
WHAT IS MULTI-AGE TEACHING AND LEARNING?

PRESENTED BY DR. BARBARA COZZA

WHO IS DR. BARBARA COZZA?

- Author of
- *Multi-age Learning Communities in Action: Caring School Environment for All Children, 2017, Rowman & Littlefield*
- *Catapult Consultant and Expert on Multi-age Learning*
- *Provide professional development for teachers, leaders, parents*
- *Professor at St. John's University*



Essential Question

- What is multi-age teaching and learning?

Session Objectives

- Define multi-age teaching and learning programs
- What does research say?
- Role of Students, Teachers, Parents
- Describe classroom lesson components
- Examine benefits of multi-age programs
- Testimonials
- Outcomes of Multi-age Program

MULTI-AGE QUICK THINK/WRITE/SHARE

Multi-age Quick Write

What is your **definition** of multi-age?

What do you see as your **role** in multi-age?

Multi-age

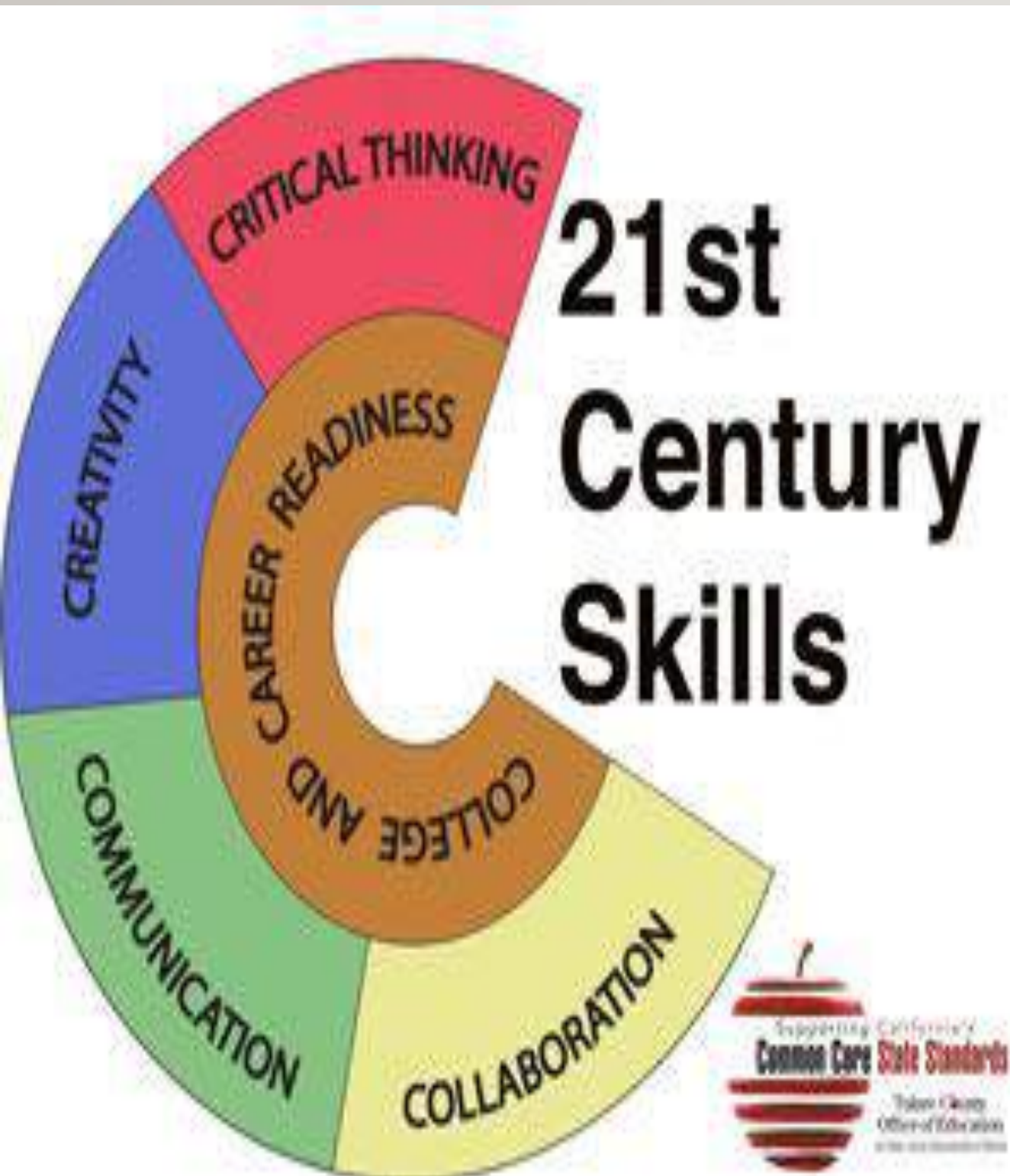
What does multi-age **look** like?

What does multi-age **not** look like?

Multi-age Defined

- Target each student's strengths and needs
- Differentiated instructional practices are embedded in the program
- Student to student interaction
- Varied ages together with the same teacher for two years
- Independent work , meaningful learning
- Student centered

MULTI-AGE AS A VEHICLE FOR LEARNING



21st Century Skills

- Collaboration and teamwork
- Creativity and imagination
- Critical thinking
- Problem Solving

Multi-Age Learning Community Classrooms



How does a multi-age learning environment look different from a graded classroom?

- Multi-age classroom: very active, rigorous, authentic, real-to-life environment.
- Children interact with children on an ongoing basis.
- Collaborate and become leaders
- Caring - Feel at home
- Give students more choices

What Does Research Say?

- Pavan found 91% of studies in America and Canada
 - Students in MA perform as well or better than students in graded system
- Gains in language and reading – tools to learn content
- Integrated approach – well supported by brain-based research
 - Gardner' s multiple intelligences
- Affective/social (MA learners out performs graded systems) alleviates bullying
- Older students with younger students increases academics
 - Vygotsky construct meaning in social context

How can the Multi-Age Help?



Enrollment
increases



Collaboration



Rigor
Individualized
Inquiry based

Ongoing assessment
High level thinking



Active learning
environment



Leadership

Elements for MA Classrooms

- Theme Teaching: Cycles (repeat themes every four years)
- Orbital Studies: Independent Learning for each learner
- Learning Centers – supports concepts in lessons
- Project-based Tasks – real to life
- Interdisciplinary studies – themes from social studies, science, literacy

Teach content – Reading and Mathematics

Whole Group/Small Group/individual Instruction

- Whole group – present broad-based content, concepts, skills (simple to complex) following Common Core Standards
- Small group – concentrate on ability with specific content, concepts, skills
- Individual – target needs of student
- Each group disbands when it meets its needs

FACE-TO-FACE + BLENDED LEARNING APPROACHES



**Face-to-Face Learning
Approaches**



Virtual Learning Approaches

**Multi-age Learning Community = Best of
Both Worlds**

RIGOROUS PROJECT-BASED LESSONS



PROCESS WRITING AUTHORS



INTERDISCIPLINARY THEME WORKSHOPS



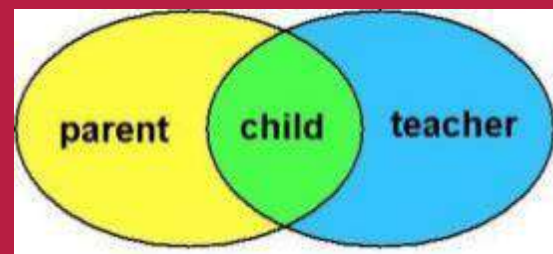
Benefits of multi-age education:

For Students

1. Learner-centered
2. Rigorous curriculum
3. 21st century skills
4. Positive, nurturing environment
5. Alleviates Bullying
6. Promote cooperative behavior
7. Opportunities for leadership

For Educators

Stronger relationship with students and parents
Better able to address individual student needs
More job satisfaction



For Parents

1. Stronger relationship with teacher
2. More opportunities to take an active role in child's education
3. Child is more positive about school
4. Child is given appropriate support/challenge depending on their individual achievement level
5. Child learns to be pro-social, independent and responsible
6. Child learns to self initiate

1. How fast do schools move from a traditional program to a caring and rigorous multi-age learning environment?

Every school is different



Every child is unique and special...

2. How does this multi-age program connect to grade level high stakes testing processes?

- **Continue to take benchmark tests or high stakes tests based on grade levels**
- **Learning based on Standards**
- **Being assessed on grade level standards as well as standards that are a year below and a year above the student's grade level**
- **Students do very well on high stakes tests**
- **Teachers continue to evaluate each student's performance to make sure each student meets the current grade level needs**

3. What kinds of resources are needed?

- **Materials for hands-on mathematics and science tasks, computers**
- **Reading materials on many different levels to target the needs of all age learners**



Testimonials



What are some changes observed?

- “Communication between administration and faculty and administration and parents” is necessary for the successful implementation of this mode
- “The purpose of multi-aging is to leverage multiple learning styles with multiple ability levels”
- In the MAC model, the teacher must “offer various types of activities and experiences to children on different levels”
- “My students’ academic needs are met by the use of learning games, smartboard, group work, individual work, children have Blended Learning, hands on experiences”

What are some of the successes and challenges that you have experienced this year?

- Successes

- I have seen more independent students. They are advanced in learning and are academically challenged.
- My students are more accepting of challenges than they have been in the past.
- Our class has worked really hard and it is wonderful to see the students helping one another on seatwork

- Challenges
- Planning and paperwork
- Lack of supplies, computers...



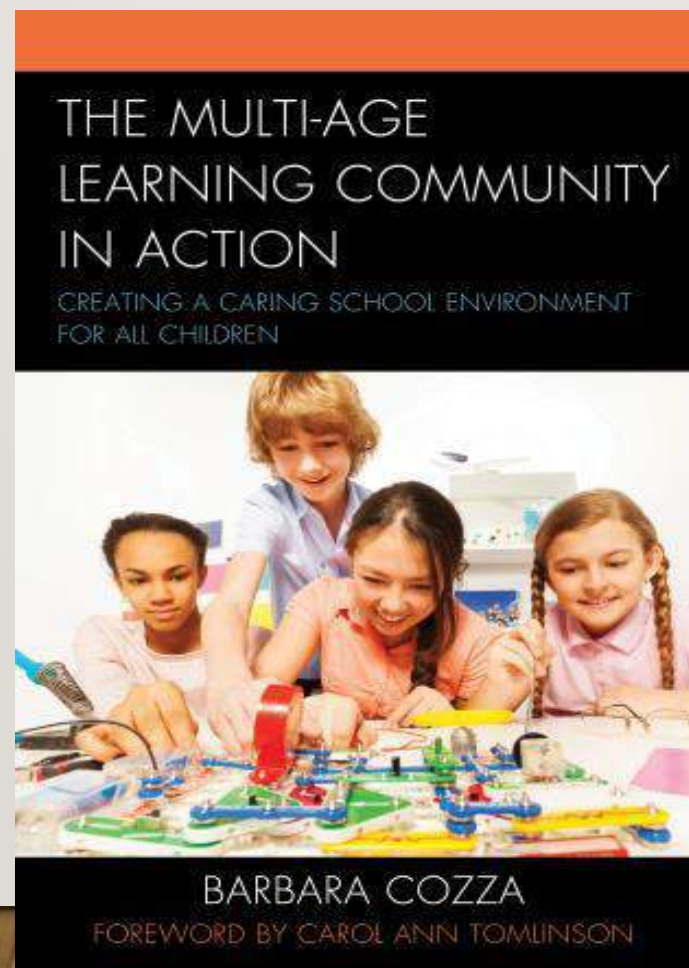
OUTCOMES OF MULTI-AGE LEARNING COMMUNITIES

- Students are highly engaged and motivated to learn with rigorous lessons
- Students receive differentiated instruction
- Students gain ownership over learning
- Teachers can provide more targeted support
- Students become leaders
- Students learn from other students through modelling
- Parents take an active role in the learning environment



BOOK FOR ALL

- This book is intended to assist educators at all levels of all school organizations, as well as give policymakers, educators and parents the information on an effective school program. This book gives information on how to transform schools into multi-age classrooms.



THANK YOU!

- **Questions???**