

INTRODUCTION

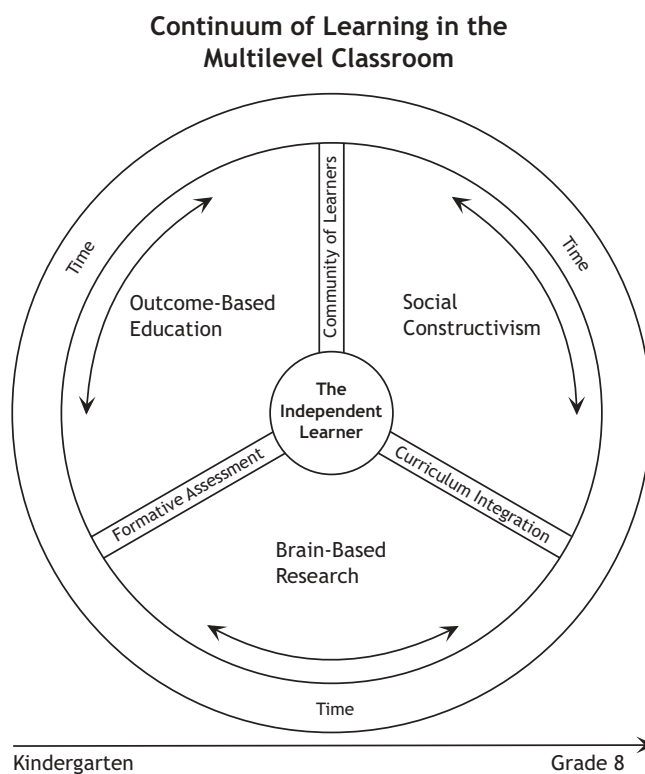
Purpose

Independent Together: Supporting the Multilevel Learning Community is designed to engage students, educators, and parents in developing independent learners within a student-centred multilevel classroom community and to celebrate the uniqueness of each learner. Development along a *continuum of learning* offers independent learners time to grow as risk takers, leaders, researchers, and thinkers.

Background

As a result of philosophical choice or demographic necessity, many Kindergarten to Grade 8 teachers in Manitoba have two or more grades for two or more years in their classrooms. Developing independent learners is imperative to the success of these multilevel classrooms, which depend upon a supportive and informed learning community consisting of learners, educators, and parents.

The theoretical ideologies of this resource represented in the diagram below reflect Manitoba's outcome-based curricula grounded in social constructivist underpinnings and current brain-based research. The principles of formative assessment and differentiated instruction, which are integral throughout all recent curriculum documents, are crucial to the quality of learning in the multilevel classroom.



Based on best practices, curricula are integrated to facilitate inquiry of big ideas, thus targeting learning outcomes from multiple curricula for formative and summative assessment. A flexible planning model that can engage a broad range of students in planning for inquiry provides teachers with a variety of entry points for teacher-led, shared or negotiated, and student-led instruction. Putting all this into practice takes time.

Time is an asset rather than a disadvantage in the multilevel classroom. When educators have a clear understanding of the theoretical underpinnings and pedagogy of the multilevel classroom, and are supported in implementing these best practices, there will be more time for supporting learning. The multilevel classroom provides a context for quality learning and teaching that will benefit all partners in its learning community.

Content

Independent Together: Supporting the Multilevel Learning Community presents practical and adaptable strategies to manage multiple curricula and to provide a rich learning and teaching context for a wide range of learners. This resource contains the following sections:

- The **Introduction** outlines the purpose, background, and content of the document.
- **Chapter 1** defines the term *multilevel classrooms*, provides a review of related literature, and describes the benefits of a multilevel classroom for students, educators, and parents.
- **Chapter 2** describes the learning community and the role of each partner: learners, educators (teachers and administrators), and parents.
- **Chapter 3** examines assessment and evaluation processes in a multilevel classroom.
- **Chapter 4** outlines ways to differentiate instruction for a range of learners.
- **Chapter 5** provides suggestions for integrating multiple curricula for a range of learners.
- **Chapter 6** constructs a flexible planning model based on the four-column format used in Manitoba's Foundation for Implementation documents and the inquiry process.

- **Blackline Masters (BLMs)** support the suggested learning, teaching, and assessment processes, and may be adapted to meet the needs of each learning community. A sample Parent Brochure is included.
- **Appendices** provide classroom examples and identify connections to strategies in other departmental publications, including *Success for All Learners*.
- The **Glossary** defines terms used throughout the document.
- The **Bibliography** cites the resources used in the development of the document. Resources are suggested within each chapter.

This resource does not attempt to duplicate existing resources that explore best practices, but discusses the specific application of these practices to multilevel classrooms.