and calmly discuss with him what he had done and his punishment. Since I could not remove him from my classroom when he had an outburst, I had learned to deal with him on my own terms. I often would have to take all materials away from him so he would not hurt himself or others.

This worked for a while until he started biting himself during 'Time Out' at his seat. I still remained calm, for the sake of the other students, and attempted to show him I was in charge and was not about to give him any center privileges for this type of behaviour. It was not until I had students who were in tears meeting me daily in the classroom after recess or lunch breaks, that I felt something had to be done and very soon. Many students had become very fearful of his unpredictable behaviours of pounding on tables, biting himself or others, violently breaking things, as well as rough behaviour which, at times, was being urged on by other children in the class. I, again, started pleading at the office for help and was finally provided with a teacher aide after more than a month and a half of school had elapsed.

After a teacher aide was finally put in place for this A.D.D. child during the middle of November, I started to feel that I was capable of carrying out my regular classroom duties with ease. The aide would respond to his unwanted behaviours in the same way I had been doing. After a few weeks of this, I was amazed to see him coming to the realization that when he misbehaved he would be

immediately removed from a fun activity and, thus, have to sit away from the others and watch. He slowly, but surely, learned that he had to behave if he was to take part in all class activities. Also, I found that having centers in the classroom worked very well in managing his behaviours because he could see all the center activities that he would get to do if he behaved properly.

When I had this situation finally in control, I was off and running with my theme plans and learning center activities. I could see it all being a great benefit to those students involved. Also, at this time, I was beginning to see my multi-grade class as one group or entity again. The only problem was, I could not exactly call my class "Upper Primary". I had to revert back to calling them Grade 1/2 until I could come up with a better class title. I also found it a different year since I did not have to leave my 1/2 split class to teach at other grade levels. This was a marvellous break-through for me in teaching duties, especially since the discipline and academic needs in my homeroom were varied and needed much attention and consistency.

This was also the year that Linda Doody, Language Arts Coordinator for our district, met with myself and the Vice-Principal/Kindergarten teacher to show us a new way she had devised to make a 'Two-Year Plan of Focus Themes/Units' for multi-grade [see Appendix D]. She explained how, with this new format she had designed, that a teacher was able to fill in theme(s) to be covered for each month plus the concepts/outcomes and resources to be used. It was very similar to my previous cut and paste planning except

that it could be filled in very quickly, meaning less work and less strain on planning time. Besides using this format for the remaining years, I also devised and used my own planning form in which each theme was broken down into a day-to-day plan [see Appendix E]. I found that both of these forms saved a lot of time and frustration for me when it came to planning for my multi-grade year.

The following year at R.K. Gardner School, 1995-96, was one that I had been looking forward to for a long time, especially after the year I had punched in previously. I had been granted educational leave for January to June 1996 and had been accepted to begin my graduate work towards a Masters of Teaching at Memorial. With this break to look forward to, the first half of the school year couldn't go fast enough for me. I was looking forward to going back to school and being on the other side of the classroom for a change. My teaching assignment this year, again, was homeroom Grade 1/2 [see Table 9] and consisted of half of the group of students that I had taught last year. Since I was familiar with most of the group and since I had just completed two years of teaching a Grade 1/2 split, I felt it was time to give the students some responsibility in coming up with and deciding the themes we would do for the whole year. At the beginning of this school year, I had my class do a brainstorming activity to list all the topics/themes that they would like to do during the year. Then, as a group, we selected 6 or 7 of these topics that students voiced the most interest in (eg. Titanic, Pets/Dogs, Helen Keller). I then

proceeded to spend a week-end devising a tentative yearly focus theme plan. This, granted, was not a very easy thing to do especially when you have such varied themes that are very difficult to match up with many of the grade-level outcomes. I decided to mix in with the student-selected themes some themes that I had previously completed and had much success with in other years. I planned a year of themes, also knowing that my replacement teacher might very well have a different outlook or theme plan in mind for the period from January to June.

TABLE 9: Teaching Assignments 1995-96 (R.K. Gardner School)

GRADE(S)	SUBJECT(S) TAUGHT
1/2	Homeroom + Core French + all subjects (except Music and Physical Education)

The 1996-97 school year found me back at R.K. Gardner and eager to begin my duties after having, I felt, a wonderful sabbatical at University. In my Master's course work, much of my research and papers were based on the theme of 'Multi-grading'. I had completed a lot of reading on the topic by such researchers as Jim Grant and Bruce Miller and was returning to the classroom teaching scene with a revitalized and more positive outlook on multi-grading. My head was full of many wonderful ideas and activities to be tried back in the classroom and I was eager to get at it. My batteries, as someone had pointed out to me, were recharged and I was ready to go places, especially with my multi-

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grade teaching! I also had read much information on 'Multi-age' teaching and its set-up and was very surprised to see that this technique was not much different from my approaches in the past in my own multi-grade classroom. I was teaching to the class as a whole and trying to eliminate grade-level designations, as well as grouping my students heterogeneously instead of by grade/age-level standards. These were all characteristics of the new 'Multi-age' ideology and which I had been implementing in my classrooms for years.

In my readings, I came across a qualitative study by Bruce Miller that showed many positive reasons for multi-grade instruction such as the idea that children can easily be placed ahead or back in areas in which they excel or are having trouble (Miller, 1991). Also, Miller found that the multi-grade classroom had a stronger sense of community and cooperation. The students are "happy" learners with less frustration and fewer discipline problems. I had felt, especially over the past few years, that there were more positives to multi-grade teaching than negatives; however, I felt they were not always at the forefront or being stressed to the public. Our school board, for instance, while in the process of consolidating schools due to declining enrolments, teacher cutbacks, and less government money, used our school's multi-grade situation in a negative way to convince parents to have their high school students moved to a bigger school in the next community. At a public meeting, our school board's superiors stressed the idea that the Level I to III students of R.K. Gardner

school would be better off moving because they would be in one-stream classes with no doubling of grades, thus, being given a better education. I was appalled by this mode of thinking, especially since so many of our district's schools had multi-grade classrooms going on at this time and with many positive learning experiences happening in them. The school board never seemed to give it a second thought, leaving a very sour taste in the mouths of all concerned, especially for those who would remain behind at R.K. Gardner School. The fact still remained that the rest of the students from K-9 were to continue on in multi-graded classrooms. The teachers on staff were left to maintain multi-grading as a good thing to those parents who were now becoming very concerned about the negativity surrounding the multi-grade classroom.

With my adrenalin running high on the multi-grade issue, I proceeded to have an enjoyable year back at R.K. Gardner. My teaching duties consisted of homeroom Grade 2/3 which had become, over the years, my preferred grade combination for multi-grading [see Table 10]. It, also, contained the same group of students that I had taught the previous year before going on leave, give or take one or two students, and the responsibility of the entire Grade 2/3 curriculum. In many of my readings at University, the idea of organizing and planning a two or three year plan for multi-grade/age instruction in advance was a plus if it was to be accepted by all those involved, including parents and the community (Miller, 1989). Since I did not know that I was to have the same

TABLE 10: Teaching Assignments 1996-97 (R.K. Gardner School)

GRADE(S)	SUBJECT(S) TAUGHT
2/3	Homeroom + Core French + all subjects (except Music, Physical Education, Computers, and Library)

group of students for three years in a row, I was not fortunate to have the opportunity at the beginning of the previous year to do the necessary long-term planning.

My planning for this first year back was somewhat similar to my preceding years. I used, again, the tentative yearly plan form and selected themes using the Nelson Language program for both Grade 2 and 3. Also, I taught all subjects to the whole group using learning centers and the whole language approach. I even started experimenting with teaching Math in the same way. I planned, as best I could, to teach similar topics from the Math textbooks. I would have all students on the carpet for the initial instruction and then allow my students to complete any page or center activity they wished. I found that the Grade 2 students especially enjoyed having the opportunity to take a Grade 3 Math text home to complete work from. I, also, remember having to sometimes photocopy pages from the Grade 2 Math text for some Grade 3 students when I felt they needed review or extra practice with a particular concept covered previously.

This year I was attempting to do more grouping by student needs instead of by grade-level or random grouping. I remember when

I had the Grade 3 group for half-hour periods of Language while the Grade 2 group went to Library or Computers, keeping a couple of the stronger Grade 2 students with the Grade 3 group. They were selected due to their strong reading and writing abilities. Also, they were first asked if they were interested in doing this and they decided to try it. I had also obtained parental consent before proceeding with this arrangement. The students worked out so well in this situation that it continued for the remainder of the school year. All students, after spending the last 2 years together, appeared to have forged many good friendships across grade-levels and had learned to work well together in all group activities as one class or community of learners. My strong conviction of students being 'teachers' within our classroom was now part of the norm in our room as well. Students were found helping each other more and assisting those who needed help to complete center activities or the like. I had put in place the rule "Ask three before you ask me" at the start of the school year for students to follow if they needed assistance any time. They were required to ask any three students in the classroom before they came to the teacher for assistance. This worked wonders and was a great classroom management idea that helped me give assistance to those who especially needed it. Students started to realize that they could help each other, no matter what dilemma they found themselves in.

By the end of the 96/97 school year it became apparent that my classroom assignment for the 1997-98 school year would consist of

the exact same group of students, whom I had been homeroom teacher for the past 3 years except they would be a Grade 3/4 split. I felt that the students, especially this years Grade 3's who I had taught since they were in Grade 1, and myself were in need of a change. I, therefore, requested that I be moved to homeroom Grade K, 1 and 2 with only some teaching duties in Grade 3/4. The administration agreed with my suggestion, as well as my reasoning, and granted me my request for the following school year.

The 1997/98 school year became one of change and considerable classroom movement for me. It also became another year that I will never forget due to the many varied teaching duties I was to perform. At first, I was assigned homeroom Grades Kindergarten, 1 and 2, as per my request, with 5, 7 and 11 students, respectively. Since I requested full responsibility for Language Arts, I was given the Language Arts for Kindergarten to Grade 4. Also, I was responsible for Art and Health in Grade 3/4 [see Table 11] and Science and CORE (combining of Religion, Family Living, and Health) in Grade 1/2. After reading articles at university concerning team-teaching in the multi-grade classroom, I felt I could make a go of it by team-teaching with my two fellow teachers in K-4. I was looking forward to using the thematic approach in both classrooms to make planning easier for us, as well as, helping keep my sanity as I moved between the two classrooms.

After the first week of school, as a team we realized that it was going to be almost impossible for me to carry out the full responsibility of Language Arts in K-4 since there was not enough

TABLE 11: Teaching Assignments 1997-98 (R.K. Gardner School)[September to Christmas Break]

GRADE(S)	SUBJECT(S) TAUGHT
K/1/2	Homeroom + Opening Exercises, Language Arts, and CORE (combining of Religion, Family Living, and Health)
1/2	Science
K	Computers
3/4	Language Arts, Health, and Art

scheduled time slots for me for Language Arts in my K-2 homeroom. My principal, who was also my team-teacher in K-2, suggested that I take over the Grade 1 and 2 Math in the afternoon slots and to leave the Language Arts for her to do with the K-2 class in the mornings. I was not happy with this idea since my concentration in Graduate Studies had been in English Language Education and I had great plans for implementing a thematic approach for Language in K-4. Also, I felt that my movement between the two classrooms was now going to be both hectic and disjointed since I would not have a comparable subject to aid in my theme planning or to bring some cohesiveness between both classrooms; however, I commenced to make the best of, what I believed to be, a bad thing.

For the first few months of working with these many changes I virtually felt like a fish out of water. I felt that I could not find my place or niche in either classroom since they both seemed foreign to me. One reason for these feelings was the fact that the

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Grade 3/4 room, which had been my main teaching base and classroom for the past 10 years, was now the full responsibility of another teacher who I was just sharing classroom space with. At the same time, I was also sharing my homeroom K-2 classroom with the principal whose teaching materials and other classroom items remained in the room with a few of my own materials. Most of my teaching and classroom aids were now being kept in boxes either at home or around the school. My ideas for team-teaching and planning themes to cover the K-4 spectrum were not to be and were all plunged down the proverbial drain before I even had a chance to organize my thoughts on the matter. I feel today that if I had taken the leadership role from the start of the school year and organized the themes for K-4 on paper, as I had seen or read about, the others would have come to understand the feasibility of my ideas and welcomed them with open arms. However, with one of my team-teachers carrying out duties of principal besides classroom responsibilities in K-2, and the other teacher a junior high trained teacher with responsibilities for K-6 Physical Education and K-9 Computers, I cannot say that we would have had many opportunities to do any K-4 group planning in the opening months.

I cannot exactly put into words how I felt about the classroom situations I found myself in this year. As far as I was concerned the approach we were taking in K-4 was going against my whole philosophy of multi-grade teaching. I felt that we were moving backwards instead of forwards with the multi-grade situation. Although in K-2 my team-teacher and I were to share 10 hour-long

periods with the whole class for Language Arts in the morning, I was not pleased with that route. I was now, after moving such a long ways from my first introduction to multi-grade teaching, being subjected to teaching by grade-level and by subject, as well as by the infamous clock or school bell. On the suggestion of my team-teacher, we decided to split our K-2 group into grade-level groups. This meant that for most of the year, I was generally responsible for the Grade 2 Language Arts while my team-teacher looked after the K-1 Language Arts program. There were times when I would take some of the stronger Grade 1's to complete a block of work with the Grade 2's or she would take the weaker Grade 2's to work with the K-1 group.

I had given my opposition on this matter of separating by grade-level, but was told that this was the only way to meet the concerns of parents, especially those who were wanting extra help for their child. The circumstances at our school, at the time, were such that we did not have the services of a remedial teacher for K-4, so this arrangement was supposed to take care of any remedial work and concerns of parents. This way, my principal informed me, was the best way around the situation although I did not see it as so. I had felt, from the start, that my idea of having the K-4 program taught using the 3 available teachers, and implementing a Language Arts base along with whole language and learning centers, would be the most beneficial for all concerned. The many circumstances that I had not been accustomed to or had been trying to avoid for the past few years in multi-grade, had returned to

haunt me. After 12 years in the teaching profession I was, again, ready to throw in the towel and quit.

There were other parental concerns that came to light during this school year as well. Some parents were very troubled with the K, 1, and 2 grouping we had in place and many voiced their opinions to both the school administration and the school board almost on a daily basis. They were mainly concerned that their children, especially the Grade 2's, were not being challenged as much as they should and that they were being subjected to too much playtime or group activities with the younger students. Parents could not understand our grouping practices and often would question the need for their Grade 2 child to complete the same story or activity sheet as a student in Kindergarten. After much discussion and explaining by us that students were being challenged all the time, that our expectations for each student were different, and that it all depended on each child's individual needs and working levels, some parents finally appeared to be coming around to our side. There were still others who kept up the fight right until the end of the school year.

Another parental problem was that students who needed extra help would not be able to receive it in such a large class with such a wide range of ages and grade-levels. We reassured these parents that their child was being given the utmost support with the resources we had available and that we had many opportunities, when both teachers were in the classroom, to split the class into groups according to need. This seemed to please many of our

concerned parents, however there were still a few who persisted in expressing their dislike of the grade combination we had put in place. We felt that there was no chance of ever changing some of their attitudes, especially one parent who felt her child should be taken out for Special Education. As team-teachers we attempted, throughout the year, to teach our K-2 group the best way possible using both the Whole Language and the Thematic approaches to learning, as well as through centers; however, we often grouped by need instead of the worthwhile heterogeneous grouping that I had come to believe was very effective.

As we struggled through the year, we had many bright spots and opportunities to demonstrate to other colleagues our worthwhile multi-grade practices. One such occasion occurred early in the year when we were visited by two primary teachers from another school district who had both been assigned multi-grade classrooms. One teacher, who felt she had been "dropped this bomb" when she arrived at her new school in September, had a very negative attitude towards multi-grade instruction and could not see it working for her. The other teacher, who had taught multi-grade before, was eager to learn new ways to make her teaching more relaxed and enjoyable. She even took notes as the day proceeded, commenting or questioning everything she could. One time during the day she commented on how she "couldn't distinguish the grades" in our K-2 classroom. She was extremely impressed, as well, at how efficiently students worked together in their groups, assisting, and helping each other as needed.

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This visit by other peers was quite a boost to my teaching ego, however, it did not cover up the horrendous job I felt I had at hand. Besides my responsibilities in Grade 3/4 and my homeroom duties in K-2, with some split-classes for Language Arts, I was also responsible for Computers with the 5 Kindergarten boys and some CORE (combining of Religion, Family Living, and Health) slots with the K-2 group. I also did opening exercises with my K-2 homeroom before I shifted next door with the Grade 3/4 class of 24 students.

After the Christmas Break, my teaching assignment in Grade 3/4 was changed again [see Table 12]. Instead of teaching Health to the Grade 3/4 class, I exchanged these teaching duties with the Grade 3/4 homeroom teacher and began to teach the Science program instead. She felt that she was best able to teach Health since she was also doing Physical Education. This was fine with me, since I enjoyed Science. The only problem I had was that units which were supposed to be covered before the Christmas Break were now far behind schedule. I found myself having to teach Science almost daily just to cover the assigned outcomes. Another added stress was the fact that our school board was piloting a new Science Curriculum in Grades 4-6 and the entire district was going through many growing pains with it all. I found that in order to cover the program I had to sometimes take a Language Arts class with the Grade 3/4 group to do a Science lesson instead.

This arrangement with Science was not working to my best intentions since I felt that Language activities, such as reading

TABLE 12: Teaching Assignments 1997-98 (R.K. Gardner School)[January to June closing]

GRADE(S)	SUBJECT(S) TAUGHT
K/1/2	Homerom + Opening Exercises, some Language Arts, and CORE (combining of Religion, Family Living, and Health)
1/2	Mathematics and some CORE
K	Computers
3/4	Language Arts, Science, and Art

and writing, should always be a major part of every daily routine. I discussed these concerns with the Grade 3/4 homeroom teacher and we came to the conclusion that it would be very necessary for her to complete extra writing activities daily in her Religion or Social Studies classes to help keep up with the Language Arts needs within her homeroom. Again, I was feeling that I had lost control over my own thematic approach to teaching Language in the Grade 3/4 classroom. It was the first time in my career that I ever agonized so much over my multi-grade instruction. As well, I was beginning to develop a very pessimistic attitude towards it.

In my past multi-grade experiences I was used to planning, using Language Arts as a base, so that students could make continuous progress throughout all subject areas. I remembered using the Language program (Nelson Networks) and being quite able to weave it through my theme units. I had come to the point where Language was being used in every subject area that I taught.

However, this was not what I was able to implement during this 1997/98 school year at R.K. Gardner and these opinions, or regrets, stayed with me through the whole year. To this day, I feel that this school year was my worst on record for multi-grade instruction. I felt that I had done the best that I could do with what I had, however it was not a suitable climate for any teacher to be teaching in. I told many of my colleagues that I would not agree to a similar teaching situation in the future, especially one that would require me to, literally, 'bounce' back and forth between two separate and distinct classrooms.

When I reflect on that year, I often think of the number of students we were working with and of the endless possibilities we had at hand for making it a more promising year for all involved. Our school enrolment at the time had declined considerably with a grand total of 48 students in the primary section, Kindergarten to Grade 4. Two teachers were responsible for at least 24 students at one time. However, the numbers per class for the remaining classes from Grade 5 to 9 never exceeded 20 students with some teachers only responsible for 5 or 9 students at one time. The unequal sharing of teacher man-hours was very unfair and unjustified, especially since in K-4 we did not have a resource teacher for our remedial or special needs students. Here we were in the K-4 section maintaining the bulk of the student population, as well as the greatest number of academic problems, yet we were given no resources or extra teacher units to assist with it.

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Before the school year ended I was given my tentative teaching assignment for the 1998-99 school year. I would be returning to my preferred multi-grade combination of Grade 2/3 with full responsibilities for all the curriculum, except Music, Physical Education, and French. Also, it would be necessary for me to have the Grade 1 group of 5 boys join my Grade 2/3 split during some of the afternoon slots while the K/1 teacher performed her Language Arts duties in Grade 4/5. The administration, finally, could not see tying up one teaching unit for only 5 students when there were so many other needs in our school, especially in the areas of Primary Remedial or Special Needs.

Since school has been out in June, our out-going principal has approached me to ask if I would be interested in teaching Art in either the Grade 6/7 or Grade 8/9 class. Since Art has always been an interest of mine, I gladly acknowledged that I would be interested; however, I stipulated that I would only agree if it could coincide with the slots that my Grade 2/3 group would either be in Music, Physical Education or French. I did not want another teacher to have to come into my classroom to teach a subject just to suit the needs of the older students. I felt that it would be better for my younger students to have the least amount of teacher movement and, at least, a classroom with some consistency especially after what they had been through the previous year. I was assured that this would be the case and I accepted my teaching duties with enthusiasm. Now, I was ready to make my tentative yearly thematic plan for my Grade 2/3 group of 19 students with a

much better chance of me implementing the philosophies of multi-grading that I had come to believe in.

A LOOK BACK

When I reflect on my many years of teaching in the multi-grade classroom, with its numerous ups and downs (or like the past year, ins and outs), I realize that it has all been a major learning experience for me. This past school year could have been made easier if I had taken upon myself the role of 'leader' and better organized what I first had in mind for the K-4 classrooms. All this prior knowledge that I had picked up while away at university could have been used to the advantage of both students and teachers. I, for one, could have avoided the many problems and frustrations that I encountered throughout our year. We had an ideal multi-grade situation right in our laps: 3 teachers for K-4. What a team-teaching paradise we could have had! However, as earlier stated, the myriad of circumstances beyond my control, in regards to my team-teachers, were too overpowering causing me to drop my ideas and dreams for an enjoyable multi-grade year for K-4.

I also remember scenarios where I could have made different decisions or plans if the circumstances had been different. One example occurred back in 1994-95 when I received a Grade 1 and 2 grouping. If, at that time, I had known that I was to retain this same group of students as my homeroom for the next 3 years, I could have planned things quite differently. However, at the time, foresight was not one of our school's or district's top priorities.

Also, with the many cutbacks and possibilities of school closures in our district, things were so uncertain that no long-term planning could be carried out by our administration or its staff. All I know is that if I had been given the chance to make a three-year plan for those students, both myself and my students would have enjoyed a less stressful and more educational four years together than we did.

WHAT RESEARCH HAS TO SAY ABOUT MULTI-GRADING

At the core of multi-grade teaching is instructional delivery methods and teacher quality (Thomas & Shaw, 1992). Studies of instruction in multi-grade classrooms across rural America reveal that teachers use various methods to juggle the wide variety of students needs (Miller, 1991). In his research in Newfoundland and Labrador, Mulcahy (1993) found that multi-grade teachers use a wide variety of teaching strategies to help them cope with the various demands of having many subjects and such a wide range of individual needs in their classrooms. A "sack full" of good teaching strategies is very necessary on the road to creating a successful multi-grade learning environment. Many of these strategies help make connections across the curriculum (Grant & Johnson, 1995).

Mulcahy (1993) states that the most common form of curriculum integration used in a multi-grade classroom is "horizontal integration" in which the teacher designs an appropriate set of learning activities to meet the intended educational outcomes in many curriculum areas. The school day is generally planned around

the theme or topic instead of around the separate subjects. As well, some teachers have experimented with "thematic vertical integration" which involves using a common theme or topic to teach different grade levels within a single learning area (Mulcahy, 1993). The teacher is able to work with the whole class instead of having to teach separate classes, separate subjects. Resource-based teaching and learning centres are very closely related to this integrating and combining of subjects and grades thematically.

Complete immersion in reading, writing, talking, and listening is another popular teaching strategy used in the multi-grade classroom. Reading and writing are a part of everything that happens throughout the day in any classroom. Mathematics, for example, doesn't necessarily need to be taught in isolation. Learning the language of numbers, of estimating, and of calculating needs to happen from morning to afternoon (ie. the calendar and the weather - How many hours are there left of school? Is it hotter/colder than yesterday? Is there more/less daylight after school?). Language teaching is a major part of the everyday instruction in a multi-grade classroom. Some researchers specify the particular benefit of integrating the reading curricula, while others suggest that all academic areas can and should be integrated so students are taught as though they were all in the same grade (Delforge, Delforge, & Delforge, 1992).

Recent research has found that students in multi-grade/age classrooms are yielded many cognitive benefits (Veenman, 1995). One such benefit is that children whose knowledge or abilities are

similar but not identical can stimulate each other's thinking and cognitive growth (p. 322). In my multi-grade classroom I have seen this first hand when older and younger students work together. The older children feel good sharing what they already know about a topic with the younger students. Even the younger children, who would otherwise not take a big part in large group activities, seem to learn more from their peers and elders. I have seen older students diligently explaining ideas to younger students, and sometimes vice versa, with no hindrance on anyone's part. The older students, while sharing what they have previously learned with the younger students, are also deepening their own understanding of the concept as well. As Katz (1995) points out, younger children are capable of participating and contributing to far more complex activities than they could initiate if they were by themselves. Once the older students set up the activity, the younger ones are found participating even if they could not have set it up (p. 2).

Throughout the research literature on multi-grade instruction, various advantages and difficulties were apparent. In the area of cognitive development, younger children learning along with older children were found to learn vocabulary more rapidly and to be introduced earlier to more advanced problem-solving skills (Hallion, 1994). Peer tutoring has been found to produce academic improvement for both parties involved and, as well, the tutors show increased self-confidence and an improved attitude toward school. Through peer tutoring the stigma of repetition is removed, therefore, the dropout rate is reduced (Thomas & Shaw, 1992). Also,

children can easily be placed ahead or back in areas in which they excel or are having trouble (Miller, 1991).

Evidence suggests that multi-grade students can attain higher achievement levels, especially in math, language, and the sciences. Columbia's Escuela Nueva program of multi-grading, was found to be very successful in raising primary students' achievement in math and Spanish, as well as possibly affecting indicators of creativity, self-image, and socio-civic behaviours. It is also cited that the mixed-age interactions promote leadership skills, independence, and improved social skills (Hallion, 1994; Psacharopoulos, G., Rojas, C., & Velez, E., 1993; Thomas & Shaw, 1992). Miller (1991) found that the multi-grade classroom has a stronger sense of community and cooperation. The students are "happy" learners with less frustration and fewer discipline problems.

The consensus on difficulties experienced by multi-grade teachers is highlighted in the response "double planning, double teaching, double grading, and double record keeping". These teachers cite that the time factor is most critical - time in terms of covering materials with students and teacher preparation (Appalachia, 1990). Teachers report that there is very little time, if any, for curriculum planning, collaboration with other teachers, record-keeping of student work, professional development, and teacher reflection. As well, the multi-grade teacher does not have much time to evaluate teaching strategies or to reflect on whether they have been successful or not.

What does the research tell us regarding the skills required of the multi-grade teacher? Much of the research states that the skills needed by a single-grade teacher are similar to those of a multi-grade teacher, except for the greater demand on the cognitive and emotional sides. Miller (as cited in Cobham, 1992) outlines many characteristics that a successful multi-grade teacher must possess. He considers it necessary for a multi-grade teacher to:

- 1) be organized, creative, and flexible.
- 2) be willing to work hard, be resourceful, and self-directed.
- 3) be willing to work closely with the community.
- 4) have a strong belief in the importance of cooperative and personal responsibility in the classroom and be ready to develop these characteristics in students.
- 5) have prior successful experience in the grade levels to be taught.

Miller (1991) also notes that more time must be spent in organizing and planning for instruction in a multi-grade classroom if the teacher wishes to meet the individual needs of students and to be successful at monitoring their progress. A climate needs to be established to promote and develop independence in all students. If all students are to be involved, the teacher needs to recognize that whole-class instruction must revolve around open task activities. Miller (1991) has found that multi-grade classrooms are "as effective as single-grade classrooms in terms of achievement, and superior in terms of student affect" (p. 15). Penney (1992)

concluded from his research on multi-grading in Newfoundland and Labrador schools, that "there was no significant difference in academic achievement between students of rural multi-grade classrooms and students from rural single-grade classrooms" (p. 11). In the Newfoundland and Labrador Royal Commission Report Our Children Our Future (1992), the issue of rural schooling is addressed:

Despite the prevalence of such classes (ie. multi-grades), their possible effects on students and their impact on teaching strategies have rarely been addressed or accommodated (p.304).

CONCLUSION

Give me a fish and I will be fed today. Teach me how to fish and I will be fed forever.

Old Proverb (as cited in Tener, 1995)

By way of conclusion I want to summarize my journey from my earliest attitudes on multi-grade teaching to my present day philosophies. I remember my first thoughts of having two distinct, separate grade levels before me that had to be taught independent of each other. The need was there to socially integrate the students into grade level groups. Today I have come to the alternative approach which I have always preferred and advocated: to provide a class of students (whether it be a 1/2 or 2/3 combination) with the same experiences and learning activities,

while allowing for their individual and diverse needs. I have come to see the need to socially integrate the students into a single learning community instead of two separate grades. I now implement many learning activities that try to take into account not only each student's individual needs or learning abilities but their learning rates.

I have also come to realize that as a teacher, no matter if in a single or multi-grade situation, you have to see each student as a unique individual with different needs and responses. I have come to see each of my multi-grade classes as either a 'family' or 'community' of learners. I have come to realize that I, the teacher, am only a 'facilitator' of learning and that the students have an abundance of knowledge waiting and needing to be shared. I had started out in the multi-grade classroom teaching subjects separately to distinct grade levels. Today, however, I have come to integrate as much of the graded subjects as much as possible. I know that I am having much success in doing this with all subjects except Mathematics. Maybe over the next few years at this I will be able to accomplish that major feat: teaching one whole-class math lesson to a class of more than one grade.

To this day, I can honestly say that if I was ever given the choice to either teach a single-grade or a multi-grade class I would chose the latter. After making this statement to many of my colleagues and friends, both in and out of the teaching profession, many have thought I was crazy and often ask "Why?". I often find myself replying that it is because I have come to find the multi-

grade experience to be a much more rewarding and satisfying route to take. I feel that I am better able to follow the academic growth of my students on a daily, and sometimes yearly, basis. As well, I tell them that I find it to be a more relaxing situation, with students feeling more like family to me. Also, I feel that in a multi-grade situation I have more control of my own creativity and of what I teach and how I teach it. As well, I feel that I have the flexibility to juggle schedules around to meet the ever changing needs of my students when necessary. I know from my experiences with multi-grading in the past, that it can work to the benefit of all students involved if the teacher is both enthusiastic and flexible, as well as having the complete support of administration, staff, parents and community.

Over the years I have found students in my multi-grade classes to be very cooperative, independent learners with an eagerness to learn new things no matter what the difficulty. I have witnessed Grade 3 students tutoring Grade 2 students on how to complete 2-digit addition with trading, without any encouragement from me to do so. I have seen Grade 1 students eagerly involved in a higher grade-level activity beaming from their feeling of great accomplishment. I have watched many students of different backgrounds and academic levels working together to complete a group project with pride. I have observed younger students beaming after assisting older students with the spelling of a word. Just as Miller (1991) has discovered multi-grade/multi-age classrooms to be, I have found my students to be 'happy' learners with little or

no discipline problems, working at very low frustration levels and developing a better self-image through peer-tutoring, group activities, and other instructional practices. What more could any teacher ask for?

From the start of my multi-grade teaching, each situation has been due mainly to the declining enrolment or government cutbacks and never because of the philosophical belief that it was the 'best' or 'right' learning environment for students. Because of this, I have always wanted to get the positive side of multi-grade teaching out in the public eye and to quash those negative notions that first hit a person when someone says "multi-grade". These and other extrinsic barriers to effective multi-grade teaching have always been a concern of mine. People, especially parents and administrations, need to understand the philosophy and to see that although it is far from being a new phenomenon, multi-grade instruction today is done completely different from the way it was 10 years ago or beyond.

One recommendation I would make is the necessity to relay to all people involved in a school, both the positive and negative sides to having multi-grade instruction. I believe that if society could be shown the many positive aspects and results of studies completed on multi-age classrooms and be able to witness how they outshine the downside, everybody would be standing up and arguing for multi-grade instruction in our public schools instead of the single-graded classroom. I once read in an article during my Graduate work, a statement which has always stuck in the back of my

mind and which concerns the real reason for implementing multi-grade instruction more often: When children play together they don't segregate themselves by age; instead they play all together without any attention to age or grade distinctions. Why then do we, as adults, force this age appropriate grade-level designation on them when they first arrive at school?

Another recommendation I would make is that every teacher or school administrator involved in implementing or instructing in a multi-grade, be given the necessary training in this worthwhile procedure instead of having it literally 'dumped' into their laps on the first day of school with no previous exposure or knowledge. Teachers should be taught how to effectively integrate subjects and to monitor student progress, as well as how to use the many different grouping practices to ensure the best for everyone in the multi-grade classroom. Also, parents and the community should be informed that the education of their children will not be deprived because of multi-grading but, rather, enhanced.

With the changes in society today and the outlook for the future education of this province appearing very different, I look towards the year 2000 with some hope. I pray that with the possibility of multi-grading or multi-aging becoming the 'norm' in many urban and rural schools in the future, the positive side will become highlighted. The many successful practices of multi-grade instruction should be properly and effectively put into place so that all children in our province are given the highest, balanced, quality of education that is possible. Students, as well as

teachers, should be given the chance to see themselves as capable, successful, and 'happy' life-long learners and leaders.

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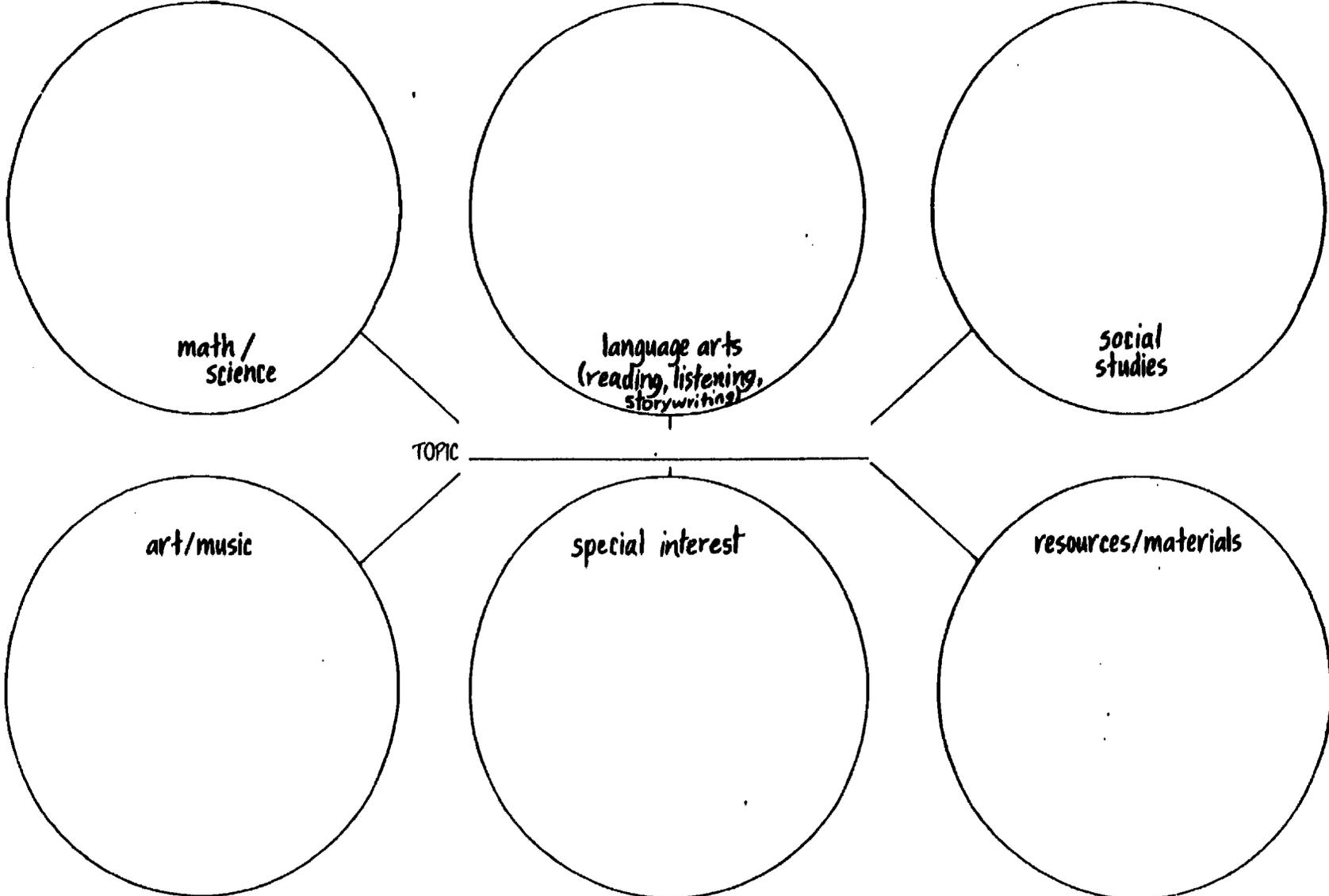
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Across the Curriculum Planner



Theme: Our Solar System/Space (+ Thanksgiving)

Gr. 2
(Unit 6)

Theme 5: Wonderful Ways to Go
 Lesson 16: Wonderful Ways to Go
 Lesson 17: Ride Your Imagination
 Lesson 18: The Happy Wanderers
 Independent Reader: The Know-It-All Frog
 Independent Reader: The Sailwagon
 Lesson 19: Brendan, Morgan and the Best Ever Cloud Machine

Language Development Checklist 4
 Lesson 20: Actively Books—
 Using "A Story for You"

Oral Reading Appraisal Record

Language Development and Awareness Summary
 Theme 5: Wonders That Might Be

Lesson 10: Wonders That Might Be
 Lesson 11: Space
 Lesson 12: The Best New Thing
 Independent Reader: But Martin!
 Independent Reader: Alistair in Outer Space

Language (Networks)

Gr. 2
(Unit 8)

Theme 2: Our Good Health
 Lesson 6: Our Good Health
 Lesson 7: Come to the Health Fair
 Lesson 8: the trouble with stitches
 Lesson 9: Ruff 'n' Reddy
 Language Development Checklist 5

Science (Add-on-Weekly)

Gr. 3
(Unit 11)

7 Sunlight on the Earth and Moon
 Chapter Planning Guide 147a
 Chapter Opener 148
 Lesson 1 Sunlight and Shadows 150
 Lesson 2 The Moving Earth 153
 Our Science Heritage 154
 Lesson 3 Day and Night 158
 JOBS Using Science 162
 Lesson 4 Light on the Earth 163
 Lesson 5 Sunlight on the Moon 168
 Looking Back 172
 Ideas for REVIEW 172
 TEST Your Understanding 173
 PROBLEMS 174
 FIND OUT on Your Own 175



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345
350
352

Gr. 2
(Mathquest)

Unit 1 Number to 19
 Problem solving: Developing observation skills, thinking of possibilities
 Printing numerals
 Identifying and creating sets to 9
 Adding members to create a set
 Creating coin collections to match a price

355
360

Gr. 2

Problem solving: Creating and interpreting a pictograph
 Identifying a ten and ones
 Counting coin collections: A dime and pennies

361

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Math

Counting on and back
 Identifying the number before/after/between
 Identifying the greater/greatest and lesser/least numbers
 Identifying and comparing sets
 Problem solving: Obtaining information from a picture
 Problem solving: Sorting

88

111

111

112

115

112

Gr. 2
(Mathquest)

Unit 2 Addition and subtraction facts to 10
 Identifying ordinal position
 Finding sums to 5
 Problem solving: Printing a number sentence for an illustration; illustrating a number sentence
 Finding differences to 5
 Finding sums to 7
 Finding differences to 7
 Finding related addition and subtraction facts
 Problem solving: Word problems
 Finding sums and differences to 8
 Finding sums and differences to 9
 Finding sums and differences to 10
 Recording number sentences with 3 addends
 Finding and recording the missing addend
 Problem solving: Choosing the appropriate operation; printing a number sentence for an illustration

Gr. 3
(Mathquest)

Unit 1 Addition and Subtraction Facts to 18
 Reviewing sums and differences to 18
 Problem solving: Choosing the appropriate operation
 Finding missing addends
 Identifying and generating fact families
 Identifying rows and columns in an array
 Completing an addition table
 Problem solving: Interpreting a pictograph
 Problem solving: Looking for possibilities
 Problem solving: Choosing the operations in a multi-step problem

96-97 Fruits

98-99 Vegetables

100-101 Breads and Cereals

102-103 Meats

104-105 Milk and Cheeses

106-107 Some Meals for a Healthy Day

108-109 Some Meals for a Healthy Day

110-111 Some Meals for a Healthy Day

112 Words to Know

112 Things to Do

113 Using "Words to Know"

113 Questions to Answer

Chapter 6 "Eating Many Foods"
 Gr. 2 Health (Being Healthy)

Extra Resource:

"Children of the World" (Primary Unit by Alberta Global Ed. Project)
 The Right to Adequate Nutrition and Medical Care - Food 27

Gr. 2 Social Studies (Explorations)

"Exploring a Space Community" (pp. 103-150)

Gr. 3 Religion (Friends of God)

Unit II: Thankfulness 25

Abraham and Sarah 28

Frederick Banting 32

Lester Burry

Sept. 1992-93

* Other teacher with Gr. 1/2 while I was in Gr. 3/4 Core French.

Class Schedule (Gr. 1/2)

1993-94

Duty

DAY/PERIOD	1	2	3	4	5	6
8:50 - 8:55	DEVOTIONS					
8:55 - 9:40	1 Language (centers)	Lang.	Lang.	Lang. (centers)	Lang.	Lang.
9:40 - 10:20	2 Language	Music	GYM	Lang. (centers)	GYM	Music
10:20-10:32	RECESS					
10:32-11:15	3 GYM	Math	Math (centers)	Math Buddy Reading	Math	Math
11:15-12:00	4 Math	Math	Math (centers)	Math Buddy Reading	Math	Math
12:00-12:50	LUNCH					
12:50-12:55	HOMEROOM					
12:55 - 1:35	5 French Fun!	Lang. (centers)	Lang.	French Fun!	Library	Lang. (centers)
1:35 - 2:15 2:15 - 2:30	6 *French (Gr. 3&4) Printing BREAK	Lang.	*French (Gr. 3&4) Computers	Art	*French (Gr. 3&4) Printing	Lang. (centers)
2:15 - 3:00	7 CORE	CORE	CORE	Art	CORE	CORE
3:00 - 3:05	DEVOTIONS					

