

PARENTS, DID YOU KNOW...?

At Landmark Elementary we have enough students to have approximately 1.5 classes of each grade. The result of this, as you know, is the necessity of having multi-grade classrooms. We currently have a 1/2, 2/3, 3/4 and a 5/6 class. There seems to be a misconception among some that students in multi-grade classrooms are at a disadvantage or are in some way thought of as weaker students! This is not at all the case! Many of our strongest students are in multi-grade classrooms. Each of our classes contains a group of students with a variety of strengths and challenges.

In addition, although classes of combined grades do require careful preparation to manage the distinct content in different disciplines, there can be great benefits for students both socially and academically.

Reviews of research that was conducted by Manitoba Education and Youth (2003) show that instruction in classes of combined grades can “provide students with increased opportunities for social and emotional growth.”

Students have been shown to do better in the area of socio-emotional development; develop more positive peer interactions; have greater development of social skills; do more collaborative and independent learning; display greater feelings of comfort and security, and a positive self-concept;

show higher satisfaction with achievements; have more opportunities for student leadership within a community of learners. (Manitoba Education, Training and Youth. 2003.Independent together:

Supporting the multilevel learning community. Winnipeg, MB: Manitoba Education, Training and Youth)

According to researcher and author Joan Gaustad, “Research indicates that heterogeneous grouping promotes cognitive and social growth, reduces anti-social behaviour, and facilitates the use of research-based, developmentally appropriate instructional practices, such as active learning and integrated curriculum. The wider range of ages and abilities in a multi-age classroom discourages misleading age-graded expectations and helps teachers focus on students’ individual learning needs.” (Gaustad, J. 1997. Building support for multiage education. ERIC Digest (ERIC ED409604))

Of course, every child is unique and a multi-age classroom would not work for all students. In our efforts to address the unique needs of each student, many factors are considered before placing a child in any particular classroom, and it is always our goal to do what we believe to be best for the student and to provide exemplary education for all!

Following are some resources if you are interested in learning more about multi-age classrooms:

[The Benefits of Mixed-Age Grouping](#) by Lilian G. Katz

[Building Support for Multiage Education](#) by Joan Gaustad

Manitoba Education, Training and Youth. 2003.Independent together:Supporting the multilevel learning community. Winnipeg, MB: Manitoba Education, Training and Youth)