

Wyoming Teacher Policy Institute Action Research Final Project

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Language Arts Growth In Multiage Settings

Introduction

Woods Learning Center opened in the fall of 1991 after five district educators approached the superintendent of Natrona County School District with the idea of beginning a new, innovative school. Woods Learning Center is a public K-8 school in Casper, Wyoming that uses a variety of multiage groupings to instruct children. Students are arranged in multiage classrooms called “pods.” Kindergarten and first grade students are in a classroom called the primary pod, second and third grade students are in an intermediate pod, fourth and fifth grade students make up the upper intermediate pod, and seventh and eighth grade students form a middle school classroom. The sixth grade students at Woods Learning Center are in an individual classroom but work with both the upper intermediate pod and the middle school students in a variety of multiage activities. Woods Learning Center is a child centered learning environment that believes individuals learn best when they are actively involved in the learning process.

Increased demands on testing and curriculum mapping brought about the importance to understand how multiage learning affects student achievement. Therefore, in my study I researched how multiage groupings impact achievement

in language arts at Woods Learning Center. More specifically, I compared academic growth in language arts between first year and second year students in a multiage classroom. I also explored stakeholders' perceptions of how multiage classrooms affect student achievement and the best practices that support multiage learning. After completing my research I am able to answer the question: How does academic growth in language arts compare between first and second year students in a multiage classroom?

The purpose of my project was to understand and articulately communicate the best practices in language arts instruction that support multiage learning at Woods Learning Center. I used writing assessment and project presentation assessment data to determine if there is more academic growth in language arts during a child's first or second year in a multiage classroom. The administrative team will use information, gained from this study, to make sound judgments related to curriculum and instruction. The information will further inform the district of best practices for successful student learning.

Literature Review

In answering the question, "Do students learn more in the first year or second year in a multiage classroom," I looked to the current literature for information and reviews. Multiage education has long been a topic in educational studies. The history of multi-age education dates back to the colonial period of one-room schoolhouses. Since that time, multiage has evolved and has multiple meanings in different settings across the nation. While reading literature about multiage education, it became evident that little to no research

has been done in the area of growth from year to year in a multiage setting. There is however, a variety of literature concerning how academic growth is affected by multi-age settings. Recurring themes, throughout the literature on multiage education, surface in the areas of relationships and social interactions; teacher's knowledge of students; extra time on task in the classroom; and students learning at their own pace.

Relationships and Social Interactions.

According to the sources found on multiage education, academic growth in multi-age classrooms is greatly influenced by relationships formed and social culture found in the classroom. According to a study by Kinsey, a combination of relationships and a healthy environment makes a significant contribution to academic achievement (2001). Another source states that "learning is the integration of all domains (cognitive, physical, social, emotional, aesthetic, moral) and how emotion interacts with children's' learning is a serious consideration in the multiage classroom" (Stone, 1997, p. 108). Both authors address relationships as an important part of academic success. Chase and Doan take it a step further by comparing multiage schools to other high achieving countries such as Japan, Germany, Sweden, and Switzerland where it is not unlikely for teachers to stay with the same students for 2 or more years (1994). Chase and Doan also state that a better relationship with students creates a culture in the classroom, which allows students to feel safe and confident in their knowledge. Having confidence brings a sense of contentment for students and makes them more likely to take risks as learners. Furthermore, taking risks as learners allows

for meaningful learning on behalf of the student. Chase and Doan's work correlates to the studies of Piaget and Vygotsky. According to Piaget and Vygotsky, as the brain constructs knowledge within a social context, it lays foundation for cognitive knowledge. On the same note, social behavior has been related to greater student achievement and higher outcomes on standardized tests (Kinsey, 2001.) The information in these sources support the data collected from the Woods Learning Center Staff and parents. Through interviews and surveys the Woods Learning Center Staff overwhelmingly stated that relationships and culture make Woods a successful school while parents commented on the "family atmosphere" of the school.

Teacher's Knowledge of Students.

Another trend found in the literature is that of the teacher's ability to get to know the student for more than one year. When teachers work with their students for multiple years, they are more familiar with students' strengths and weaknesses and better able to set long-term goals and closely monitor growth (George & Lounsbury, 2000). Authentic assessment also comes about in a multi-age classroom because teachers have enhanced knowledge of the students (Chase & Doan, 1994). Extra time with a student also allows the teacher to approach many developmental tasks with a "two-year perspective." (p. 97) According to George and Lounsbury, "Students need not to begin every year with new teachers unaware with their academic profiles and time doesn't need to be devoted to lengthy time-consuming diagnosis of student's learning (2000, p.15). Unfortunately, in a one-year traditional classroom teachers may not have time to

do the lengthy process of diagnosis and may simply begin the year with the scope and sequence chart. When given sufficient time teachers are able to gain insights to many areas of the students' lives and are able to change curriculum and instruction to better fit the students needs (Chase & Doan, 1994). George and Lounsbury sum it up as "Teachers are more effective when they know students well, when they understand how their students learn and when they have enough time with students to accomplish their goals (1992, p.65)."

Time.

Overwhelmingly, the issue of time was repeated in the literature. One of the benefits of multiage is that there is less time wasted in a multiage setting because there is a group of students that already know the expectations of the classroom. Rather than devoting time to understanding the rules and expectations of a new classroom context, the students are secure because they know half of classmates and the teachers (Chase & Doan, 1994) George and Lounsbury also reveal that through their studies, "Time on task which research proves is the most valuable commodity in producing academic achievement, is certain to benefit from teachers and students who view themselves as having a two or three year learning contract" (p.15). Not only do teachers find that there is more instructional time in the classroom in a multiage setting, but students as well have stated that they are able to undertake large learning goals and find greater success when the work time has less disruption (George and Lounsbury, 2000).

Pace of Learning.

While reading the literature, I found little information about growth of students in multiage classrooms. Most of the literature reviewed mentioned that students were successful because they were allowed to grow at their own pace. Chase and Doan say that multiage education is a solution to grade retention (1994). This makes sense because multiage classrooms generally have a developmental view of learning. The developmental learning model allows learning to be structured over several years to support each student as an individual. Multiage classrooms have high, but appropriate, expectations, no grade levels, and usually no letter grades. The absence of grade level labels and letter grades equates to no “labeling” and therefore no need for retention (Stone, 1997). Because students are allowed to grow at their own pace, students are naturally learning to be helpful, patient, and tolerant of peer’s abilities (Katz, 1992). It is evident in previous studies on multiage education, academic growth from year to year isn’t as important as continuous learning for students.

In all of the literature reviewed, none mentioned the amount of growth of first compared to second year students in a multiage setting. I found that both groups are mentioned to benefit in a variety of ways. Multiage settings where older children have the opportunity to tutor younger children have produced promising outcomes (Unrath, Robertson, Valentine, 1999). Grant, Johnson and Richardson state “Students who teach other students often retain as much as 90% of the material taught.” (1996, p. 48). This information would lead a reader to believe that second year students would have higher academic growth. On

the other hand, another source claimed that pressure from older children on younger children might cause cognitive stimulation and more growth on the part of the younger student. (Chase & Doan, 1994) This information is contradictory to most of the literature, but supports the results found through the research at Woods Learning Center.

Interestingly, while the research does not overtly state that students learn more the second year, there is an overall theme in the literature that second year students would have higher growth. Second year students having more knowledge of expectations, stronger relationships with teachers, and contentment in the environment implies that a second year student in a multiage setting would show greater academic achievement than that of a first year student in a multiage setting.

Methodology

As with any action research, the approach to my research started delicately. Woods Learning Center staff is adamant about multiage learning and there was some apprehension about the goals of the research. When Jennifer Grooms, Nicole Roden, and I assured our staff that our goal was to learn more about multiage practices in order to sustain our school and vision, the staff was supportive of our research. The staff at Woods Learning Center was pleased to learn that our research was aimed toward finding the strengths and benefits of multiage learning so that we could communicate multiage learning practices to administration at the district level. Hopefully in the future, we can use our

combined research to support the school of choice model in Natrona County School District and work towards modifying curriculum mapping to fit our needs.

To begin the project I worked with colleagues Nicole Roden and Jennifer Grooms, researching different aspects of multiage learning, to create a survey for the parents and students of Woods Learning Center. Parents were given a written survey where they answered questions using a five point Likert scale. They were also given the option to write comments related to multiage practices. After surveying the parents, the kindergarten through eighth grade students were surveyed about different aspects of multiage learning. Following written surveys of parents and students, I worked with my research colleagues to conduct interviews of the instructional staff members at Woods Learning Center. This data was graphed and analyzed for trends and information of best practices that support multiage learning. After graphing and analyzing data from surveys and interviews I used 4 years of writing assessment data and one year of project presentation data to determine if students make more growth in the first or second year in a multi-age classroom. Lastly, I reviewed school assessment data on the NWEA Growth and PAWS assessments to reflect overall language arts achievement at Woods Learning Center.

Analysis and interpretation of the data came about rather easily after completing the literature review. Survey results and stakeholders' comments corroborated with the literature. The same themes emerged in literature that was over ten years old and interviews completed this year. Once I started looking into the assessment data it became evident that learning is a process that takes

place over several years, but it wasn't until I read the middle school students' reflections that I fully understood that there was not a conclusive answer to my research question.

Findings

The learning from this project was much deeper than just answering my original question. After teaching in a multiage setting for 4 years I have come to understand that multiage learning is a great way for students to learn. However, I never knew or understood the research and methodology of multiage and how it truly impacted children. Completing this study has allowed me to understand where the idea of multiage came from, how it has evolved, the social impacts and academic impacts on student achievement. The readings furthered my knowledge as a multiage teacher and made me more appreciative of the work I get to do each day.

My research is divided into five sections. First, the results of the parent surveys show the perceptions on a variety of multiage aspects. The second area of research focuses on the students. Student interviews, surveys, survey comments, and written reflections show how the students feel about a multiage setting and how they believe they grow as learners. Research in the third area relies on interviews with teachers and support staff at Woods Learning Center. Through the interview comments, a deeper understanding of how multiage works and beliefs of academic learning are revealed. The fourth and fifth areas concentrate on the numerical data from Woods Learning Center students.

Writing assessment data and project presentation assessment data is used to give evidence of growth in multiage classrooms.

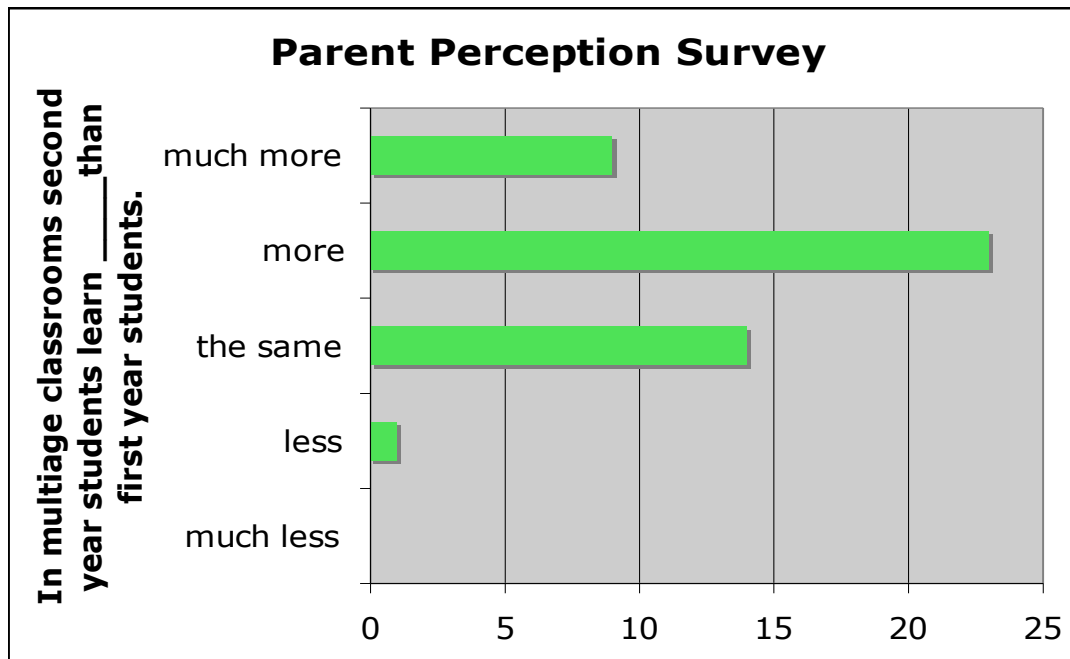
Surveys.

Parent surveys were a very important part of the research. Starting with parent surveys revealed how parents felt about multiage learning and some beliefs they held about multiage practices. Collecting data from the surveys helped to answer the question of academic growth in a multiage classroom, but also defined areas that need to be addressed with parents.

The parent survey included several questions pertaining to academic achievement in multiage classrooms. The responses were very revealing. Fifty-three families agreed or strongly agreed that multiage provided a greater range of academic opportunities for their child, while only two disagreed with the statement. Parent comments in this area are supported by the literature surrounding multiage topics. One parent commented, "This is true beyond words. Independent learners can go as far as their desire takes them." The fact that most multiage settings focus on developmental learning of a child, supports this quote from the parent. Another parent remarked, "I believe this depends on staff and the content in which the multiage class is taking place." Another parent commented, "Curriculum tends to be repeated each year." These comments will be presented to the staff for their ideas on how we can address such ideas.

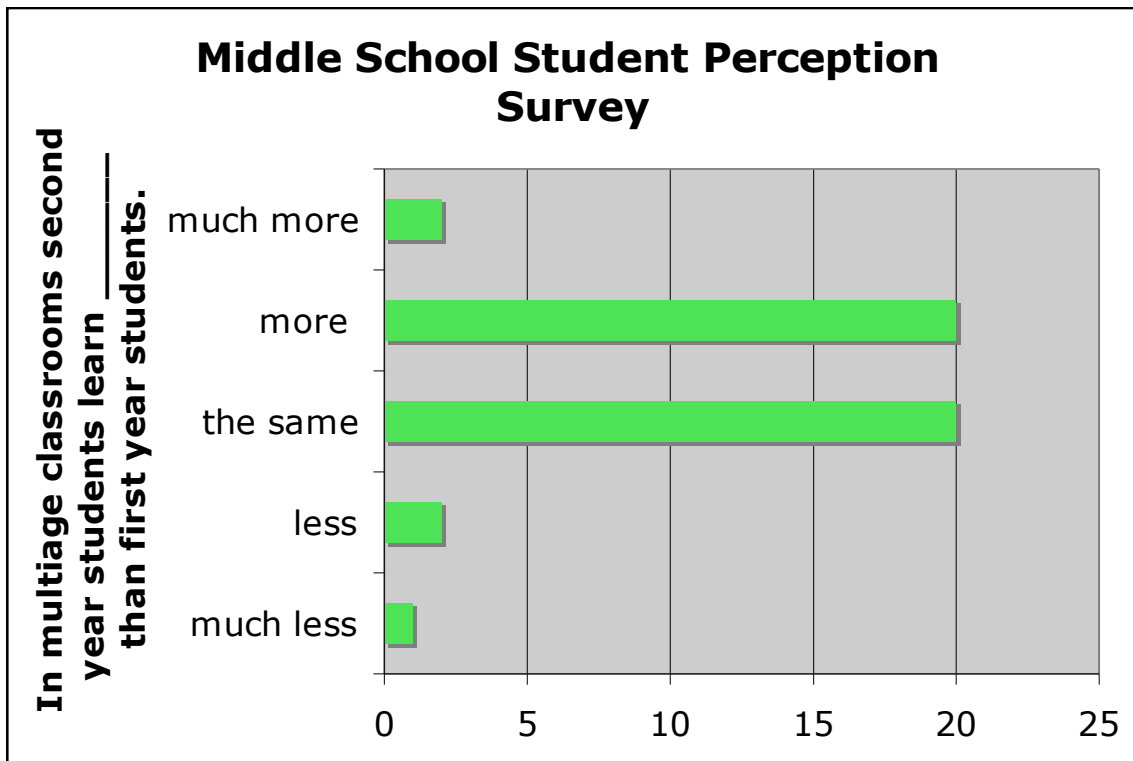
The most important question, to my research, on the survey focused on the academic growth in a multiage classroom or pod. Parents were asked to fill in the blank with "much less", "less", "some", "more", or "much more" in the

following statement. “Second year students in a multiage classroom learn _____ than first year students.” The parents’ responses were surprising. One parent responded “less,” fourteen parents responded “the same,” twenty-three responded “more,” and nine responded “much more.” The results of the survey correspond with the beliefs implied in the literature and information from the teacher interviews. Both the literature and staff interviews implied that second year students would learn more because of the knowledge of expectations, the level of comfort in the classroom, and the availability of role models.



Students provided the responses for the next area of research. Paper surveys were distributed to each student at Woods Learning Center. Kindergarten through fifth grade was given a different survey than the middle school students. The younger students took a survey that mainly focused on the affective aspects of multiage ages, which is addressed in research by my colleague, Nicole Roden.

After viewing the results of the kindergarten through fifth grade survey, I found that the information didn't address my research question. The middle school students were given the same survey as the parents and answered the same questions on academic opportunities and growth in a multiage classroom. The results from the from the middle school surveys were answered in the following manner:



It was interesting to see that the middle school students felt they learn more or the same as a second year student. Comments from the students in this area helped to understand their thinking.

“Sometimes the group splits into two and three for like thirty minutes and each group learns something different.”

“I think each year we learn more and more bit by bit.”

“It’s nice because we are able to show strategies and be shown strategies.”

“This is because in a multiage classroom you have the ability to learn what the higher grades do.”

Student Interviews.

I chose to interview students to probe for further information about multiage learning from a student perspective. I asked the following questions:

1. What is good about Woods Learning Center?
2. What would you tell people about multiage learning?
3. What do you like or dislike about learning with different aged kids?
4. What did you learn by watching other students’ projects?
5. Do you think you learned more during your first or second year in a pod?

The comments made by the students during the interview were fascinating. The students could articulately answer the questions with relevant answers to my research. The students were open and honest about their feelings and beliefs of multiage learning.

When I asked the students what they thought was good at Woods Learning Center they said many of that same things that the staff said. One student said, “Multiage learning is a positive thing because it puts you with younger people and teaches you how to work together.” A middle school student explained, “It is nice at Woods Learning center because teachers take the time to explain things and it doesn’t matter the age group, all teachers are there to help.” She also mentioned, “Working with different people helps you to learn more.” An intermediate student like the fact that, “You don’t have to get used to a new teacher every single year.” All of these comments link directly to the literature based on relationships.

When asked the second question about what they would tell people about multiage learning the students responded in a very positive manner. A primary student said, “You get to play with each other a lot of the time.” A sixth grade student thought multiage learning “puts you more people and you get to learn leadership and following.” Another student thought multiage learning was fun because “the olders can teach the youngers.” These answers coincide with the culture of learning at Woods. More research in this area can be found in Nicole Roden’s study on social impacts of multiage groupings.

It was fun to hear the likes and dislikes of students when working with different aged kids. Four students commented on how frustrating and difficult it was to explain something to a younger student. Two students felt “cool” and “important” when they got to teach something to a younger student.

The most interesting comments came from asking the students what they learned by watching other students' project presentations. The teachers at Woods Learning Center will be excited to see that the modeling provided by the older students is benefiting the younger students. The following list was created during the interview with students. Watching other projects taught them:

- New ways to do research
- How to organize ideas
- Different Styles of presenting
- Visual/board ideas
- How to be creative
- How to use note cards
- How not to use note cards
- Movement (when a presenter moves around it is easier to listen and learn)
- Don't rely on parents for help
- Ask audience questions for interaction

As a teacher/researcher I was excited to hear what the students were learning from one another. There is no surprise that the second year students have higher scores on projects. They are learning an incredible amount about project presentations from one another.

The final question was the same question that was on the written survey. When asked if they feel like they learn more the first or second year in a pod, I received a variety of answers plus additional comments that helped me

understand their thinking. Out of the six students interviewed, two students thought they learned more the first year in a pod. They supported their reasoning with the following comments: “In my first year in intermediate the teacher asked a question and I didn’t understand. But in the second year, I was asked the same question and I knew the answer.” “During the first year you might be shy and timid. The olders will help you understand and learn the concept.” Two students said they learned more during the second year in the classroom because there was more writing in math. The remaining two students thought they learned the same amount or it “depended on the subjects” and what the students needed to learn. Even though the students varied in their answers they all agreed on one thing. Everything they learned the first year was reviewed the second year so that they could remember.

While interviewing six students doesn’t give conclusive evidence, it did provide insight to the students and their feelings about multiage age. I found it refreshing that the students answered many of the questions with comments I also heard in the staff interviews. This leads me to realize, Woods Learning Center’s philosophy and beliefs are not only held by the staff. The students hold the beliefs on learning as important as the staff. Furthermore, multiage learning is more than an instructional method, it is a culture of learning.

Student Written Reflections.

To get additional student perspective I used written reflections completed by the middle schools students as part of my research. The middle school students were asked to write about their growth as a learner. Their writing provided

insights on strengths and weakness in their individual learning. The students wrote reflections as they went through their portfolio that had been accumulating since they began school at Woods Learning Center. The middle school students were all writing about their strengths and weaknesses as learners, but a theme emerged. The theme of continuous learning (as also addressed in the literature) was strong. Many students could identify areas where they had grown, but needed to continue to grow. One student writes, "During the years people learn more. But some of us have problems with the same things. Like me for example, I'm good at writing. I always have been, and I always will. But, I've always had trouble with math, and I probably always will." Another student writes, "I have learned many things this semester, but I am not done yet. I plan to keep growing and learning so that one day I can put my learning to good use and be a respected member of society." A seventh grade student notes, "I have learned a lot through the year 2008, being around the eighth graders helps because they know how it is to be a seventh grader." Her comment is a great example of how an older student can be a role model for a younger student. In addition, this student writes, "Seventh grade was the beginning of our middle school class, so things were different in sixth grade and I wasn't prepared. For my last year I have learned a lot in the mistakes I have made, and the struggles I have taken on in the past years." All of the comments reveal that progress and continuous learning is more important to the students than receiving top grades. These students' ideas are reinforced by the literature that says continuous learning is one of the benefits of multiage learning.

Teacher Interviews.

Teacher interviews supported the parent survey information and also revealed that teachers believe academics are impacted by the high expectations that come from a multiage atmosphere. Many of the teacher comments were similar to those found in the literature. Two of the same themes from the literature review, teacher's knowledge of students and extra time on task in the classroom, emerged in the teacher interviews. An additional theme of high expectations came about in the interviews as well.

When interviewing the Woods staff, many teachers commented on how well they got to know students in a multiage classroom. Guy Sallade stated, "It usually takes until November to know the kids. Having two years to get to know the kids is beneficial." Jim Gaither said, "The first year with a student is for assessment, getting to know the kids and understanding how they work as a student. The second year a teacher can set appropriate expectations." He continues say that the first year is like a "practice year" with the students and a teacher can "zero in on what works" for a student who is in a classroom for multiple years. Pam Hopkins agrees that teachers know students better in a multiage setting. She commented, "Teachers have a huge and vast array of knowledge of where kids are academically."

Extra time devoted to learning was another popular benefit of multiage classrooms. Susie Shell said, "Youngers watch olders for cues as to what to do." This allows teachers to spend less time on teaching rules and expectations. This

also helps to “alleviate pressure on the teacher because the olders are teaching procedures” (Pam Hopkins). Kate Cherry supports this comment by adding, “At the beginning of the year olders (second year students) take a leadership role. They nurture the youngers and show them the routines and procedures of the classroom.” Nicole finished it by saying; “We lose less academic time with the students because less time is spent on transitions.”

Marci Miles revealed that she believes multiage classrooms have higher expectations than a regular grade level classroom. Susie Shell believed that the “youngers rise to the high expectations” set by the teachers. Guy Sallade said, “Higher expectations lead to better results academically.” Jim Gaither agreed with the statements saying, “High expectations and modeling from the younger students allow for more content and skill then discipline and process.”

The information from the staff interviews provided insight to multiage learning at Woods Learning Center. Not only did the staff provide information for the research, they were able to learn from one another about beliefs and practices in each classroom.

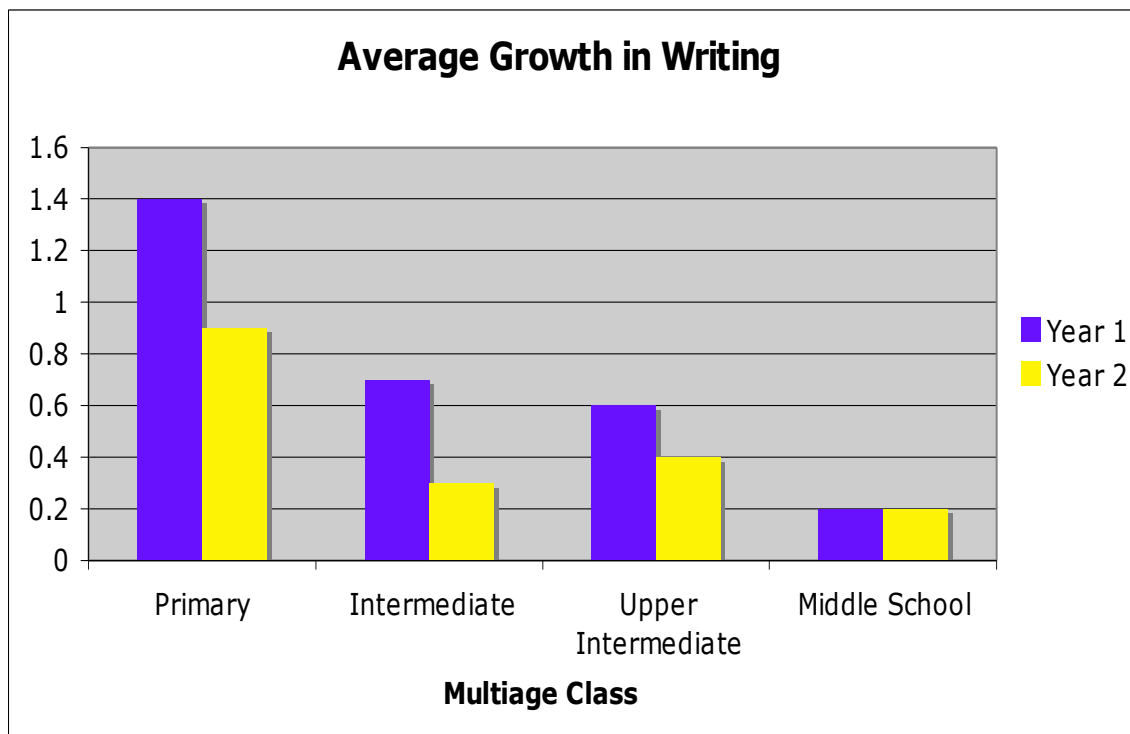
Assessment Data.

Originally, NWEA Growth Assessments and PAWS Assessments were going to be used in this study. However, because the PAWS and NWEA test is only administered to third through eighth grade students it made it difficult to analyze growth and academic gains for the entire student body at Woods Learning Center. Therefore, I chose to use two other assessments that are used for all students at Woods Learning Center. The first source was an in-house writing

assessment given to all students at Woods Learning Center. The assessment is given twice a year, once in the fall and again in the spring. The assessments are analyzed for growth using a Six Traits Writing Rubric. The second assessment source is project presentations. Every classroom at Woods Learning Center has students complete several projects over the course of the year. Regardless of grade level, the students are expected to research a topic, write a paper (or other written method), and present a project to a group of peers and adults.

Classroom teachers use proficiency levels, determined by an eight-point rubric, to evaluate the projects. I included project presentation data in this research because it gives a good picture of a multiage age assessment. Students are graded on the same rubric regardless of whether they are a first or second year student in the classroom. Project presentations are great integrations of all components of language arts. Each project contains reading, writing, speaking and listening.

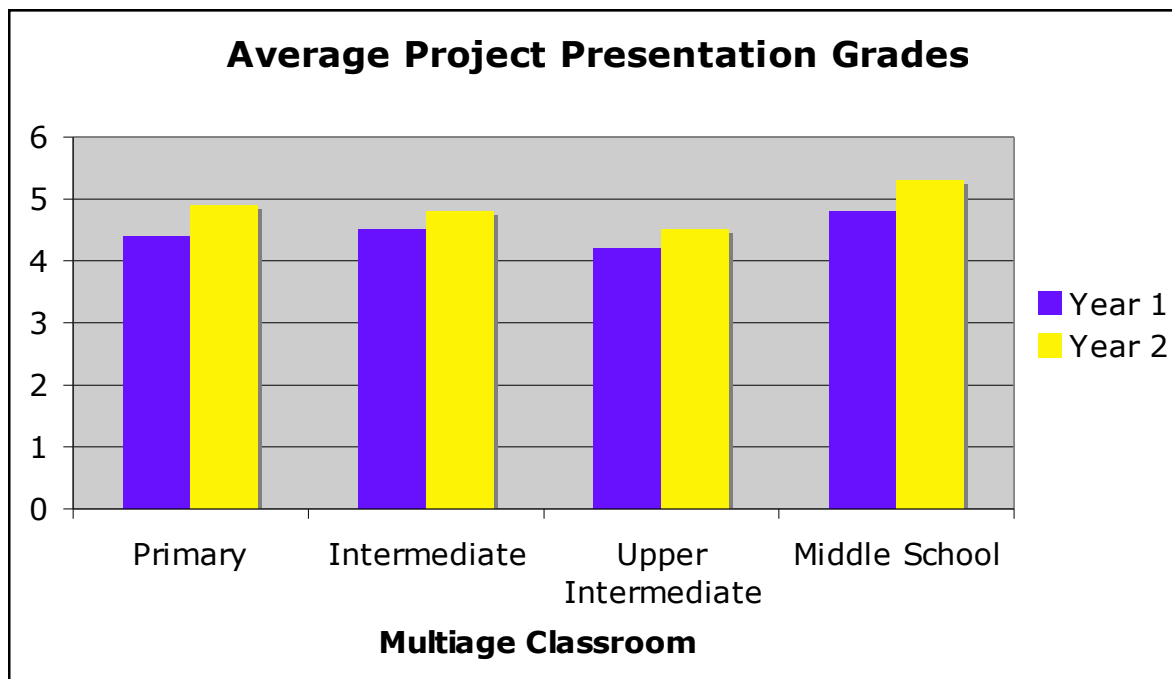
Data from Writing Assessments were revealing. Since the assessments are given in the fall and spring, I calculated the growth of each student at Woods Learning Center. I used data from four years to determine if students made more growth in writing during the first or second year in a multiage classroom. The results from the writing assessment concluded that first year students in a pod grow more in every multiage class except for middle school. The trend in the data is that first year students grow approximately half a point more than the second year students. The middle school students show the same amount of growth in year one and year two.



These results are not surprising when you compare the results with the teacher comments. Teacher comments about having high expectations of first year students in a classroom coincides with the first year students having higher growth in writing. From my own classroom, I have seen first year students rise to extremely high expectations in writing and first year students writing almost as well as their older, second year peers.

I was not able to analyze growth with the project presentation data using the same method as the writing assessment data. Because classrooms have different expectations for projects and some classrooms only assign individual projects once a year, I decided to graph the project assessment data to look for trends between first and second year students in a pod when assigned the same project. It amazed me that while the second year students had higher scores on

project assessments, the first year students scored quite well. The average score of first year students in the primary classroom, grades kindergarten and first, was 4.4 while the second year students averaged 4.9 on an eight-point rubric. First year students, in the intermediate classroom, averaged a 4.5 while the second year students averaged a 4.8. Upper Intermediate, grade four and five, first year students scored 4.2 on average and second year students scored 4.5 on average. Middle school students in year one score a 4.8 while second year students scored a 5.2. It is evident by the data that second year students score higher than the first year students in a multiage classroom. Although these results do not correlate with the writing results they do confirm what the literature says about multiage age learning and academic achievement. It is understandable that when students are given more time in a classroom to understand expectations and see models, they perform better. Project presentations are a great example of students understanding expectations and seeing various models before they present their project. In most classrooms at Woods Learning Center, second year students see at least three project presentations by classroom peers and numerous project displays by other students in the media center before presenting a second year final project. This gives students multiple examples to grow in their own project presentations.



The research is inconclusive regarding whether or not students grow more in language arts during a first year or second year in a multiage age classroom. While students grow more in writing in the first year in a classroom at Woods Learning Center, they grow more in project presentations (an integrated language arts assessment) in their second year in a multiage age classroom. The true conclusion to my question is that whether students learn more in a first or second year is not significant. It is significant that students are continually growing both academically and socially and students meet proficiency in both grade levels by the time they leave a multiage class. This may mean that students surpass their peers in some areas and take more time to grow in other areas. It also may mean that students use their time in a multiage pod to grow socially.

After looking at our most recent test scores on the NWEA growth assessment, Woods Learning Center had substantially high growth. Knowing that our school is performing well supports my research that students are growing in a multiage classroom. Students are not harmed academically by attending a multiage classroom. Students do as well or better than their peers in a traditional one-year classroom. For further information on subgroups and testing at Woods Learning Center please read my colleague's, Jennifer Grooms, research.

Overall, I conclude that students are growing at Woods Learning Center academically. Regardless of years in a classroom all students are making gains in their learning. Furthermore, some learning may take place socially, as defined by my colleague, Nicole Roden, in her research.

The larger question overlapping my research is that of best practices in the area of language arts. While interviewing the teachers a great list of best practices emerged. The following best practices are implemented in language arts instruction at Woods Learning Center. Differentiated learning, small groups, student centered, flexibility and individualized instruction. These practices combined with instructional strategies in language arts provide a framework for learning at Woods Learning Center. While these are the specific best practices listed by the staff at Woods Learning Center, I found through the research that the affective aspects are also best practices supporting the learner at Woods. Those aspects include, strong student and teacher relationships, high expectations, and time devoted to learning.

In conclusion, I found that students do not necessarily learn more in a first or second year in a classroom. Students are continually learning and growth in a multiage setting looks different in subject areas and in years. Students are learning regardless of years in a classroom. Some students need an extra year in a room with teachers who understand how they learn and can provide additional instruction to help meet the needs and goals of the students.

Recommendations

Natrona County School District is a district of choice. Parents get to choose the school that they believe fits their child. I recommend that choice continue to be available to parents. Woods Learning Center students score well on district and classroom assessments but the method for teaching at Woods Learning Center includes the whole child and focuses on more than academics. While this works for the student population at Woods, it may not work for all students. Therefore, the opportunity to choose a school is important for parents and students. I hope that multiage schools are continually supported and allowed to teach in the manner that they find appropriate for their student body.

I suggest that district and state testing policies be examined. Students could be measured after blocks of time rather than at the end of each grade level. I would prefer to see testing take place after first, third, fifth, and eighth grades. This also holds true for district curriculum mapping. Curriculum could be spread over a two or three year time period rather than by grade level. As curriculum is being mapped for specific grade levels, our school needs this

research to provide evidence that multiage is beneficial to students so that we may be able to adjust the monthly curriculum maps so that they fit our specific instructional methods.

Also, my colleagues and I found that more grade levels could be mixed together more often. If students were involved in larger multiage settings with different classrooms, transitions between classrooms may be easier.

Because of this project I now have a better understanding of multiage and how it works at Woods Learning Center. I have found that multiage is a caring, developmental approach to teaching students. Multiage is more than an instructional method, it is a culture that permeates the entire school. In multiage settings, students are given the time and support to succeed academically and socially to become well-adjusted students.

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