

A STUDY TO DETERMINE WHICH FACTORS CONTRIBUTE
TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A SUCCESSFUL
PRIMARY MULTIAGE/NONGRADED PROGRAM

by

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ABSTRACT

Child growth and development pedagogy suggests that not all children are ready to learn the same thing, at the same time, in the same way. Multiage/nongraded programs allow pupils to advance from one concept or skill level to the next as they are ready, regardless of age or grade, which results in continuous progress. Multiage/nongraded education has a solid foundation of research and experience to support its use. However, many questions still exist regarding the factors that contribute to the implementation of a successful primary multiage/nongraded program.

The purpose of this ethnographic study was to identify the (a) critical attributes of a successful multiage/nongraded program, (b) strategies necessary for successful implementation, (c) inservice training needed by teachers, (d) obstacles encountered during implementation, (e) advantages and disadvantages of a multiage/nongraded program for students, and (f) advantages and disadvantages of

a multiage/nongraded program for teachers. Data from 58 teachers of primary multiage classes in a large public school district in central Florida were collected during the 1995-96 school year using focus group interviews. An Interview Guide and a demographic questionnaire were developed to help gather data. Data collection procedures for this ethnographic study utilized a series of focus groups, field notes, and audiotape recordings. Data from the interviews were categorized, analyzed, interpreted, and summarized.

Two of the critical attributes of a multiage/nongraded program discussed in this study were developmentally appropriate practices and continuous progress. Other critical attributes included authentic assessment, team teaching, and varied instructional strategies such as integrated thematic teaching and whole language.

Implementation strategies discussed were the decision-making process involved in choosing to implement the multiage/nongraded program, the selection of the multiage teacher, professional development activities, student selection, and parental involvement. A large portion of the study was

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