

Title: Summary of research/resources on implementation of Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in the multi-age classroom setting

Date: August 2013

Question: Could you provide information regarding implementation of CCSS in the multi-age classroom setting?

Response:

To answer the request, REL West staff searched selected databases for relevant resources (see “Methods” section on the last page), and could find very limited information. This is not surprising, given how recently the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) were made public and adopted by most states, and that there are not many recent studies on effective instruction in multi-age classrooms. We hope that the information provided is helpful to you.

To help with searches for information on implementing CCSS in multi-age classroom settings in the future, we provided one peer-reviewed article and a series of research-based books on effective instruction in multi-age classrooms. In addition, we included a sampling of publicly available resources on implementation of CCSS in general, and more specifically in multi-age classroom settings. We organized the information into the following categories:

1. Research-based information on effective instruction in multi-age classrooms
2. Organizations focusing on implementing CCSS in general
3. Organizations that are working on implementing CCSS in multi-age classroom settings

We have not done an evaluation of these organizations or the resources themselves and offer this list for your information only.

Research-Based Information On Effective Instruction In Multi-Age Classrooms

Mulryan-Kyne, C. (2007). The preparation of teachers for multigrade teaching. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 23(4), 501–514.

Abstract: This paper addresses the issue of teacher education for multigrade. The main thesis of this paper is that the professional knowledge and skills that are relevant and necessary to teaching effectively in single-grade contexts are also relevant and necessary for effective multigrade teaching. However, many of these skills need to be given a specific multigrade emphasis in the context of the preparation of teachers for multigrade teaching. This does not necessitate separate teacher education programs for multigrade teachers. The paper makes comparisons between multigrade and single-grade teaching in terms of outcomes and teaching practices and highlights the importance of effective teacher education programs that cater to the needs of teachers in a broad rather than a narrow sense. The content of programs aimed at the specific preparation of multigrade teachers are examined, and a categorization of specific areas of content that need particular emphasis in the context of teacher education for multigrade is provided.

Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory. (1999). *The multigrade classroom: A resource handbook for small, rural schools*. Portland, OR: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory.

Summary: “The Multigrade Classroom” is a seven-book series that provides an overview of research on multigrade instruction, identifies key issues teachers face in a multigrade setting, and offers resources for multigrade teachers. Produced in 1999 under the Rural Education Program to address multigrade teacher training in rural areas, the handbooks are also applicable to schools in other settings and are among the few practical resources available on the topic. The books define multigrade instruction as grouping children of two or more grade spans with diverse ability levels into a single classroom where they “are encouraged to share experiences involving intellectual, academic, and social skills.”

Book 1: Review of the Research on Multigrade Instruction

http://educationnorthwest.org/webfm_send/1150

Summary: In this book, the research on multigrade instruction is reviewed in order to answer two questions: (1) What effect does multigrade instruction have on student performance? And (2) What kind of training is needed in order to teach in a multigrade classroom? Detailed information focusing on organizing and teaching in a multigrade classroom is also presented.

Book 2: Classroom Organization

http://educationnorthwest.org/webfm_send/1151

Summary: This book describes strategies for arranging and organizing instructional resources and the physical environment of the classroom. Sample classroom layouts and a “design kit” for organizing your classroom are also included.

Book 3: Classroom Management and Discipline

http://educationnorthwest.org/webfm_send/1152

Summary: Establishing clear expectations for student behavior and predictable classroom routines has been shown to improve student performance. In this book, research relating to classroom management and discipline are presented, along with a checklist for planning management routines and discipline procedures.

Book 4: Instructional Organization, Curriculum, and Evaluation

http://educationnorthwest.org/webfm_send/1153

Summary: Research-based guidelines for planning, developing, and implementing instructional strategies are presented. This book emphasizes the development of cooperative

work norms in the multigrade classroom and explains how to match instruction to the needs of students. An overview of curriculum and evaluation planning concepts is also provided.

Book 5: Instructional Delivery and Grouping

http://educationnorthwest.org/webfm_send/1154

Summary: This book emphasizes that instructional quality and student grouping are key components for success in the multigrade classroom. Instructional methods such as recitation, discussion, and cooperative learning are reviewed. Planning guides and examples are also included where appropriate. Strategies for organizing group learning activities across and within grade levels, especially those that develop interdependence and cooperation among students, are discussed.

Book 6: Self-Directed Learning

http://educationnorthwest.org/webfm_send/1155

Summary: Developing skills and strategies in students that allow for a high level of independence and efficiency in learning, either individually or in combination with other students, is essential in the multigrade classroom. Ideas for developing self-direction are presented in this book.

Book 7: Planning and Using Peer Tutoring

http://educationnorthwest.org/webfm_send/1156

Summary: This book provides guidelines for developing skills and routines whereby students serve as “teachers” to other students within and across differing grade levels. The research on what makes for effective tutoring in the classroom is also reviewed.

Organizations Focusing On Implementing CCSS In General

Achieve

<http://www.achieve.org/achieving-common-core>

From the website: Achieve partnered with NGA and CCSSO on the Initiative and a number of Achieve staff and consultants served on the writing and review teams. On June 2, 2010, the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts/Literacy and Mathematics (CCSS) were released, and since then, over 45 states have adopted the Common Core State Standards and are now working to implement the standards. Achieve has developed materials to help states, districts, and others understand the organization and content of the standards and the content and evidence base used to support the standards.

ASCD's Common Core Resources

<http://educore.ascd.org>

From the website: This website was funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation as part of a three-year grant to provide both teachers and school leaders with specific information about the Common Core State Standards and to develop and deliver technical assistance for the successful implementation of the standards at the district, school, and classroom levels.

Literacy Tools

<http://educore.ascd.org/channels/c8920746-9ae8-49bf-bae3-f8b6cac46173>

From the website: Understand the framework, learn how to use the models, and view sample units based on the templates created by the Literacy Design Collaborative (LDC).

Math Tools

<http://educore.ascd.org/channels/3B6BC7EC-3F01-499A-85CA-F000E7BB2D56>

From the website: Classroom Challenges, developed through the Mathematics Assessment Project (MAP) by the Mathematics Assessment Resource Service (MARS), include both

problem-solving and content development formative assessment lessons. Learn more about Classroom Challenges and the Mathematics Design Collaborative (MDC) in this section.

Common Core State Standards: Implementation Tools and Resources

http://www.ccsso.org/Resources/Publications/Common_Core_State_Standards_Implementation_Tools_and_Resources.html

From the website: CCSSO (Council of Chief State School Officers) developed this list of tools and resources to point states to promising practices and tools to support Common Core State Standards implementation. This document primarily lists resources developed by CCSSO and the lead writers of the standards and is not intended to be a comprehensive list of all resources available.

Common Core State Standards Initiative

<http://www.corestandards.org/the-standards>

From the website: The Common Core State Standards provide a consistent, clear understanding of what students are expected to learn, so teachers and parents know what they need to do to help them. The standards are designed to be robust and relevant to the real world, reflecting the knowledge and skills that our young people need for success in college and careers. With American students fully prepared for the future, our communities will be best positioned to compete successfully in the global economy.

Doing What Works

<http://dww.ed.gov/>

From the website: The mission of the website is to translate research-based practices into practical tools to improve classroom instruction. Several resources and sections are related to implementation of the Common Core for math: Planning Fractions Instruction Using Common Core State Standards for Mathematics, Response to Intervention in Elementary-Middle Math, and Developing Effective Fractions Instruction for K-8.

The National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE)

<http://www.ncte.org>

From the website: NCTE offers books, online courses and events, journal articles, and more to support teachers' focus on keeping students at the center of instruction. They also provide videos featuring educators sharing their insights on how to frame instruction, keep teachers as decision-makers, and put students at the center of learning while planning for the Common Core.

<http://www.ncte.org/standards/common-core>

The NCTE series of virtual conference recordings and books explore how student-centered teaching remains crucial to every classroom and provides examples of upholding NCTE principles of effective teaching in a time of Core standards. The recordings, ideal for groups or individuals, include authentic and practical advice from national literacy leaders and classroom teachers who work in real classrooms with real students.

Each grade-level conference includes four, 60-minute session recordings focused on:

- Interpreting the Common Core State Standards
- Maintaining a student-centric classroom while planning lessons and units of study
- Connecting the inspiring instruction already in your classroom to the CCSS
- Keeping teacher decision-making in the classroom

The National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) – Core Math Tools Home

<http://www.nctm.org/resources/content.aspx?id=32702>

From the website: Core Math Tools is a downloadable suite of interactive software tools for algebra and functions, geometry and trigonometry, and statistics and probability. The tools are appropriate

for use with any high school mathematics curriculum and compatible with the Common Core State Standards for Mathematics in terms of content and mathematical practices.

Organizations That Are Working On Implementing CCSS In Multi-Age Classroom Settings

Luna, K. (2010). Davenport proposes new model of multi-age classrooms. *Quad-City Times*. Retrieved on July 29, 2013, from http://qctimes.com/news/local/education/davenport-proposes-new-model-of-multi-age-classrooms/article_c2e16e38-82b3-11e1-ad8b-0019bb2963f4.html

Excerpt: ... Schoening remembers when multi-age classrooms were introduced at her school, at a time when the district was facing a drop in population and trying to find the best way to serve that neighborhood. The approach really works, she said. Earl Hanson teachers follow a two-year curriculum, so students aren't stuck with repeated material during their time in the same classroom. They also focus on the state's Common Core standards, which are "very grade specific," she said.

Everyday Mathematics

<http://everydaymath.uchicago.edu>

From the website: *Everyday Mathematics* is a comprehensive pre-K through grade 6 mathematics program developed by the University of Chicago School Mathematics Project and published by McGraw-Hill Education. Every year in the US, about 4.3 million students in 220,000 classrooms are using *Everyday Mathematics*.

Multiage Classrooms

<http://everydaymath.uchicago.edu/teaching-topics/multiage/>

Excerpt: There are two commonly used strategies for handling the Teaching the Lesson components in a multiage classroom. The first is to adopt a team-teaching approach, with each teacher working with one grade level for the Teaching the Lesson portion of the lesson, and then completing the other components of the lesson as a multiage group. A second approach is to function as a self-contained classroom. The teacher leads the Teaching the Lesson portion of a lesson with one grade level group, while students in the other grade level are engaged in the Ongoing Learning and Practice component of their lesson. When these activities have been completed, the teacher switches to the other grade level's Teaching the Lesson component, while the first group works on their Teaching the Lesson and Ongoing Learning and Practice activities. The groups are rejoined for lesson activities like games.

Multiage Learning Network (MLN)

<http://multiagelearningnetwork.org>

From the website: The Multiage Learning Network is a place for educators to learn and connect. We are a voluntary association of schools in Wisconsin that have one or more multiage classrooms. Wisconsin charter schools created and lead the MLN.

Multiage and the Common Core: A Day of Discovery

<http://multiagelearningnetwork.org/events/>

From the website: Are you struggling with how to think like a multiage teacher in your classroom while working with the Common Core standards which are organized by grade level? You are not alone! "Multiage and the Common Core – A Day of Discovery" is a workshop intended to help you understand the CC from a multiage perspective, which can be tricky since they are organized by grade level. We have a model to help you and your colleagues work with the CC and not lose your multiage focus.

REL West Note: MLN provides two options of fee-based workshop: 1) On Site Workshop or 2) Videoconference Workshop. You can get more information about these options by sending an inquiry to info@multiagelearningnetwork.org.

Project Based Learning in Ashland

<http://www.ashlandcharterschools.com/index.html>

From the website: The School District of Ashland is creating a continuous project based, multiage learning option for students in 3rd through 12th grade. Opening in fall of 2013 is the Ashland Elementary Charter School serving grades 3–5. Planning is underway to open a 6–8 school in fall of 2014 and a 9–12 school in 2014.

Multiage Classroom

<http://www.ashlandcharterschools.com/multiage-learning.html>

From the website: Rather than being taught at a certain age level, students are taught at their point of challenge. A multi-age school is required to use the same curriculum framework (Common Core State Standards) and is subject to the same accountabilities (state testing, MAP testing, report cards) as single-grade schools. However, students won't be confined to a single grade level of learning.

Methods

Keywords and Search Strings Used in the Search

("Multi-age" OR "Multi-grade") AND "Common core state standards" AND ("implement" OR "implementation")

Databases That Were Searched

ERIC, EBSCO, JSTOR, ProQuest, PsycINFO, PsycArticles, Google, and Google Scholar

Criteria for Inclusion

When REL West staff review resources, they consider—among other things—four factors:

- **Date of the Publication:** The most current information is included, except in the case of nationally known seminal resources.
- **Source and Funder of the Report/Study/Brief/Article:** Priority is given to IES, nationally funded, and certain other vetted sources known for strict attention to research protocols.
- **Methodology:** Sources include randomized controlled trial studies, surveys, self-assessments, literature reviews, and policy briefs. Priority for inclusion generally is given to randomized controlled trial study findings if they exist. In examining the research reports, the reader should note at least the following factors when basing decisions on these resources: numbers of participants (Just a few? Thousands?); selection (Did the participants volunteer for the study or were they chosen?); representation (Were findings generalized from a homogeneous or a diverse pool of participants? Is the sample similar to the reader's own context?).
- **Existing Knowledge Base:** Although we strive to include vetted resources, there are times when the research base is limited or nonexistent. In these cases, we have included the best resources we could find, which may include newspaper articles, interviews with content specialists, organization websites, and other sources.

- This memorandum is one in a series of quick-turnaround responses to specific questions posed by educators and policymakers in the Western region (Arizona, California, Nevada, Utah), which is served by the Regional Educational Laboratory West (REL West) at WestEd. This memorandum was prepared by REL West under a contract with the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences (IES), Contract ED-IES-12-C-0002, administered by WestEd. Its content does not necessarily reflect the views or policies of IES or the U.S. Department of Education nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Government.