



CONTENTS

Chapter 1	Introduction	5
Chapter 2	Multi-age Classrooms	7
	Historically speaking	7
	What are multi-age classrooms?	7
	Why have multi-age classrooms?	8
Chapter 3	The Moomba Park Experience	9
Chapter 4	Developing a Co-operative Teaching Partnership	11
	What makes an effective teaching partnership?	11
	Implications for a multi-age teaching partnership	13
	Advantages of a co-operative teaching partnership	14
Chapter 5	Planning a Multi-age Curriculum	15
	Establishing a vision – The first step in planning	15
	Developing class goals	15
	The whole year plan	17
	Using the Curriculum and Standards Framework	22
	Term planning	22
	Integrated Unit Plan	23
	Stand Alone Unit Plans	27
	Routine Plans	28
	Weekly planning	28
	Daily preparation	29
Chapter 6	Classroom Organisation	32
	Classroom furniture	32
	Work and learning areas	34
	Resources and equipment.....	37
	Storing resources and equipment	40
	Further organisational ideas	40
Chapter 7	Curriculum: Organisation and Delivery	45
	Establishing the learning environment	45
	The teacher’s role	45
	A teaching approach	47
	Grouping students	48
	Developing and using routines	49
	Providing for student input.	51
	The question of homework	53

Chapter 8	Multiple Intelligence and the Multi-Age Classroom.....	56
	Gardner’s Seven Intelligences.....	56
	Using the Model in the Multi-Age Classroom	57
	Learning Activities Based on Multiple Intelligence	57
Chapter 9	One Week in our Multi-age Classroom	61
	English	62
	Maths	70
	Fitness and outdoor games	73
	Integrated activities	73
Chapter 10	Managing Student Welfare and Behaviour	76
	The student management plan	76
	The code of conduct.....	76
	The Moomba Park model	77
	Features of a multi-age student management plan	77
	Developing student self-esteem	78
Chapter 11	Assessment: Monitoring, Recording and Reporting	80
Chapter 12	Communicating with Parents	85
Chapter 13	Summary	88
Appendix A:	Multi-Age Homework Policy	89
Appendix B:	Reading Response Activities	91
Appendix C:	Cross-age Co-operative Maths Activities	94
	Cross-age Group Activities	94
	Cross-age Partner Activities	99
Appendix D:	Ten Practical Activities to Enhance Self-esteem	103
Bibliography	104



CHAPTER 1

Introduction

In early 1995 we attended a statewide seminar focusing on teaching multi-age classes. Teachers from across Victoria, many of whom were currently teaching in multi-age settings, attended the two day seminar. It was an excellent opportunity to meet with colleagues and share experiences teaching primary-aged children in multi-age classrooms. The seminar provided the large group of participants with some of the latest ideas and practices in developing multi-age curriculum programs.

With many schools now responding to the thrust towards multi-aging in the early years of schooling and in light of the introduction of outcomes-based curriculum frameworks in many schools across Australia, the need to talk, share experiences and gain further practical knowledge is essential.

After the two day program, we returned to our school feeling confident that we had shared and exchanged ideas with a group of teachers whose multi-age arrangements were fairly representative of what was happening in Victorian schools, especially the medium to larger metropolitan schools. To our surprise, we did not meet with teachers from schools who had taken the step of initiating a multi-age class covering an age range of more than two or three years. When we explained Moomba Park operated a class of Year 1-6 students as well as P-2 multi-age classes, we were greeted with a general response that was nothing short of amazement, particularly when people realised we were not a small rural school.

This type of response continued when we explained that our Year 1-6 multi-age class concept was not a short term experiment and had existed and operated successfully since the mid 1980's, well before the current thrust to multi-aging had emerged. We further confounded a number of our colleagues when we explained that our class consisted of over fifty students whose age range was between five and twelve and the core classroom teaching responsibilities were divided evenly between two teachers, working together in a co-operative partnership approach. Most enquiries related to how the class worked, why we were doing it, how we planned and how we catered for such a diverse range of abilities and interests. We were unaware that our multi-age arrangement was unique among those present at the seminar.

Since that statewide seminar eighteen months ago and through subsequent discussions at teacher workshops and school networks, we have discovered that how we form and operate the Year 1-6 multi-age setting at Moomba Park is almost unique among metropolitan primary schools. However, on this, we are prepared to stand corrected and would delight in hearing from schools and teachers who have embarked on the same or similar multi-age arrangements.

It is against this backdrop that we have produced a book about the multi-age approach. We have used the Moomba Park Year 1-6 multi-age classroom experience and in particular our co-operative experiences to provide practical examples which aim to highlight the many social and academic advantages available to students who are learning in a multi-age classroom. We considered that if those present at the multi-age seminar eighteen months ago were interested, then the wider teaching fraternity would be interested in the processes we use to establish and maintain the multi-age class, the types of programs we plan, the teaching and learning strategies we implement and how a co-operative teaching partnership can enhance a multi-age learning environment. The questions asked at the 1995 seminar and the many others that have been asked since, are answered in detail in the following pages.
