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**TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE MULTIAGE PROGRAM  
AT KINGSLEY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL IN  
SULLIVAN COUNTY, TENNESSEE**

---

**A Dissertation**

**Presented to**

**the Faculty of the Department of  
Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis  
East Tennessee State University**

---

**In Partial Fulfillment**

**of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Education**

---

**by**

**Sandra G. Ramsey**

**May 1998**

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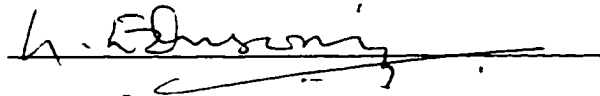
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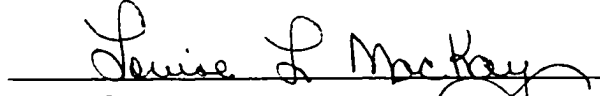
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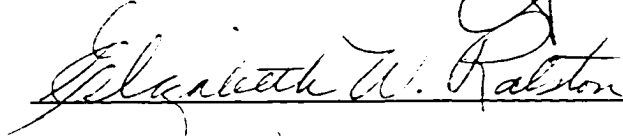
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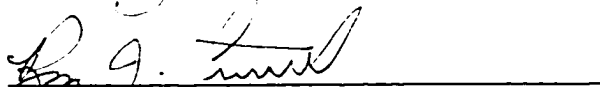
  
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## ABSTRACT

### A CASE STUDY OF THE MULTIAGE PROGRAM AT KINGSLEY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

by

Sandra G. Ramsey

This study examines how teachers at Kingsley Elementary School feel about the multiage program. There were 28 teachers and two administrators interviewed to determine their perceptions of the positive and negative influences of the multiage program. The purpose of the study is to ascertain the success or failure of the multiage program at Kingsley Elementary School and to explore the process used by the school to implement the process.

The approach to this study was qualitative and used interview data from both former and current Kingsley staff. Five research questions were formulated. The field effort concentrated on the respondents' perceptions of the developmental process of the multiage program.

Results suggest that the teachers' and administrators' perceptions of the multiage program at Kingsley Elementary School basically favor traditional methods. During the analysis, the interviewees made suggestions that may serve to improve the multiage program. Some of these suggestions could be used as a guide for other school systems that are beginning implementation of a multiage program.

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL

This is to certify that the following study has been filed and approved by  
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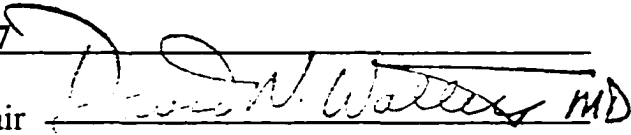
Program at Kingsley Elementary School in Sullivan

County, Tennessee

Principal Investigator Sandra G. Ramsey

Department Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis

Date Submitted March 1, 1997

Institutional Review Board Chair  MD



## DEDICATION

To my grandmother Nannie, Mable Galloway, who was always with me in spirit, and to my sister Joy who was my support.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my appreciation to those who helped make this study possible:

To Dr. Terrence Tollefson, who served as chairman of my committee, for his support, encouragement, and guidance;

To Dr. Elizabeth Ralston, Dr. Louise MacKay, Dr. Gunapala Edirisooriya, and Dr. Marie Hill for their time and service;

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## CONTENTS

	Page
APPROVAL.....	ii
ABSTRACT.....	iii
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD .....	iv
DEDICATION.....	v
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS .....	vi
LIST OF TABLES .....	xii
 Chapter	
1. INTRODUCTION .....	1
Statement of the Problem.....	6
Validation of Research Questions .....	6
Purpose of the Study .....	7
Significance of the Study .....	7
Limitations of the Study.....	7
Definitions of Terms .....	8
Overview of the Study.....	9
2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE .....	10
Introduction.....	10
Defining Nongradedness .....	11

Chapter	Page
Student Participation .....	13
Effectiveness of Nongraded Instruction.....	14
Multiage Programs .....	15
Prosocial Behaviors .....	17
Curriculum Change.....	18
Implementation of Nongradedness .....	20
Developmentally Appropriate Practices.....	21
Development of Multiage Programs.....	23
Research Findings About Nongraded Programs .....	27
Evolution of Kingsley's Multiage Program .....	31
Summary .....	41
3. METHODOLOGY .....	43
Design of the Study .....	43
Subjects.....	44
Instrumentation .....	44
Data Collection.....	45
Interviews.....	45
Observations.....	46
Interview Analysis .....	47
Trustworthiness .....	47

Chapter	Page
Consistency .....	48
Summary .....	48
<b>4. ANALYSIS OF DATA.....</b>	<b>49</b>
Introduction.....	49
<b>Part One: Observations Concerning Organizational Meeting and</b>	
<b>Parent Teacher Association Meeting .....</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>Organizational Meeting.....</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>Parent Teacher Association Meeting.....</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>Part Two: Interviews .....</b>	<b>54</b>
Interviewees .....	54
<b>Current Kingsley Elementary Teachers' Attitudes Toward the</b>	
<b>Multiage Program.....</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>Multiage Training .....</b>	<b>56</b>
<b>Perceived Advantages of the Multiage Program.....</b>	<b>58</b>
<b>Disadvantages Perceived in the Multiage Program at</b>	
<b>Kingsley Elementary School .....</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>Traditional or Multiage Allows Most Effective Use of</b>	
<b>Teaching and Learning Time.....</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>Summary of Findings.....</b>	<b>68</b>

Chapter	Page
5. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....	70
Introduction .....	70
Summary .....	70
Conclusions .....	71
Recommendations .....	72
REFERENCES .....	74
APPENDICES .....	81
APPENDIX A, Letter to Superintendent .....	82
APPENDIX B, Letter to Principal .....	84
APPENDIX C, Letter from Principal .....	86
APPENDIX D, Letter to Respondents .....	88
APPENDIX E, Validation of Research Questions from Literature Review .....	90
APPENDIX F, Comprehensive Assessment Program Average Test Scores at Kingsley Elementary School.....	92
APPENDIX G, Value-Added Assessment in Sullivan County Elementary Schools 1994 Through 1996.....	94

	Page
APPENDIX H. Ages of Kingsley Elementary Faculty From 1990-1996	
Years of Experience of Kingsley Elementary Faculty From 1990-1996.....	100
APPENDIX I. Informed Consent Form.....	103
APPENDIX J, Verbatim Transcripts of Responses to Interview Questions Regarding Teaching in Multiage Classrooms.....	105
VITA .....	141

## LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. KINGSLEY ELEMENTARY TEACHERS' ATTITUDES TOWARD THE MULTIAGE PROGRAM.....	56
2. MULTIAGE TRAINING PRIOR TO BEGINNING THE MULTIAGE PROGRAM AT KINGSLEY ELEMENTARY .....	58
3. ADVANTAGES PERCEIVED IN THE MULTIAGE PROGRAM AT KINGSLEY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL .....	60
4. DISADVANTAGES PERCEIVED IN THE MULTIAGE PROGRAM AT KINGSLEY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL .....	64
5. WHICH PROGRAM WORKS BEST AT KINGSLEY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL. TRADITIONAL OR MULTIAGE.....	68
6. KINGSLEY ELEMENTARY MULTIAGE TENNESSEE COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT PROGRAM AVERAGE TEST SCORES ARE SHOWN AS PERCENTILES FOR THE STATE OF TENNESSEE 1994-1996 .....	93
7. SULLIVAN COUNTY ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS' THREE- YEAR AVERAGE GAINS IN MATH 1994-1996 .....	95
8. SULLIVAN COUNTY ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS' THREE- YEAR AVERAGE GAINS IN READING 1994-1996 .....	96



Table	Page
9. SULLIVAN COUNTY ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS' THREE- YEAR AVERAGE GAINS IN LANGUAGE 1994-1996 .....	97
10. SULLIVAN COUNTY ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS' THREE- YEAR AVERAGE GAINS IN SOCIAL STUDIES 1994-1996 .....	98
11. SULLIVAN COUNTY ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS' THREE- YEAR AVERAGE GAINS IN SCIENCE 1994-1996 .....	99

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

Rousseau's writings prior to the 18th century, characterized young children as moving through a succession of developmental stages. Each stage governed the way children learned about the world (Williams, 1987). Approaches taken to educate children in Europe and America have been influenced strongly by John Dewey, Maria Montessori, and Jean Piaget, among others. They all held that young children's ways of learning were different from those of older children. They said that learning activities for young children needed to be responsive to the children's developmental needs (Williams).

Today, there is a movement by educators, child specialists and legislators calling for a return to a developmentally oriented curriculum that includes nongraded schools for primary children. According to Bredekamp (1987), developmentally appropriate education consists of both age-appropriateness and individual appropriateness. Developmentally appropriate schools are flexible in how they group children. Nongraded primary schools provide more time for children to develop at their own pace and acquire early literacy (Bredekamp).

Multiage is a term used to describe programs in which grade-level

designations have been de-emphasized and students are allowed to progress within multi-ability groupings. According to Nye (1993), students in multiage groups vary in experience, maturity, and ability. Teachers in multiage programs expect children to have different interests and skill levels. All children in multiage programs are expected to learn at their own pace.

Nongraded schools allow each child to progress at his or her own pace without being locked into the content of a given grade. A student in a graded school who is unable to satisfy the requirements of a given area must either be retaught or promoted at the end of the year. In nongraded schools, a student who needs a year and a half to master third grade reading is neither punished by failing the grade nor promoted beyond his or her ability to cope (Cremin, 1961).

According to Anderson and Pavan (1993), students in nongraded schools do as well as or better than students in traditional schools in terms of both academic achievement and mental health. Pavan (1977) analyzed 64 research studies using standardized achievement tests as the basis of her evaluation. Of those studies, 91% indicated that students in nongraded groups performed better academically than did the traditionally graded students. According to Pavan (1973) in an earlier study, students in nongraded schools performed better academically because the schools responded to individual differences by adjusting curriculum. She also

concluded that parents and educators could be assured that students would flourish in nongraded schools.

Not all educators are as enthusiastic as Pavan, however. Slavin & Gutierrez (1992) stated that there was no magic in nongradedness. They found that the effectiveness of nongraded elementary programs depended on the features of the program. Slavin & Gutierrez did support the positive effects of such a program, such as higher academic achievement, better mental health, and a more positive school attitude.

According to Way (1979), skeptics of multiage grouping have expressed concern that achievement would suffer if children of different ages were grouped in multiage classes. Results from previous studies indicated that achievement in multiage classrooms was no different from achievement than the single-age classrooms (Way).

Research on nongraded programs has indicated that resistance to nongraded programs was partly due to poorly attempted implementation of them in the 1960s and early 1970s. The programs were said to be nongraded, but in many cases they were not true nongraded structures. These approaches were not clearly explained to parents and community members, who often perceived them negatively. Attempts to implement such programs without providing understanding or training for teachers have led to failure of some nongraded programs (Gaustad, 1992).

According to Pratt (1986), children's friendships have been one of the themes of multiage research. Children within same-age groups show more aggression and increased competition than those in multiage groups.

Given the opportunity, children will select friends of a wide age range and interact with them better than peers in same age groups. According to Connell (1987), there is a poor fit between graded programs and children's developmental differences.

Often when a problem area has been identified by a faculty, such as the need to modernize the science curriculum, help at-risk students, or teach more students to read effectively, the usual solution has been to generate a special program staffed separately with new cadres of specialists. What is now envisioned by educators is a movement toward the creation of a setting where inquiry is normal and the conditions of the workplace support continuous, collegial inquiry. The vision is of a school as a center of inquiry, where faculties continuously examine and improve teaching and learning (Joyce, 1993).

One of the most important and valuable contributions of the restructuring discourse is the attention it has given to the idea that changes need to be made at the most basic levels of schooling. Learning achievement is the crucial product of the educational system. The primary expectations of parents and other

stakeholders is student acquisition of the knowledge, skills, and attitudes specified by state and local boards of education (Reich, 1990).

Innovations now found in many elementary schools include team teaching, nongraded schools, individualized instruction, open classrooms, and computer-assisted programs. While traditional methods are still dominant, a great many districts are experimenting with innovative plans and programs.

One such innovation is team teaching, which provides for groups of teachers working cooperatively with children at the same time. A team of teachers with a leader may be responsible for all the instruction of children in a school who would normally be assigned to the primary grades (1-3). Teams generally use some large-group, some small-group, and some individual instruction. Advantages include more time for planning, better evaluation of the progress of pupils, the opportunity for teachers to help one another improve practice, and flexibility in meeting the needs of students. Success also depends upon the degree to which teachers are able to work together effectively. According to Pulliam and Van Patten (1987), many European elementary schools are now organized so that teams of teachers stay with the same students for several years, thus getting to know them well. This model is becoming more attractive in America, because European students often perform better than American students on standardized tests (Pulliam & Van Patten).

Anderson and Pavan (1992) proposed pursuing the development of curricula based on enabling the students to deal with swiftly changing futures and the uncertainty and complexity of a society caught in a situation of rapidly expanding knowledge. Anderson and Pavan state that learning the processes of the conformation of any one set of problems is a key in the future betterment of curriculum.

Making changes in schools that result in a substantive transformation of teachers' and students' educational experiences is difficult. As Cuban (1990) notes, despite the occasional or frequent rhetoric of school reform, the ways of educating children have remained virtually unchanged since the early 1900s.

### Statement of the Problem

Since 1990, there has been much interest in and work devoted to planning a successful multiage program in Sullivan County. However, there are no case studies of Kingsley Elementary teachers' perceptions of multiage programs. This study will seek to determine teachers' perceptions about the effects the multiage program has on student learning at Kingsley Elementary.

### Validation of Research Questions

The basis for the interview questions was taken from the educational literature and local information (See Appendix E).

### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to ascertain the teachers' perceptions of the multiage program at Kingsley Elementary School and to find out the advantages and disadvantages of the program.

### Significance of the Study

The significance of this study is that it provides information that will allow other school systems, educators, and concerned individuals interested in the multiage program to have access to the perceptions of teachers at Kingsley Elementary, who are already working in a multiage program. This information will also provide the Sullivan County Board of Education with data concerning the perceived advantages and disadvantages of the multiage program at Kingsley Elementary.

### Limitations of the Study

1. This study is limited by the degree that Kingsley Elementary School teachers and principals expressed their opinions candidly.
2. Because this is a qualitative study of present and former teachers and principals, no generalizations may be made to other populations.
3. One former principal and 10 former teachers chose not to participate in this study.



### Definitions of Terms

The following definitions are offered as clarification for the particular meaning of the terms in this study:

#### Combined grades

Classes that include more than one grade level in one classroom (Katz, Evangelou, & Hartman, 1990).

#### Continuous progress

Curriculums in which children stay in classrooms with their peers in an age cohort regardless of whether they have met grade-level achievement expectations (Katz, et al., 1990).

#### Flexible grouping

Grouping of students homogeneously by achievement for some subjects, such as reading and math, but heterogeneously for other subjects (Gaustad, 1992).

#### Mixed-age grouping

Grouping children so that the age span of the class is greater than one year (Katz, et al., 1990).

#### Multiage

The practice of grouping children of more than one age and ability level together (Anderson & Pavan, 1992).

### Portfolios

Dated samples of student work, including art work (Anderson & Pavan, 1992).

### Split grades

Grades where students of usually two ages are combined, but taught separately (Anderson & Pavan, 1992).

### Team teaching

Teachers working together in a team to make instructional decisions (Anderson & Pavan, 1992).

## Overview of the Study

Successful schools have educators who are willing to provide a curriculum that helps children succeed in reaching educational goals. School leaders know that providing the best possible school curriculum for children and their future demands continual experimentation, evaluation, and adjustment.

Chapter 1 introduces the basis for this study. In Chapter 2 the study of the literature in the area of multiage programs is examined. In Chapter 3 the specific methodological features of this study are fully detailed. The data collected from the study are identified in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 contains the results of the information collected.

## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

#### Introduction

Pulliam and Van Patten (1987) traced the beginning of a graded elementary school to 1818, when the Boston Primary School was organized. In 1850, only 45% of the nation's youngsters attended school. Such methods as highly individualized instruction, cross-age tutoring, multigraded classrooms organized for learning level rather than age level, peer tutoring, and the like were always, by necessity, a part of the small one-room school experience (James, 1990). The typical elementary school was a crowded one-room school where all eight grades were taught, hence the origin of the multiage program (Pulliam & Van Patten, 1987).

There are many varied educational influences that have shaped the multiage programs. These influences include emerging definitions of nongradedness, student participation, perceptions of the effectiveness of nongradedness, multiage programs, prosocial behaviors, curriculum change, implementation of nongradedness, research outcomes of nongraded programs, academic research findings, and the evolution of Kingsley's multiage program.

### Defining Nongradedness

Multiage grouping is the practice of grouping children of more than one age and ability level together without using grade-level designations. The goal is to use teaching practices that maximize the benefits of interaction and cooperation among children. Even when there are single-grade distinctions, students' abilities are presented in terms of basic skills and aptitudes to learn grade-level concepts. Usually, the range in ability among students within a single-grade program is greater than the range of defined grade-level skills. According to Goodlad (1986), teachers must determine the range of pupil variability. The abilities of the children enrolled determine vertical pupil placement. Some children are able to work on a higher level than others, according to Anderson and Pavan (1992).

Multiage programs are based on the belief that chronological age is a crude indicator of what and when children are ready to learn. They emphasize regrouping children within classes based on readiness, interest, and acquired knowledge. According to Goodlad (1986), children do not advance evenly, in terms of a year of graded accomplishment for each year of living and schooling. They spurt and stop, advance and regress in both their general and their specific developments. Classes in the nongraded school are set up to recognize and account for wide ranges of accomplishment, so that even very long lags or very gross spurts by pupils are still within normal expectancies for the group.

Teachers in multiage programs expect children to have different interests and skill levels. Multiage programs are based on the assumption that these differences are not primarily because of age. All children in multiage programs are expected to learn at their own pace for three to five years within a supportive environment that encourages growth and development without fear of failure.

Many multiage programs are based on the rationale that it is necessary for schools to avoid both retention (holding slow students back) and social promotion (passing students on to the next grade for which they may not be prepared). Retention is deemed emotionally harmful to students, is applied inconsistently, and fails to account for normal developmental inconsistencies of young children. Social promotion fails to hold schools accountable for each child's learning (Goodlad, 1986).

According to Nye (1993), effective teaching strategies are essential to multiage classrooms. They may be more prevalent or consistently used in these learning environments, since the skills of an entire team of teachers are present. Some of the advantages to the programs incorporate active hands-on learning, whole language strategies to develop literacy skills, subject integration, literature based instruction, writing across the curriculum, a well organized learning environment with choices, and many other characteristics. Nye also

suggests that multiage programs provide a natural framework for effective teaching practices and decision making.

As stated by Nye (1993), the disadvantage of implementing any new innovation is that it can fail if individuals are not really committed to the change. Multiage programs promote choice, action, teamwork, and diversity.

### Student Participation

Students are active participants in their learning and in the collection of documentation to be used for assessment and evaluation. The continuous progress of pupils is reflected in students' growth of knowledge, skills, and understanding, not movement through a predetermined sequence of curriculum levels (Anderson & Pavan, 1992).

Additionally, children in multiage programs experience instruction that encourages them to take personal responsibility for learning. Teachers encourage students to help each other with the mastery and application of basic literacy and number skills as well as to work independently in groups or individually. Learning occurs primarily through well-planned cooperative problem solving or research experiences (Anderson & Pavan, 1992). Groupings of children are fluid and change frequently within one or more classroom settings throughout the day. Multiage programs differ from split grades where students of 3 or 4 ages are

combined but taught separately in the same classroom at their traditional grade level.

A multiage program incorporates a continuous progress plan in which subject areas with hierarchical skills (such as mathematics) are taught in skill-level groups and also are divided into integrated-thematic units. Students can take as much or as little time as necessary during their primary years to master skills and concepts in depth. A continuous progress curriculum allows children to advance as fast as they master content or repeat content in different ways to gain better mastery or depth of knowledge (Anderson & Pavan, 1992).

#### Effectiveness of Nongraded Instruction

Slavin & Gutierrez (1992) contended that the effectiveness of nongraded elementary programs depended in large part on the features of each program, especially the degree to which nongrading was used as a grouping method, rather than as a framework for individualized instruction.

Having a multiage program does not mean that students continue to stay together with their age peers, regardless of whether they have met traditional single-grade achievement expectations. Thus, multiage programs do not offer social promotion according to age. They do provide a continuous period of time for students to progress through curriculum levels without artificial time periods, such as grade levels or chronological age divisions. The main rationale for

continuous progress is developmentally appropriate progress at individual rates. Some schools that adopt a continuous progress approach emphasize individualization of the curriculum so that teaching and learning tasks are responsive to rates of progress and backgrounds (Katz, et al., 1990).

### Multiage Programs

Not all multiage schools or programs are alike. Some schools and programs include pre-kindergarten-age students, while others exclude preschoolers on the basis that they are not ready for mixing with older primary-age students. Some programs include kindergarten children with primary-multiage students (grades 1-3) during one or two days per week or a few hours each day. Others include five-to eight-year-olds together in all-day programs. Some programs have ability groups for reading or math and employ cross-grading (multiaging), especially for such subjects as science and math that may be easily integrated (Nye, 1993). In this multiage primary program, each child progresses educationally at his own developmental rate and pace, with the teacher using continuous assessment to check individual progress and success. The students in the primary program do not fail, nor is there the need for any of them to skip a grade level to have an appropriate educational curriculum. When necessary, a student may spend a fifth year or may exit the program in fewer than four years.



The three states of Kentucky, Mississippi, and Oregon have mandated multiage programs for all primary students (Nye).

The multiage program in Kentucky's primary programs respects the wide range of developmental differences in young children. The program allows children functioning below age group norms in some areas of their development to work with younger peers in a less stressful situation. Children who are functioning at above-age norm levels may work with students who are performing at higher academic levels (Nye, 1993).

Teachers of multiage students must be prepared to meet the many learning levels and needs of the students. One way to achieve this goal is through teaching using an integrated curriculum. An integrated curriculum can be designed that allows teachers to select a broad theme and organize every aspect of the curriculum around that theme (Daniel, 1995).

In a study by Pratt and Treacy (1986), teachers in Western Australia were asked about the advantages of multiage programs. The teachers and principals pointed out the disadvantages of the program instead. The teachers and principals stated increased workload, more time required for the programming and preparation of materials, more time required for marking tests, not enough time for providing attention to individual students, and no opportunity to reflect on the teaching activities during the day. The teachers were critical of teacher-training

courses and claimed that the courses did not prepare them for a multiage curriculum. Responses from teachers showed that most teachers preferred a single-grade class over a multigrade class because of more time for planning and preparation. Teachers in multiage classes taught math and reading by grade level. This process was considered more conducive to learning. Teachers and principals reported that multiage programs were undesirable (Pratt & Treacy).

### Prosocial Behaviors

Prosocial behaviors are often behaviors such as help-giving, sharing, and turn-taking. These facilitate interaction and promote socialization. Social perceptions also play an important role in the development of social behavior. The formation of friendships is often based on a child's perceptions of the roles of peers (Nye, 1993).

Research evidence suggests that children of different ages are usually aware of differences and attributes associated with age. Consequently, both younger and older children in mixed-age groups differentiate their expectations depending on the ages of the participants. Interaction in mixed-age groups elicits prosocial behaviors that are important in the social development of young children (Nye, 1993).

It has been established that children are more likely to exhibit prosocial behaviors (Whiting, 1983) and offer instruction (Ludeke & Hartup, 1983) to younger peers than to age-mates. Children are also more likely to establish friendships and exhibit aggression with age-mates (Hartup, 1976). The availability of younger and therefore less threatening peers in mixed-age groups offers the possibility of remedial effects for children whose social development is slow.

Research suggests that the effect of mixed-age grouping on cognition is likely to derive from the cognitive conflict arising from children's interaction with peers of different levels of cognitive maturity. In their discussion of cognitive conflict, Brown and Palinscar (1986) made the point that the contribution of such cognitive conflict to learning is not simply that the less-informed child imitates the more knowledgeable one. The interaction between the children leads the less-informed member to internalize new understandings.

### Curriculum Change

According to Cruickshank (1986), the school system, the superintendent, the school, the principal, teachers, and a class of children all carry powerful social, political, ideological, and physical influences that affected educators' everyday work environments and that could, in turn, affect their curricular and instructional beliefs when they change work environments. The stability of these

ordinary everyday relationships in educators' lives has helped them maintain an ideological outlook. Changing these ordinary everyday relationships frequently has presented educators with turning points that have served as the primary stimulators for change.

According to Goodman (1994), the first approach to school change suggested that school improvement and teacher growth could be encouraged by curricular, instructional, or administrative innovations; by providing schools with curriculum consultants, coordinators, or instructors; or by having school personnel engage in other kinds of change-oriented curriculum events, such as working on curriculum committees. The schools in which educators worked and the educators' positions in those schools were left largely unchanged while new elements were introduced into the work environment. Change initiated in such ways created feelings of incompetence and anxiety. Individuals experienced loss when changes took place. However, transitional experiences helped to lessen feelings of frustration.

Caine and Caine (1989) concluded that educators could integrate subjects such as science, math, history, and reading. They could make their schools into small, healthy, real-world communities where students, young and old alike, were given responsibilities for school functions.

Goodman (1994) predicted that as schools begin the next century, they will undergo what "restructuralists" call the "third wave" of school restructuring. These restructuralists note that the first wave of school reform was in response to this country's rural, farm-based society; the second-wave school system was established for the industrial age; and now a third wave of school change is needed for the coming "information/technology age."

### Implementation of Nongradedness

Pavan (1973) contended that implementation of nongradedness is an important factor influencing student performance. She said that the length of time a program had been in operation and the length of time a given student had been in the program also may be significant factors (Pavan, 1977).

Nongraded or ungraded instruction simply means grouping children without grade designations and mixing various age levels. The reason for this practice has been to increase the academic heterogeneity of class composition. This practice was common in the 1950s (Goodlad & Anderson, 1987). Later, it became common practice to group children in graded and nongraded programs homogeneously for instruction on the basis of ability and achievement. The in-class groupings could be ongoing or temporary for specific instruction in basic skills, regardless of the children's ages.

Groupings for homogeneity versus integration across ability groups (heterogeneous grouping), has persisted in American education. Research has not shown consistent advantages of homogeneous ability grouping in single-grade classrooms in terms of improving academic outcomes for students or increasing the percentage of students progressing normally with their peers. According to Katz, et al. (1990), a possible disadvantage of homogeneous-age grouping has been that some children become acutely aware of failing to live up to normative expectations for behavior and achievement for their ages. They concluded that research on mixed-age grouping had suggested that, in spite of its risks, its potential advantages outweigh its disadvantages.

#### Developmentally Appropriate Practices

Many schools experimented with ungraded classes in the 1960s. The concept has drawn renewed attention in recent years as a way of curbing ability tracking and grade retention, two practices that a growing number of educators have identified as failures for some young children (Cohen, 1989).

Experts also see ungraded units as a way to steer schools away from competitive and overly academic instruction in the early grades and toward methods using hands-on materials, play, and exploration (Cohen, 1989).

According to Perrone (1989), the primary years represent a developmental period in which some children grow more rapidly than others. The National Association of State Boards of Education issued a report in 1986 calling for new primary school units to provide developmentally paced learning for 4-to-8-year-olds.

Lynch (1997) concluded that teachers in multiage classrooms have more positive belief systems about developmentally appropriate practices, as compared with teachers in single-age classrooms. Teachers in multiage classrooms use fewer teacher-directed activities and more child-initiated activities.

Cohen (1989) found that many schools in British Columbia had ungraded K-3 units, and the provincial government there, acting on the recommendations of a royal commission on education reform, had mandated such units for all primary schools. This plan would further extend the continuous progress model through the upper grades by the year 2000.

Goodlad (1986) discovered that the then-current system of grouping pupils by grades had been developed partly in response to the public school movement's demand for efficient ways to organize large numbers of children. Goodlad concluded that the changing demographics, more than the philosophical arguments, would force us into a search for school practices designed to

accommodate children's individual differences without loss of educational quality in schools.

Earlier ungraded classrooms tended to group children by their similarities of ability, rather than by their ages. Current efforts focus on maximizing and capitalizing on differences between children (Katz, et al., 1990).

### Development of Multiage Programs

To develop multiage programs, schools should allow teachers to volunteer to work as members of multiage teams. Guided observation and open dialogue with practicing multiage teachers in a successful program are the best initial training approaches. If possible, parents and interested school board members should be on each multiage observation team. Ongoing training and planning time for teachers must then be sustained. Use of a knowledgeable consultant, external to the school system, can be helpful (Nye, 1993).

Multiage classrooms have existed for a long time, but teacher education institutions have tended to ignore them. According to Anderson and Pavan (1992), many universities actually have avoided placing their student teachers in multigraded classrooms and have paid little attention to the management of such classrooms in courses that were offered. They found that only rarely in university courses had published documents been made available about managing mixed-age



and heterogeneous classes, or about how to adapt or modify the curriculum/course of study to fit multigraded situations.

Researchers and curriculum developers in the universities need to put a great deal of time and energy into designing multigrade curricula and related materials. Great effort must be made through staff development programs to provide the existing cadre of classroom teachers with the training in teaching strategies and the materials they will need in order to succeed in the nongraded, multiage classrooms in which they are being encouraged, or required, to work (Anderson & Pavan, 1992).

Pavan (1977) suggested that multiage program teachers should be experienced in or desirous of developing skills in cooperative learning, whole language, hands-on instruction, and teaming. Such teachers should be creative, knowledgeable of assessment, open to trial and error, and interested in making classroom decisions, and they should personally enjoy learning. All of the changes to establish a multiage program should not be implemented at once. A year of planning, reading, discussion, and observation is highly recommended. It is helpful to involve a multiage program consultant or facilitator in monthly planning sessions.

Pavan (1977) stated that if school principals were interested in starting multiage programs, they should develop at least two teams per school, with three

or four teachers per team. The change process can be lonely or threatening in a school when there is a single group of innovative teachers. With a multi-team approach, as ideas succeed or fail for one team, they can be shared with the other teams. If only one team of teachers is interested, the principal may allow it to implement the multiage program while providing ongoing interest and support.

After all parents in a school have been invited to an overview about a planned multiage program, Anderson and Pavan (1992) suggested that students for the multiage program should be selected at random. Someone knowledgeable about multiage programs and research should make the presentation to the parents, along with teachers and supervisory personnel who are enthusiastic about the new program. The presentation should include a hands-on instructional component using multiage cooperative learning groups that involve the parents and perhaps the children, if they can be separated from the adult discussion after the group activities. This will allow the parents to experience a simulation of the planned multiage program. Parents should not be told that the new multiage program is an experiment. Schools and the school system should have a clear commitment to implement the multiage program.

Schools have to prepare to provide manipulative materials and equipment, many books on a broad range of topics at different levels, and materials for student projects, as well as ongoing administrative support and staff development

opportunities (Anderson & Pavan 1992). This instructional approach is not expensive per child or per classroom, but assistance to obtain manipulatives and training may be needed from parent-teacher organizations, the school districts, or other resources. The total school faculty will need to consider its role in a multiage setting. According to Nye (1993), the school librarian should adopt a multiage philosophy to support the students' development of research skills and increased levels of inquiry using resource materials.

Communication about the multiage program within the school and with parents should be as open and frequent as possible. Happy children are often the best sales personnel (Anderson & Pavan, 1992). When implemented correctly, multiage programming reflects the current assumptions and research about environments and processes that are conducive to learning. These programs embrace a philosophy of success for every student in the early grades.

According to Nye (1993), working as a multiage program team member allowed teachers to make instructional decisions with the support of other teachers. The team approach has allowed them to show their expertise with a work group. Multiage programs allow teachers to share resources and responsibilities over a sustained period of time to promote positive student outcomes, rather than modeling an environment in which teachers experience high

pressure from evaluations based on their individual performance or class test scores.

Tracking practices or beliefs will lessen the chances that children have to develop and succeed in settings that provide and foster flexibility and diversity. Multiage programs offer multiple-ability and same-ability grouping opportunities for learning and the opportunity to break out of models designed for total homogeneous grouping and instructional practices (Nye, 1993).

### Research Findings About Nongraded Programs

Pavan (1973) did a seven year study from 1961-68, and examined 22 nongraded programs. Of those 22, only 16 studies used standardized objective measures. She reported that in only one of those 16 studies did the traditional school outperform the experimental-nongraded school. The other 15 studies favored the nongraded experimental program. She argued that the discussion should be framed in this manner because of the other benefits of a nongraded program. Nongraded groups perform as well as, and possibly better than, graded groups on tests designed for the graded school.

Gutierrez and Slavin (1992) selected studies of elementary (K-6) nongraded school programs from 1958 to 1985. The number of studies was reduced to those satisfying the requirements of the best-evidence synthesis that Slavin (1986) developed as an alternative to narrative reviews. They further divided the research

into different types of nongraded program implementations: (1) nongraded programs involving only one subject, (2) nongraded programs involving multiple subjects, (3) nongraded programs incorporating individualized instruction, (4) nongraded Individually Guided Education (IGE) programs, and (5) studies lacking descriptions of nongraded programs. Gutierrez and Slavin found that the effects of nongraded programs depend on the type of program implemented.

Yerry and Henderson (1964) investigated the differences between students combined in grades one-two, three-four, and five-six with students from single-grade classes. Differences between levels within the multiage group were also compared. Five hundred students were involved. At grades two, three, and six there were no significant differences from single-grade students. At grades one and five, significant differences favoring multigrade classes were found for math and language arts.

Rule (1983) conducted a study on student achievement for 3,360 students in grades three, four, five, and six. Comparisons were made of achievement scores of students from multiage classrooms of two grades, those from single-grade classrooms in schools with multiage classrooms and those from single-grade classrooms in schools with only single-grade classes. Students were grouped and compared according to high, medium-to-high, and average achievement. Math and reading performances were analyzed. Achievement score comparisons for reading

produced significant differences between single and multigrade classrooms. Students from multigrade classrooms had significantly better scores than did high-performing students from single-grade classrooms. Multiage students scored lower in math than did students in single grade classrooms. Twelve analyses were conducted. Four analyses favored multiage classrooms and eight favored single-grade classrooms.

Rule (1983) found that multiage classes did not affect reading achievement negatively, but that they may have enhanced achievement for average to high-achieving students. Rule also found that math achievement might be negatively affected by placement in a multiage classroom, especially for pupils in grade three. According to Rule, in combining classes, the average to high-achieving students appeared to be the best configuration for all grades in reading and for grades four, five, and six for math.

Rule's (1983) research does not include information regarding low-achieving students or mixed-ability-group students. Nearly all students were selected because of high achievement. Combined classes were selected for high-achieving students as a means of reducing the achievement disparity in multiage classrooms. Rule did not include first or second grades as part of her sample.

Pratt and Treacy (1986) conducted a comprehensive study of multiage classrooms in Australia. The study sought to identify differences between single-age and multiage primary classrooms in rural and urban settings. Teacher interviews, classroom observations, analysis of student work, and a student attitude measure were used for data collection. There were 13 multiage classrooms and 13 single grade classrooms involved in the study. Pratt and Treacy concluded that there was no indication that academic progress or social development had been affected by how students were grouped. The results of their study indicated that students from both types of classrooms were progressing at nearly the same rates.

Schrankler (1976) conducted a study with 990 students in grades K-6. He asked 10-year-olds about their expectations for success. The results indicated that single-grade students had higher expectations than did multiage students. When 11-year-olds were asked to describe their perceptions of how successful they were in school, the results favored the multiage classroom.

The quantitative studies reviewed focused on numerical student-outcome data. Detailed contextual information describing what actually occurred in the classroom was not collected in these studies. The researchers did not learn how teachers planned, prepared, and taught in multiage classrooms. Therefore, data did

not show how teachers felt and responded to being assigned to multiage classrooms.

Performance scores on standardized achievement tests were the measures that were used. The tests showed only one negative comparison where scores were lower in multiage classrooms, eight positive ones in favor of nongrading and seven with no significant differences (Anderson & Pavan, 1992).

In a study from McLoughlin (1970), 5 to 10% more children enter fourth grade after three years of schooling in nongraded schools than was the case in graded schools. With fewer retentions, fewer students failed.

#### Evolution of Kingsley's Multiage Program

The Tennessee State Department of Education invited seven school systems in Middle and East Tennessee to pilot nongraded primary programs in 1990. One school in each of those systems implemented a nongraded program by allowing a group of three to six volunteer teachers to serve in a family grouping or team of multiage classrooms (either grades K-3 or 1-3). Five single-grade structured schools were chosen as control schools. They matched the student demographic characteristics of the nongraded schools. The Sullivan County system piloted a multiage program in three schools, with one school implementing the program on a school-wide basis in grades K-5. The school that implemented a school-wide multiage program was Kingsley Elementary School.



Kingsley Elementary School is located in the Bloomingdale Community, which is nestled in the foothills of upper East Tennessee in the Appalachian mountains. Pioneer traditions of leadership and "firsts" have always been prevalent here, so the initiation of a new educational program was welcomed by many. There were, however, some challenges to the multiage program. This included providing teacher training, overcoming a low budget, and informing all parents about the features of this new program (C. Briggs, personal communication, May 3, 1990).

The enrollment at Kingsley for the last three years has remained constant, at approximately 380 students. The male/female ratio is almost equal. The ethnic composition is entirely Caucasian.

A recent survey conducted by Kingsley Elementary School in 1997 concluded that the majority of the students' parents are employed by area industrial factories and also revealed a large number of unemployed parents (M. Moseley, personal communication, April 3, 1997). Consequently, Kingsley has a high percentage of students participating in the free and reduced cost lunch program. In addition, Kingsley has a significant number of students requiring before- or after-school care. The YMCA Program at Kingsley provides an optional solution for this need. Many other programs are provided for special needs. The Title I Program is a program funded by the state to provide assistance to children with

scores below the norm in math and reading. Kingsley has had 176 students participating in this program for the past three years (E. Edwards, personal communications, March 6, 1997). An average of seven students was enrolled in the Gifted Program during these years. The Gifted Program is a program for children with T-CAP scores at the 97th percentile or above in any subject area. The Special Education Resource Class presently serves a total of 39 students in remedial reading and math. The Special Education Resource Class is a program for children who show a discrepancy between their I.Q. and their curriculum performance (P. Boyes, Personal communication, May 3, 1997). The Headstart Program is available to preschool students and enrolled six Kingsley students the last school year. The Headstart Program is a program for four-year olds from low-income families. The school has 22 students taking prescribed medication for Attention Deficit Disorder and Attention Deficit Disorder with Hyperactivity. Students with ADD and ADHD have problems with focusing and staying on task in a regular classroom (M. Moseley, personal communication, May 3, 1997).

Kingsley staff (See Appendix H) visited multiage schools in Kentucky, North Carolina, and Minnesota as part of their training. The training was funded through state and federal funds (J. Casey, Personal communication, April 6, 1990). Sullivan County provided staff development programs on multiage curriculum.

The process of implementation began in the fall of 1990. The multiage program consists of two sections: three primary units and one intermediate unit.

At the beginning of the 1992-93 school year, approximately one-third of the students progressed to the intermediate unit and one-third of the new students were oriented into the primary team throughout the second semester of their 1991-92 kindergarten year. The remaining two-thirds of the students were able to concentrate on a familiar learning mode, rather than a new teacher and new environment at the beginning of each year (C. Briggs, Personal communication, August 6, 1992).

The primary unit consists of nine teachers, for a total of three teams. Each team has a first, a second, and a third grade teacher, each of whom teaches reading and math skills on grade level. Science and social studies skills are taught in multiage classes. Students change classes for all of these subjects according to their ability levels. They also attend music, art, counseling, library, and physical education classes as multiage classes. Faculty concern for different reading abilities lead the teams to do reading and math on grade level (J. Horton, Personal communication, May 3, 1990).

The intermediate unit consists of six teachers. There are two teams with three teachers on each team. Each unit consists of grades four and five. Each team changes classes for all subjects among their team, except for reading where

all classes are traditional. Each student also attends music, art, counseling, library, and physical education classes for multiage (E. Davenport, Personal communication, April 8, 1991).

Teachers communicate with parents on a regular basis by sending progress reports every two weeks to parents with children in primary grades and every three weeks for intermediate grades. These reports let parents know when problems exist. This process also allows parents to schedule conferences when problems occur. All teachers on a team participate in each conference that is scheduled for their team. This allows the parent to see how the student is doing in all classes. This arrangement also allows all teachers the security of having teammates at all conferences (E. Davenport, Personal communication, May 17, 1991).

During the five years that multiage grouping has been implemented in Kingsley Elementary Multiage School, the school has had three principals, as well as 18 new teachers to replace teachers who left the school due to retirement, change of career, or dissatisfaction (E. Edwards, Personal communication, April 11, 1997).

During the evolution of Kingsley Elementary's Multiage program, several news reports were made. The following reports were made two years after the program was implemented.

According to Cleek in an interview with *Parenting Magazine* (1993),

classes in multiage settings are moving toward a cooperative learning approach. Kingsley's new program has cut class sizes by smoothing out the enrollment imbalances that had previously produced an overloaded first grade and a smaller-than-usual fourth grade. Teachers now have more time to devote to teaching.

As reported by Lloyd (1993), the *Bristol Herald Courier*, Kingsley Elementary was described as part of a state pilot program on multiage instruction, and state officials had recently visited to evaluate the school's program. Problem solving and getting along were stressed, as well as lessons that taught students several disciplines, such as language and math, at the same time. The officials found that attendance had improved both for students and teachers.

As reported by McGee (1993), *Sullivan County News*, 14 schools statewide were participating in the multiage program where children from the traditional grades were grouped according to their skills, interests, and levels of learning. "Kingsley's multiage classes were considered an excellent example of how school-based innovation can improve learning," said State Board of Education member, Dick Ray.

As reported by Lloyd (1993) in *The Greenville Sun*, the multiage program at Kingsley Elementary was deemed successful because teachers wanted it to be successful. Teachers were doing more than ever. Teachers in the primary level

and those in the intermediate level decided who would teach students what skills. That way teachers could teach their specialty areas. The program allowed them to make changes when they needed to be made.

As reported by Eldreth (1993) in the *Kingsport Times News*, primary students were described as learning educational material that parents could not teach them at home, such as working in a hydroponics lab. In the multiage program at Kingsley, several teachers received grants to help with funding science experiments through the Foundation of Excellence in Education. Through cooperative groups, children took part in growing vegetables. The lab was said to be an extension of regular classroom science lessons.

Opportunities continue to be available at Kingsley throughout the primary and intermediate years. Internet access is available to all students in the library lab. Several teachers provide after-school math and reading remedial classes. To involve the family in their child's education, Parent Involvement Education (P.I.E.) classes are offered during the evening hours. A variety of field trips are taken throughout the year to enhance subject matter.

A total of 180 instructional days has been required by the state for students. The required minimum length of the school day for students is six hours and 30 minutes. Teachers are under contract for a total of 200 days. Their school day is seven hours and 15 minutes in length, which includes a 30-minute planning time

for each teacher. In addition to teacher planning, visits are made to other classrooms to obtain new ideas and strategies. Textbooks are also reviewed by teachers on a six-year cycle.

To ensure that the state standards and curriculum are being taught, teachers are evaluated every three years. Non-tenured teachers are evaluated during each of their first three years of teaching.

As teacher performance is evaluated at Kingsley, so is student performance. Kingsley Elementary School student performance has been measured using a comprehensive set of assessment methods that were applied according to the individual needs of students. Frequently used methods include checklists, portfolios, teacher-made tests, textbook publishers' tests, and oral testing. Self-correcting games and centers are used to provide opportunities for learning and strategies for self-assessment. In kindergarten, reading readiness is assessed in a variety of ways. Primary teachers often use oral reading as an assessment tool. Reading comprehension assessment is stressed at the intermediate level. Both primary and intermediate students are monitored daily to assess progress in all subjects. In addition to regular classroom teachers, special teachers in art, music, library, physical education, speech and language, and special education, make use of many of the same methods of evaluation.

The Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (T-CAP) is administered yearly in grades two through five. Scores were not significantly below or above the norms in any subjects. According to T-CAP scores, Kingsley's strengths were in math and science, and the area that needed improvement was reading (see Appendix F).

Value-added assessment is defined as a statistical process that provides measures of the influence that school systems, schools, and teachers have on indicators of student learning (E. Edwards, Personal communication, December 8, 1997). Of the 17 elementary schools in the county, Kingsley Elementary School ranked approximately within the middle or above in value-added assessment scores. These scores reflected gains in math, reading, language, social studies, and science (See Appendix G, Tables 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11).

Attendance records of Kingsley's students reveal that in the 1995-1996 school year, the most absences (539) occurred in report period three, which began October 18, 1995, and ended November 15, 1995. Kindergarten recorded the most absences in that report period. Also, in the same school year, there were 754 instances of tardiness, with the most occurring in October. Professional absenteeism increased from approximately 285 in 1993-94 to 336 in 1994-95, and then declined to 295 in 1995-96 and 250 in 1996-97 (L. Bowlin, Personal communication, June 1, 1997).



Kingsley has several partnerships with area businesses that provide incentives to students to improve several aspects of their education. They include "Miss School Miss Out," which encourages good attendance, sponsored by Hills Department Store. Rewards are given to encourage good attendance. The First Tennessee Bank provides "Lesson Line," which is beneficial to students. Lesson Line is a phone service for parents and students to call for homework and school reminders. A variety of businesses allow students to collect receipts that go toward the purchase of technological products. Community organizations offer a variety of in-school programs that are used by Kingsley such as DARE, a drug awareness program, Warrior's Path State Park, Bays Mountain Park, and 4-H. Other programs offered after school are Optimist Athletic League; Girls, Inc.; and Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts (S. O'Dell, Personal communication, May 5, 1997).

The school community provides pre-school programs, such as Mini-Raiders, at the area high school, Headstart, and a variety of child-care centers. Social problems within the school are referred to the Department of Human Services, Child Advocacy, and Holston Counseling Services (S. O'Dell, Personal communication, June 1, 1997).

### Summary

Multiage instruction is a practice involving cooperative learning among children of mixed age and abilities. The goal is to benefit children through cooperative interaction. Students are active participants in their learning (Anderson & Pavan, 1992). They take personal responsibility for learning. Teachers direct students to help each other. Learning occurs through problem solving and research experiences.

Slavin and Gutierrez (1992) said that the success of nongraded programs depended on the components of each program. Not all multiage programs are alike. Some include pre-school age children while others do not. Some multiage programs group for reading, math and science while others do not.

Prosocial behaviors, such as help giving, sharing, and turn taking, facilitate and promote socialization. Children are more likely to exhibit prosocial behavior in a multiage setting (Whiting, 1983).

Curriculum changes in science, math, history, and reading could foster multiage schools to become real-world communities where all students could be given responsibilities for school functions. Research has not shown consistent advantages of ability grouping in those different subject areas. Cohen (1989), said experts see ungraded units as a way to guide schools away from overly academic instruction in the early grades toward methods emphasizing hands-on exploration.

The evolution of Kingsley Elementary's multiage program began in the fall of 1990. The program consists of three primary units and one intermediate unit. Each primary unit consists of a first-, a second-, and a third-grade teacher. The intermediate unit consists of six teachers. There are two teams, with three teachers on each team. Kingsley was the pilot school for the state of Tennessee. To ensure that state standards are being followed, teachers are evaluated every three years.

A study of Kingsley's students test scores indicate that the scores were not significantly above or below the norm in any subject. Conclusions were that Kingsley's students strengths were in math and science, and that improvements in the area of reading were needed. Attendance was increasing.

The literature review indicates there has been much work in planning a multiage program at Kingsley Elementary School. Kingsley Elementary School's program appears to cause slightly higher academic achievement than would be expected in a Title I school and leads to positive attitudinal outcomes.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

The study is a descriptive case study that was carried out at Kingsley Elementary School. This study evaluated and analyzed the teachers' and principals' perceptions of the multiage program at Kingsley Elementary School. The purpose of this chapter is to identify the subjects, define the data-gathering instrument, explain the process by which the interviews was administered, and delineate the procedures for analysis of data obtained in this research.

#### Design of the Study

The design of the study was based upon a descriptive-case approach, a type of qualitative research that involves making careful descriptions of educational phenomena. Attitudes and beliefs of Kingsley Elementary teachers were explored by interviewing subjects who served in educational roles at the school. The primary method of data collection was semi-structured interviews. The study employed limited direct observation. Qualitative research served as the predominant mode of analysis.

### Subjects

The subjects interviewed in this study consisted of 23 current teachers, five previous teachers, and two previous principals.

Initial contact with each individual was made in person. A letter of explanation of the study, along with a letter from the school superintendent supporting the study, was given to each person who agreed to participate.

Kingsley Elementary School has had three principals since the multiage program began in 1990. A personal interview with each of the interviewees who agreed to participate in the study was scheduled. Each interview took place at the designated date and time of the request of the interviewee, with all interviews completed by May 22, 1997. Each interview participant received and signed a copy of the Informed Consent form.

### Instrumentation

An interview guide was developed in the planning stage of the study. The instrument was based on the literature review (see Appendix E), and upon the researcher's experience with the multiage program at Kingsley Elementary School.

The interview guide includes five core questions. Its purpose was to elicit the responses of those individuals in the educational environment who were involved in the formation of the multiage program at Kingsley Elementary School.

Permission to transcribe each interview was requested and obtained from each interviewee, and anonymity was guaranteed to each interviewee.

### Data Collection

The researcher was the primary data collector during all activities in this qualitative case study. Detailed descriptions of events, persons, interactions, direct quotations, and the school and community were recorded. A journal was kept to record notes of any occurrence that might appear to relate to the research topic.

The process of triangulation, using multiple methods to collect data, has provided the researcher with a system of checks and balances to verify the accuracy of the descriptions and the analysis.

### Interviews

The purpose of the interview was to discover the respondents' perceptions about the multiage program at Kingsley Elementary School in Sullivan County, Tennessee. The primary means of data collection in this study was the interview.

The interviews were structured to allow the interviewees opportunities to think about and verbalize their perceptions of the multiage program at Kingsley Elementary School. As the interviews progressed, the questions became more

opened-ended. This practice allowed each respondent to express his or her opinions freely.

The researcher attempted to be neutral and nonjudgmental throughout this study. Reflective reading techniques were employed throughout the interview process to check the accuracy in categorizing the perceptions recorded by the transcripts. A faculty member at East Tennessee State University served as the triangulator by checking the transcripts for partiality. Dr. John Taylor, a distinguished faculty member in the College of Education at East Tennessee State University, served as the triangulator for the study by checking evaluative and interpretive narrative against transcripts.

### Observations

Observations provided firsthand knowledge of events as they occurred. The limited participant-observer role was adopted for this study. This involvement allowed gaining entry into multiage classrooms, which allowed observing and recording data in an unobtrusive and noninvasive fashion.

Entrance to each observation event was made as natural as possible. Data were recorded as unobtrusively as possible. The documents selected to review for the study included newspaper articles and published interviews with individuals concerning the multiage concept, as well as numerous internal reports.

Observations provided an opportunity to observe and record data. The purpose was to collect information, not to serve as a committee member, or planner.

### Interview Analysis

Categories were identified within which related information was compiled through a process called content analysis, the study of particular aspects of the information contained in a document, film, or other forms of communication. Terms requiring clarification, inconsistencies needing explanation and new insights suggested the need for follow-up investigations.

### Trustworthiness

According to Merriam (1988), trustworthiness combines validity, reliability, and ethical concerns and is the true judgement of merit of a qualitative research study. Merriam states that the rigor of this type of study depends upon the interaction between the researcher and participants, the triangulation of data, interpretation of perceptions, and rich description (Merriam). In this qualitative study, capturing how participants viewed reality was more critical than determining what really existed.



### Consistency

According to Merriam (1988), several techniques are available to ensure consistent and dependable results. Two of these techniques were used in this study. Triangulation, previously described, and an audit trail were used. The audit file consists of documents that were maintained to include all notes, completed interview instruments, transcripts of interviews, and copies of documents considered relevant to the study. These materials and this dissertation will provide information necessary for replication.

### Summary

In Chapter 3, an outline of the proposed research methods and a discussion of planned research activities are presented. The research questions have served as a guide to the research.

## CHAPTER 4

### ANALYSIS OF DATA

#### Introduction

The design, implemented according to plans reported in Chapter 3, resulted in the identification of 30 professional educators for in-depth interviews. As identified in Chapter 1, five research questions were developed concerning this study. Research questions 1-5 are discussed in Chapter 4. The summary is included in Chapter 5.

The research questions are:

1. What are the current Kingsley Elementary teachers' attitudes toward the multiage program?
2. Before beginning the multiage program at Kingsley Elementary School, what training from a teacher education institution or any staff development did teachers receive?
3. What advantages are perceived in the multiage program at Kingsley Elementary School?
4. What disadvantages are perceived in the multiage program at Kingsley Elementary School?
5. Which program at Kingsley Elementary School, traditional or multiage,

is perceived to allow the more effective use of classroom teaching and learning time?

The interview procedure consisted of personal questioning and completion of a consent form by those being interviewed.

Analysis procedures included systematic review of the transcripts for commonalties and differences and a search for consistencies and inconsistencies and/or discrepancies across the interviews. The story that emerged was determined to be consistent with the information from various stages of development of the multiage program. A narrative report was then prepared to reflect the data from individuals interviewed.

Chapter four is divided into two parts. Part one describes the observations the researcher made at the inception of the multiage program at Kingsley Elementary. Part two delineates the teacher interviews.

### Part One: Observations Concerning Organizational Meeting and Parent Teacher Association Meeting

#### Organizational Meeting

Notes were transcribed on April 12, 1991, for the organizational meeting of parents and teachers for the multiage program to begin in fall of 1991.

Approximately 300 adults attended the event. An interview session included the

supervisor of instruction, Kingsley Elementary School principal, and several classroom teachers. Parents were given the opportunity to ask questions.

The supervisor of instruction explained to the group how the multiage program was to be organized and how it would work. She explained that the teachers had been training in multiage concepts and would be very capable. She also stated that since the multiage plan was still in its early stages, changes and updates were likely to be made throughout the year.

The principal explained to the audience that Kingsley was the only pilot school in the state of Tennessee to completely integrate the multiage, nongraded approach on all grade levels. She stated that the groundwork for this approach was the implementation of whole-language and cooperative learning. She used such words as "contagious" and "exciting" to describe the program (J. Horton, Personal communication, September 16, 1997).

The principal's immediate supervisor was fully supportive of the program. Formal support was also given by the Sullivan County Board of Education. One board member and the superintendent were present at the meeting.

The nine staff members of grades 1-3 were present. Parents wanted to know how their children would achieve in this new program. Teachers indicated that student learning was extended and not limited to grade level instruction. Teachers reported that the curriculum had been broadened and expanded through

the integrated units of study. Several teachers stated that a great deal of apprehension existed in the initial stages of the program development.

Revisions were still being made in the organization of the language arts curriculum. It was noted that students could be promoted from one unit to another during the year without the constraints of grade levels. It was stated by two staff members that much additional time had been required in planning since the decision to implement the program (P. Boyes, Personal communication, February 16, 1997).

Parents expressed opinions that some children would benefit from the program and others might not. Some parents asked if 5th grade students would be benefited since they would be going to the middle school the following year. The supervisor of curriculum explained that they would not only develop cooperative skills but would be the leaders. After two hours of discussion of the multiage program, the meeting adjourned (J. Horton, Personal communication, August 11, 1990).

#### Parent Teacher Association Meeting

On October 4, 1991, Kingsley Elementary School featured an open house that allowed all parents to visit the classrooms and talk with the teachers about the new multiage program. The meeting took place in the gym with approximately 300 attending. Parents asked the principal about how their children would learn

everything they needed to know in this new program. Since each student would have three classroom teachers and be changing classes so much, parents asked how children could learn all they needed to learn. The principal explained accountability. She explained that each teacher had a copy of the Tennessee state curriculum guide to help teachers identify all the skills for which they were responsible. She also explained that teachers worked in teams and the teams divided the responsibilities for teaching skills among them.

Some parents with children in special education wanted to know how multiage instruction would affect their children. The principal explained that new computers and learning materials for each child would be used by the special education teacher with these children. Special education students included the students with learning disabilities as well as the gifted or accelerated students. The PTA president then dismissed the parents so they could visit and talk with the teachers in their classrooms.

By observing parents moving from classroom to classroom, questions were still being asked about the effectiveness of this new program. Some parents discussed moving their children to other schools that had traditional guidelines. Other parents seemed enthusiastic and were ready for new and innovative ideas for their children. The main concern indicated by parents was how being in a multiage classroom would affect their children's achievement (J. Casey, Personal communication, May 25, 1997).

## Part Two: Interviews

### Interviewees

Thirty professional educators were interviewed. Those interviews consisted of discussions with each of 28 teachers and two principals who had been or were then employed at Kingsley Elementary School since the beginning of the multiage program. All interviews were conducted in person at times and places chosen by the interviewees. The interviews were completed between May 1, 1997, and May 22, 1997.

The data collected from interviews were organized and reported describing the teachers' and principals' perceptions of the multiage program at Kingsley Elementary School in Sullivan County, Tennessee.

### Current Kingsley Elementary Teachers' Attitudes Toward the Multiage Program

The first question asked to the interviewees at Kingsley Elementary was: "What are the current Kingsley Elementary teachers' attitudes toward the multiage program?" Mixed feelings was the answer given by 14 (46.67%) of the teachers.

One Kingsley multiage teacher stated:

It is mixed. The first-level teachers feel it should be kept first level. Students need to bond to the teacher. They can't read yet. The younger ones can't keep up with their belongings. Yes, I have mixed feelings about the program.

A second Kingsley teacher interviewee explained:

I feel it is mixed. Some are positive and some would rather have self-contained classes. Some are frustrated with changing classes, which causes disruptions and discipline problems that carry over into the classroom. This is frustrating to me and to other teachers.

Another teacher interviewee stated:

They don't like it. There is too much wasted time changing classes. Discipline has gone downhill. Some kids will do well in multiage. It doesn't work in this area. The economics in this area are way too low for this program to work.

Although 14 (46.67%) of the interviewees stated that the feelings were mixed, five (16.67%) stated that the attitudes are good overall.

One teacher said that the whole thing is not very positive or very negative. Another interviewee suggested that most attitudes towards the multiage are on the positive side. The suggestion that the program needs more evaluation was expressed by three (10%) of the teachers. Other answers that were expressed were too much time was wasted during class changes. Some teachers stated that discipline suffers as a result of wasted time. Some also voiced the opinion that there is too wide a gap between 1st and 3rd grades. A small percent answered that there is just too much work for the teacher trying to prepare for three different age levels. One teacher explained that nobody wants to listen to any suggestions for improvements in the program. Table 1 presents the distribution of current Kingsley Elementary teachers' attitudes toward the multiage program. Approximately 14 (46.67%) have mixed feelings, pro and con, while three (10%) said traditional is best (See Table 1).



TABLE 1  
KINGSLEY ELEMENTARY TEACHERS' ATTITUDES TOWARD THE  
MULTIAGE PROGRAM

Teacher Response	Frequency	Percentage
Mixed feelings, pro and con	14	46.67
Good attitudes overall	5	16.67
Change the gap between 1-3	4	13.33
Too much wasted time	4	13.33
Needs more evaluation	3	10.00
Kingsley should return to traditional	3	10.00
Too much work	2	6.67

Note: Thirty subjects were interviewed and were asked, "What are the current Kingsley Elementary teachers' attitudes toward the multiage program?" Many teachers made multiple responses. The percentages are based on 100% of the number of total responses.

### Multiage Training

The second question that was asked of each interviewee was: "Before beginning the multiage program at Kingsley Elementary School, what training from a teacher education institution or any staff development did you receive?"

Training from staff meetings was the answer given by 11 (36.67%) of the interviewees. One teacher explained:

We visited other multiage schools in Kentucky, Tennessee and North Carolina to get ideas on how to get a multiage school started. I think that the schools in North Carolina were the best. We should continue to visit other schools to get new ideas. We get worn out with the same old routines. We also had several inservice meetings that we went to on this program.

Another teacher responded that several after-school faculty meetings were held to provide information on the multiage program.

Several interviewees responded that they had received training from their teammates. They also explained that learning from their teammates was a good way to learn the ropes. About 17% of the interviewees said that they had worked at a multiage school before coming to Kingsley. One teacher answered that she had done her student teaching in a multiage school and felt very comfortable with the program.

Some teachers replied that they did not have proper training. There were six (20%) teachers who had no training in multiage instruction. One interviewee expressed the view that trial and error was the way to explore the multiage program. One teacher said that he would like to receive more training in the future. Table 2 presents the distribution of multiage teacher training each teacher received prior to beginning the multiage program at Kingsley Elementary (see Table 2).

TABLE 2  
MULTIAGE TRAINING PRIOR TO BEGINNING THE MULTIAGE  
PROGRAM AT KINGSLEY ELEMENTARY

Teacher Response	Frequency	Percentage
Staff development program	11	36.67
Visited other multiage schools	10	33.33
No training in multiage	6	20.00
Worked previously at multiage school	5	16.67
Training from teammates	4	13.33
More training is needed	1	3.33
Trial and error	1	3.33

Note: Thirty subjects were interviewed and were asked, "Before beginning the multiage program at Kingsley Elementary School, what training from a teacher education institution or any staff development did you receive?" Many teachers made multiple responses. The percentages are based on 100% of the number of total responses.

### Perceived Advantages of the Multiage Program

The third interview question given to the interviewees was: "What advantages are perceived in the multiage program at Kingsley Elementary School?"

Peer tutoring, cooperative grouping, and team teaching were advantages of the multiage program cited by 16 (53.33%) of the interviewees. Another interviewee expressed that the older ones enjoy helping the younger ones. Several teachers voiced that social development helps the children develop better self esteem and promotes social skills.

That younger students learn from the older students was reported by nine (30%) of the interviewees. One teacher explained that the younger ones do learn from the older ones, but the older ones regress. Sometimes the older ones want to act like first graders. Another teacher expressed the belief that younger students advanced more quickly by picking up on the older ones tolerance and patience because all children are not the same. The same teacher also reported that the children learned how to work out problems and get along to become more well-rounded students. Several teachers reported that other advantages of the multiage program included hands-on experiences and development of leadership roles. Only one (3.33%) of the interviewees responded that there were no advantages in the multiage program. Table 3 presents the distribution of advantages perceived in the multiage program at Kingsley Elementary School (see Table 3).

TABLE 3  
ADVANTAGES PERCEIVED IN THE MULTIAGE PROGRAM AT  
KINGSLEY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Teacher Response	Frequency	Percentage
Peer tutoring, cooperative grouping and team teaching	16	53.33
Younger students learn from the older ones	9	30.00
Students get hands-on experiences	3	10.00
Children develop leadership roles	3	10.00
Teachers get to know their students better	2	6.67
Multiage promotes social skills	2	6.67
Feels like we still have grade levels	1	3.33
There are no advantages	1	3.33
Rotating students alleviate problems	1	3.33

Note: Thirty subjects were interviewed and were asked, "What are the current Kingsley Elementary teachers' attitudes toward the multiage program?" Many teachers made multiple responses. The percentages are based on 100% of the number of total responses.

#### Disadvantages Perceived in the Multiage Program at Kingsley Elementary School

The fourth question asked to the interviewees was: "What disadvantages are perceived in the multiage program at Kingsley Elementary School?"

Too much time was wasted, in the view of 11 (36.67%) of the interviewees.

One teacher explained:

I think that the disadvantage to this program is too much wasted time. The students have to stand out in the hall waiting, then they have to get situated after they get in the class. So, we waste too much instructional time just waiting.

Another teacher responded:

We waste time because the older students sometimes become frustrated with having to help younger ones. Also, there is not enough structure for some students, which lead to other problems. There is way too much wasted time off task, which weakens study skills.

Another disadvantage reported by eight (26.67%) of the teachers was the belief that first grade students need to be by themselves. One teacher replied:

I feel that the first grade should be by themselves for a while. They might want to include kindergarten at some point. I think that it should be grouped as K-1, 2-3, and 4-5 situation. I feel very strongly that first grade should not even be in the multiage program.

Another teacher said:

First grade should be by itself. There is too big of a gap between first and third grades. Changing classes causes them to lose their things. It also takes more time for them to get settled down. I just feel that first grades should not be included in the multiage program for a while. Maybe, not at all.

Another disadvantage given by eight (26.67%) of the interviewees was lack of discipline. One teacher explained:

Discipline is a big disadvantage to this program. I feel that the discipline in our team is different among all three of us. We need to be more consistent with our discipline rules. We were told that probably we could not have a

school wide discipline policy. We would have to follow the county's policies.

Several other teachers expressed the opinion that sometimes a student might get stuck with the same teacher for three years, which they believed, could lead to discipline problems.

That older students become frustrated and not challenged was a disadvantage reported by four (13.33%) of the interviewees. One teacher explained:

Our third grades and fifth grades are not challenged. We have to water down the lessons so the younger ones can learn. It is very disturbing and very frustrating to us. The younger ones are also learning things that they don't need to know from the older ones.

Another interviewee responded:

We have to water down our math for the older ones. These children are at different stages of learning and need to be with their own age group. I just feel frustrated because everything seems to go over the first graders' heads.

Other teachers contended that children learned math and reading better in traditional single-age classes. The teachers also responded that the fourth-and-fifth-grade-students were not challenged enough. The respondents commented that there was less emphasis on basic skills. Some teachers explained that disadvantages to the program included too many "flowery things" going on such as writing in journals every day. Also, they said that time scheduling and time conflicts took time away from integrating academic subjects. They stated

that the program was just too structured. Table 4 presents the frequency and percentage of the reported disadvantages of the multiage program at Kingsley Elementary School (See Table 4).



TABLE 4  
DISADVANTAGES PERCEIVED IN THE MULTIAGE PROGRAM AT  
KINGSLEY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Teacher Response	Frequency	Percentage
Too much wasted instructional time	11	36.67
First grade needs to be by itself	8	26.67
Lack of Discipline	8	26.67
Older ones are not challenged	8	26.67
Too wide a range of reading difference among students	4	13.33
Accountability on TCAPS	3	10.00
Children need to be with own age group	3	10.00
More group work needed due to non-structure	2	6.67
Children are too verbal	1	3.33
Program must constantly be explained to public	1	3.33
No multiage textbooks	1	3.33
Three years is too long with one teacher	1	3.33
Intermediate students are doing well	1	3.33

**Note:** Thirty subjects were interviewed and were asked, "What are the current Kingsley Elementary teachers' attitudes toward the multiage program?" Many teachers made multiple responses. The percentages are based on 100% of the number of total responses.

Traditional or Multiage Allows Most Effective Use of  
Teaching and Learning Time

The fifth question that was asked to the interviewees was: "Which program at Kingsley Elementary School, traditional or multiage, allows the most effective use of classroom teaching and learning time?"

Traditional allows the best use of teaching and learning time was voiced by 15 (50%) of the interviewees.

One teacher said:

I think traditional allows the best use of time. When you are teaching one grade in your own classroom you have more time to spend if you run over and need more time. You can also change which subject you want to teach and when you want to teach it. The traditional setting is more flexible. You can develop integrated subjects.

Another teacher contended:

Traditional works best. The multiage doesn't seem to be working here at Kingsley. That 5-year questionnaire was never given to me, unless I missed it. Here we are six years later and we have been left in midstream. Our supervisor never asks if we need help. I think with changes, the multiage program could be a good program, but not the way we are doing it.

Another interviewee concluded:

I think traditional, but we don't have traditional. We have some very low socioeconomic students who would benefit from a more structured environment. It's difficult in special classes in the short time to teach skills with such a wide range of learning abilities. You can do more research in the library or classroom with second and third grade classes. First grade should not even be in the multiage.

A teacher who had been with the school several years answered:

Traditional. The reason I think that is because if we were not accountable on those achievement tests, multiage would be a whole lot of fun. However, since we are, traditional is a much stronger program for teaching the skills that we are asked on those tests.

A teacher no longer in the system summarized:

Traditional. Traditional is more acceptable to the public. I don't feel that the multiage program is good for resource students. It is too hard for them to keep up with their belongings. It is hard for first grade students to keep up with anything.

Another interviewee replied:

Traditional. There are much less disruptions. There is more flow with the classes. We have time to finish grade level activities. Let's face it, multiage is fun for kids but skills are not as strong when those achievement tests are given. Check the scores. Remember, we were almost on probation because of those scores. Remember our supervisor came out to encourage us to try to make more gains.

Other responses were that in a traditional classroom you could better fit the lessons to the skill levels of the students. Some teachers also stated that traditional classes do not have to be watered down for the older students. Some interviewees also voiced that students come out much stronger in a traditional classroom, but lacked social skills found in the multiage.

Multiage grouping allows the best use of teaching and learning time was expressed by nine (30%) of the interviewees.

One teacher explained:

Multiage works best for me and my students. We have cooperative groups and we can help each other. No one is out there alone. Also, we like the peer tutoring. The older ones seem to enjoy helping the younger ones. I

enjoy facilitating learning and this program helps me to do that. I would never go back to the traditional.

Another interviewee said:

Multiage. In a multiage class children are always learning. Skills get taught because children are always helping each other. I think that children remember more when you do hands-on learning. They like working at centers. Children love the multiage program.

Other responses were that in a traditional setting teachers have the students' attention, but in a multiage setting they become more involved. Some teachers also answered that multiage suits all children. They also stated that multiage teaches social skills.

The conclusion that both programs work well was expressed by four (13.33%) of the interviewees. Some teachers said that they thought children learned in both traditional and multiage. They also concluded that a mixture of both traditional and multiage would work. Grade levels with cooperative groups, team teaching, and hands-on learning would be useful, they said.

Other ideas expressed by the interviewees were that the multiage program needs to take the first grade out of the program. They found that young children could not keep up with their belongings and keep organized while having to change classes. Some teachers also explained that a 5-year follow-up study that had been promised was not conducted on the multiage program at Kingsley Elementary to see if the program needed any adjustments. Table 5 presents the frequency and percentage of the respondents' views on which program at Kingsley

Elementary School, traditional or multiage, allows the more effective use of classroom teaching and learning time (See Table 5).

TABLE 5  
WHICH PROGRAM WORKS BEST AT KINGSLEY ELEMENTARY  
SCHOOL, TRADITIONAL OR MULTIAGE

Teacher Response	Frequency	Percentage
Traditional allows the best use of teaching and learning time	15	50.00
Multiage allows the best use of teaching and learning time	9	30.00
Both programs work well	4	13.33
First grade needs to be out of the multiage program	3	10.00
Multiage needs changes	1	3.33

Note: Thirty subjects were interviewed and were asked, "What are the current Kingsley Elementary teachers' attitudes toward the multiage program?" Many teachers made multiple responses. The percentages are based on 100% of the number of total responses.

#### Summary of Findings

This chapter presented the analysis of the data. Data collection was from interviews of 28 teachers and two principals who were or had been employed at Kingsley Elementary School since the beginning of the multiage program.

A detailed description of the significant findings was presented. Direct quotes from the interviewees were incorporated to present their perceptions of the multiage program at Kingsley Elementary School.

In brief, the interview results revealed mixed feelings about the multiage program. Some teachers interviewed cited the gap in student preparation between first and third grades, too much wasted time, poor discipline, and the need for more evaluation of the program as problem areas. However, the majority of teachers received training before beginning the program, saw the advantages of peer tutoring, cooperative grouping, and team teaching, and said that younger students learn from older students. They also said that students get hands-on learning, children develop leadership roles, grouping needs changing from 1-3 to a K-1 and 2-3, three years is too long with one teacher, and a promised 5-year follow-up study of the multiage program was never done.

## CHAPTER 5

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Introduction

Chapter 5 includes a brief summary of the study, major conclusions resulting from the findings and selected recommendations that may allow others to take advantage of the results of the study. The summary serves as a chronology of the steps taken in accomplishing the study. The conclusions that are presented were selected as examples of inferences based on the previously reported findings. The recommendations are then presented to assist other educators in accomplishing similar innovations in their own settings.

#### Summary

This study was undertaken to investigate the teachers' perceptions of the multiage program at Kingsley Elementary School. The researcher first attained permission from Dr. John O'Dell, Superintendent of Sullivan County Schools, to do the study at Kingsley Elementary School. Mr. Sam O'Dell, Principal of Kingsley Elementary, agreed to have the study conducted in his school. The entire population of past and present teachers who taught during the multiage program from 1991-1997, as well as the three principals were invited to participate. There were 23 current teachers, five previous teachers, and two principals who agreed to

be interviewed. Data were collected from parents and teachers, meetings, newspaper documents, and interviews. There were five interview questions. Themes and frequency of responses were put in a tabular form.

### Conclusions

The conclusions below are based upon the findings in Chapter 4.

1. Kingsley Elementary teachers' current attitudes toward the multiage program were mixed. Many teachers responded that with some changes, such as taking first grade students out of the multiage program and better discipline, the program would be strengthened.

2. Before beginning a successful multiage program, a staff development program is essential. Teachers voiced the concern that without proper training the program will not be as successful. Only 11 teachers said that they had been in a multiage staff development program.

3. According to the teachers interviewed, peer tutoring, cooperative grouping, and team teaching were advantages perceived in the multiage program.

4. Teachers expressed the belief that too much instructional time was wasted changing classes. Changing classes appeared to cause some students to become disorganized. The teachers also expressed the view that older students were not challenged enough because class instruction had to be less challenging so that younger students could achieve.



5. According to the teachers at Kingsley Elementary School, traditional teaching works better than does multiage instruction. Teachers said that the multiage program would be a better program if modifications were made, such as developing a discipline policy, challenging older students more, and implementing multiage training.

### Recommendations

To improve practice, the recommendations below were developed by analyzing the findings and conclusions reported earlier in this study:

1. Kingsley Elementary School should make additional staff development activities available to teachers who desire such training. Both on site and visits to model multiage programs should be provided. Many teachers do not feel comfortable in a new program when they have not been properly trained.

2. A frequent theme in the interviews was that there was too large a gap in grouping students in a 1-3 structure. Older students may not be challenged enough. A study should be conducted at Kingsley Elementary School to see if it would be more productive to group students in a K-1 and 2-3 structure to challenge the older students more.

3. A recurring theme in the interviews was lack of discipline in Kingsley Elementary School. This problem was attributed to the changes of classes and the apparent disorganization of the students. A school-wide discipline policy should

be implemented. Teachers should help students become organized before leaving their classrooms to avoid discipline problems carrying over to the next class.

4. A follow-up study should be conducted at Kingsley Elementary School by the Sullivan County School District to determine to what degree the multiage program is working for students and teachers.

5. A multiage handbook should be developed from successful schools to serve as a procedures manual for those school systems contemplating developing a multiage program.

6. A consortium of multiage schools should be formed to enable sharing issues, problems and "best practices," and to provide a mentoring program for schools initiating multiage programs.

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## APPENDICES

**APPENDIX A**  
**Letter To Superintendent**

Researcher's Address  
April 21, 1997

Dr. John O'Dell  
Superintendent's Address

Dear Dr. O'Dell:

I am a doctoral student at East Tennessee State University and am presently working on my dissertation: *Teachers' Perceptions of the Multiage Program at Kingsley Elementary School in Sullivan County, Tennessee*. My chairperson is Dr. Terrence Tollefson. The purpose of this study is to ascertain and analyze Kingsley Elementary teachers' perceptions of the multiage program and why it has succeeded at Kingsley while other schools have failed.

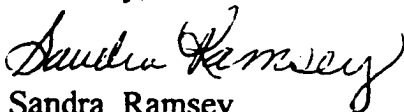
May I have permission from you to contact my principal, Sam O'Dell, and then interview the teachers concerning their perceptions of the multiage program at Kingsley Elementary School? I am enclosing a copy of the interview questions and Colleague Informed Consent Form.

If I am allowed permission to conduct this research, please let me assure you that no individual will be identified at any time before, during, or after the study. All responses will be confidential. Teachers will have the right to choose whether or not to participate in the study. I would also be happy to provide you with the results of my research if you like.

Please indicate your decision concerning my research by returning the enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope or by calling me at home (phone number) or at work (phone number).

Thank you for considering my request.

Sincerely,



Sandra Ramsey

Enc. (2)

**APPENDIX B**

**Letter To Principal**

Researcher's Address  
April 21, 1997

Mr. Sam O'Dell  
Principal's Address

Dear Mr. O'Dell:

I am a doctoral student at East Tennessee State University and am presently working on my dissertation: *Teachers' Perceptions of the Multiage Program at Kingsley Elementary School in Sullivan County, Tennessee*. My chairperson is Dr. Terrence Tollefson. The purpose of my study is to ascertain and analyze teacher perceptions of the multiage program at Kingsley Elementary School.

May I have your permission to interview all of your teachers at Kingsley Elementary School? I am enclosing a copy of the interview questions and a Colleague Informed Consent Form.

Permission for this research was secured from Dr. John O'Dell, superintendent of Sullivan County Schools. All responses will be kept strictly confidential. No individual or school will be identified before, during, or after the research. Teachers will have the option not to participate in this study.

I will contact your office by phone to speak to you at your convenience to discuss my study, the distribution of the survey, and a possible time for me to come to your school for interviews.

Thank you for your cooperation. I look forward to talking with you.

Sincerely,



Sandra Ramsey  
Enc. (2)

**APPENDIX C**  
**Letter From Principal**

**Kingsley Elementary School  
100 Emory Lane  
Kingsport, TN 37660  
288-1460**

**Sam L. O'Dell, Principal**

April 25, 1997

Dear Sandra Ramsey,

I understand that you are a doctoral student at East Tennessee State University and will be conducting interviews at this school to examine the teachers' perceptions of the multiage program. I understand that your study shows promise of helping other school systems in planning a multiage program.

I will request that the faculty of this school cooperate in any way to help in this study.

Sincerely,

  
Sam O'Dell



**APPENDIX D**  
**Letter To Respondents**

Researcher's Address  
April 14, 1997

Dear Colleague.

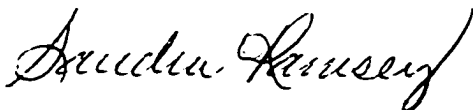
As part of a research project required for completion of the Ed. D. degree in Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis at East Tennessee State University, I am investigating teacher perceptions of the multiage program at Kingsley Elementary School in Sullivan County, Tennessee. I am requesting your assistance with this project by allowing me to interview you.

The research questions have been approved by Dr. Terrence Tollefson, chairperson of my doctoral committee at East Tennessee State University and Dr. John O'Dell, superintendent of Sullivan County Schools.

You will find the research questions easy to answer. This should take approximately 10 minutes. Your responses will be kept strictly confidential. I will contact you to schedule a convenient time for an interview. No individual will be identified before, during, or after the study has been completed.

Thank you in advance for your thoughtful participation in the completion of this study. I look forward to interviewing you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sandra Ramsey".

Sandra Ramsey

**APPENDIX E**  
**Validation of Research Questions**  
**From Literature Review**

## Validation of Research Questions

<u>Question</u>	<u>Literature Support</u>	<u>Personal Experience</u>
1. What are the current Kingsley Elementary teachers' attitudes toward the multiage program?		The multiage program has been in practice for six years.
2. Before beginning the multiage program at Kingsley Elementary School, what training from a teacher education institution or any staff development did you receive?	Teacher training and staff development programs are important before beginning a multiage program (Anderson and Pavan, 1993).	
3. What advantages are perceived in the multiage program at Kingsley Elementary School?	Teaching child at developmentally appropriate level (Nye, 1993).	
4. What disadvantages are perceived in the multiage program at Kingsley Elementary School?	New innovations fail if commitment is missing (Nye, 1993).	
5. Which program at Kingsley Elementary School, traditional or multiage, allows the most effective use of classroom teaching and learning time?	Multiage allows sharing of resources which make effective use of time (Nye, 1993).	Prior to being multiage. Kingsley was a traditional school.

**APPENDIX F**  
**Comprehensive Assessment Program**  
**Average Test Scores At**  
**Kingsley Elementary School**

**TABLE 6**  
**KINGSLEY ELEMENTARY MULTIAGE TENNESSEE**  
**COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT PROGRAM**  
**AVERAGE TEST SCORES ARE SHOWN AS PERCENTILES**  
**FOR THE STATE OF TENNESSEE**  
**1994-1996**

<i>Grade</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Reading</i>	<i>Language</i>	<i>Mathematics</i>	<i>Science</i>	<i>Social Studies</i>
1	1994	43	50	38	43	55
	1995	54	58	48	41	48
	1996	*0	*0	*0	*0	*0
2	1994	60	60	60	52	60
	1995	63	58	58	47	58
	1996	52	50	56	55	53
3	1994	61	49	57	52	57
	1995	60	68	66	68	62
	1996	64	61	60	48	52
4	1994	67	67	52	58	69
	1995	61	56	60	60	47
	1996	69	69	59	71	76
5	1994	61	74	66	75	64
	1995	60	70	74	62	53
	1996	54	63	57	59	65

Source: Personal Communication, E. Edwards, May 3, 1996.

\*No TCAP tests were administered to first graders in 1996, as a result of a statewide policy.

**APPENDIX G**  
**Value-Added Assessment In**  
**Sullivan County Elementary Schools**  
**1994 Through 1996**

**TABLE 7**  
**SULLIVAN COUNTY ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS'**  
**THREE-YEAR AVERAGE GAINS IN MATH**  
**1994 - 1996**

RANK	SCHOOL	GAINS	PROGRAM	
			<i>Multiage</i>	<i>Title I</i>
1	Valley Pike	121.9	Yes	Yes
2	Holston	112.6	No	Yes
3	Cedar Grove	111.5	No	Yes
4	Weaver	104.4	No	Yes
5	Central Heights	103.2	Yes	Yes
6	Miller Perry	101.9	No	No
7	Mary Hughes	100.7	No	Yes
8	Sullivan	100.5	Yes	Yes
9	Bluff City	100.2	Yes	Yes
10	Indian Springs	96.5	Yes	No
*11	Kingsley	92.2	Yes	Yes
12	Blountville	89.2	Yes	Yes
13	Gravely	88.5	Yes	Yes
14	Emmett	87.1	Yes	Yes
15	Akard	84.8	No	No
16	Brookside	84.6	No	Yes
17	Rock Springs	74.1	No	No

Source: *Kingsport Times-News*, "Sullivan County Elementary Schools Three Year Average Gains," May 25, 1997, p. A1.



**TABLE 8**  
**SULLIVAN COUNTY ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS'**  
**THREE-YEAR AVERAGE GAINS IN READING**  
**1994 - 1996**

RANK	SCHOOL	GAINS	PROGRAM	
			<i>Multiage</i>	<i>Title I</i>
1	Central Heights	129.9	Yes	Yes
2	Valley Pike	125.2	Yes	Yes
3	Brookside	116.7	No	Yes
4	Gravely	106.8	Yes	Yes
5	Bluff City	106.2	Yes	Yes
6	Akard	105.4	No	No
*7	Kingsley	100.8	Yes	Yes
8	Cedar Grove	97.9	No	Yes
9	Weaver	95.4	No	Yes
10	Holston	94.6	No	Yes
11	Indian Springs	91.8	Yes	No
12	Miller Perry	88.9	No	No
13	Mary Hughes	88.7	No	Yes
14	Emmett	87.5	Yes	Yes
15	Rock Springs	83.1	No	No
16	Sullivan	79.0	Yes	Yes
17	Blountville	76.3	Yes	Yes

Source: *Kingsport Times-News*, "Sullivan County Elementary Schools Three Year Average Gains," May 25, 1997, p. A1.

**TABLE 9**  
**SULLIVAN COUNTY ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS'**  
**THREE-YEAR AVERAGE GAINS IN LANGUAGE**  
**1994 - 1996**

<b>RANK</b>	<b>SCHOOL</b>	<b>GAINS</b>	<b>PROGRAM</b>	
			<i>Multiage</i>	<i>Title I</i>
1	Valley Pike	131.9	Yes	Yes
2	Brookside	120.5	No	Yes
*3	Kingsley	118.1	Yes	Yes
4	Central Heights	114.3	Yes	Yes
5	Akard	113.3	No	No
6	Bluff City	106.4	Yes	Yes
7	Miller Perry	101.0	No	No
8	Gravelly	100.5	Yes	Yes
9	Emmett	98.9	Yes	Yes
10	Mary Hughes	95.2	No	Yes
11	Cedar Grove	93.2	No	Yes
12	Indian Springs	91.8	Yes	No
13	Sullivan	85.8	Yes	Yes
14	Holston	84.2	No	Yes
15	Weaver	83.2	No	Yes
16	Blountville	77.1	Yes	Yes
17	Rock Springs	76.0	No	No

Source: *Kingsport Times-News*, "Sullivan County Elementary Schools Three Year Average Gains," May 25, 1997, p. A1.

**TABLE 10**  
**SULLIVAN COUNTY ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS'**  
**THREE-YEAR AVERAGE GAINS IN SOCIAL STUDIES**  
**1994 - 1996**

RANK	SCHOOL	GAINS	PROGRAM	
			<i>Multiage</i>	<i>Title I</i>
1	Valley Pike	126.0	Yes	Yes
2	Indian Springs	120.3	Yes	No
3	Cedar Grove	115.3	No	Yes
4	Holston	103.8	No	Yes
5	Mary Hughes	103.6	No	Yes
6	Central Heights	100.5	Yes	Yes
7	Emmett	97.2	Yes	Yes
8	Brookside	97.0	No	Yes
9	Sullivan	96.8	Yes	Yes
*10	Kingsley	96.5	Yes	Yes
11	Akard	96.0	No	No
12	Weaver	90.4	No	Yes
13	Miller Perry	89.5	No	No
14	Rock Springs	87.8	No	No
15	Bluff City	79.0	Yes	Yes
16	Gravely	74.4	Yes	Yes
17	Blountville	64.7	Yes	Yes

Source: *Kingsport Times-News*, "Sullivan County Elementary Schools Three Year Average Gains," May 25, 1997, p. A1.

**TABLE 11**  
**SULLIVAN COUNTY ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS'**  
**THREE-YEAR AVERAGE GAINS IN SCIENCE**  
**1994 - 1996**

RANK	SCHOOL	GAINS	PROGRAM	
			<i>Multiage</i>	<i>Title I</i>
1	Valley Pike	111.5	Yes	Yes
2	Cedar Grove	108.6	No	Yes
3	Holston	105.2	No	Yes
4	Brookside	103.6	No	Yes
5	Akard	102.2	No	No
*6	Kingsley	101.1	Yes	Yes
7	Central Heights	99.1	Yes	Yes
8	Weaver	95.7	No	Yes
9	Mary Hughes	95.3	No	Yes
10	Indian Springs	95.2	Yes	No
11	Sullivan	84.9	Yes	Yes
12	Gravelly	84.1	Yes	Yes
13	Miller Perry	79.3	No	No
14	Emmett	78.0	Yes	Yes
15	Rock Springs	76.4	No	No
16	Bluff City	75.3	Yes	Yes
17	Rock Springs	65.3	Yes	Yes

Source: *Kingsport Times-News*, "Sullivan County Elementary Schools Three Year Average Gains," May 25, 1997, p. A1.

**APPENDIX H**

**Ages of Kingsley Elementary Faculty**

**From 1990-1996**

**Years of Experience of Kingsley Elementary Faculty**

**From 1990-1996**

### Ages of Kingsley Elementary School Multiage Faculty from 1990 to 1996

Faculty For	90-91 Ages	91-92 Ages	92-93 Ages	93-94 Ages	95-96
Principal A	43	44	45	Transferred	--
Principal B				49	Transferred
Principal C					49
Teacher 1	45	46	47	Transferred	--
Teacher 2	39	40	41	42	43
Teacher 3	39	40	41	Transferred	--
Teacher 4	52	53	54	Early Retirement	--
Teacher 5	33	34	35	36	37
Teacher 6	28	29	30	31	32
Teacher 7	49	50	51	52	Retired
Teacher 8	43	44	45	46	47
Teacher 9	42	43	44	45	46
Teacher 10	38	39	40	41	Transferred
Teacher 11	52	53	54	--	--
			Transferred 1/2 of year		
Teacher 12	60	61	62	Retired	--
Teacher 13	43	44	45	46	Transferred
Teacher 14	46	47	48	49	50
Teacher 15	38	Transferred	--	--	--
Teacher 16	26	27	28	29	30
Teacher 17	50	51	52	53	54
Teacher 18	50	51	52	53	54
Teacher 19	47	48	49	50	Retired
Teacher 20	59	60	61	62	Retired
Teacher 21	34	35	36	37	38
Teacher 22	35	36	37	38	39
Teacher 23	22	23	24	25	26
Teacher 24		45	Transferred	--	--
Teacher 25			24	25	Transferred
Teacher 26		30	31	32	33
Teacher 27	24	25	26	27	Quit
Teacher 28				50	Med. Retired
Teacher 29			28	29	Moved
Teacher 30		22	23	24	25
Teacher 31				44	45
Teacher 32				50	51
Teacher 33				42	43
Teacher 34				46	47

Source: This chart shows that for whatever reasons, such as retirement, better positions, or dissatisfaction, the ages of 50-59 left Kingsley's Multiage Program most frequently. There were 18 of 34 teachers who left (Personal communication, L. Bowlin, May 1, 1997).

**Kingsley Elementary Faculty Members'  
Years of Experience From 1990-1996**

<b>Degree</b>	<b>90-91</b>	<b>91-92</b>	<b>93-94</b>	<b>94-95</b>	<b>95-96</b>
Master's + 45	22	23	24	--	--
Master's + 45	--	--	--	28	--
Master's	--	--	--	--	28
Master's +45 - 1	20	21	--	--	--
Master's + 45 - 2	20	21	22	23	24
M.A./M.S. - 3	16	17	18	--	--
M.A./M.S. - 4	22	23	24	--	--
Master's + 45 - 5	15	16	17	18	19
B.A./B.S. - 6	1	2	3	4	5
B.A./B.S. - 7	26	27	28	29	--
Ed.S. - 8	20	21	22	23	24
B.A./B.S. - 9	9	10	11	12	13
M.A./M.S. - 10	12	13	14	15	--
B.A./B.S. - 11	28	29	30	--	--
B.A./B.S. - 12	28	29	30	--	--
M.A./M.S. - 13	21	22	23	24	--
M.A./M.S. - 14	22	23	24	25	26
B.A./B.S. - 15	1	--	--	--	--
B.A./B.S. - 16	3	4	5	6	7
B.A./B.S. - 17	9	10	11	12	13
B.A./B.S. - 18	7	8	9	10	11
B.A./B.S. - 19	24	25	26	27	--
Master's + 45 - 20	26	27	28	29	--
B.A./B.S. - 21	11	12	13	14	15
M.A./M.S. - 22	12	13	14	15	16
M.A./M.S. - 23	1	2	3	4	5
M.A./M.S. - 24	--	30	--	--	--
B.A./B.S. - 25	--	--	1	--	--
B.A./B.S. - 26	--	1	2	3	4
B.A./B.S. - 27	1	2	3	4	--
M.A./M.S. - 28	--	--	--	27	--
B.A./B.S. - 29	--	--	1	2	--
B.A./B.S. - 30	--	1	2	3	4
M.A./M.S. - 31	--	--	--	--	5
Ed.S. - 32	--	--	--	--	28
M.A./M.S. - 33	--	--	--	27	--
M.A./M.S. - 34	--	--	--	23	24

Source: This chart shows that teachers with twenty-six or more years of experience with Bachelor of Science degrees left Kingsley Multiage Program most frequently (Personal communication, L. Bowlin, May 1, 1997).

## **APPENDIX I**

### **Informed Consent Form**



## INFORMED CONSENT

**PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:** Sandra Ramsey

**TITLE OF PROJECT:** Teacher's Perceptions of The Multiage Program at Kingsley Elementary School in Sullivan County, Tennessee.

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of the research study is to seek to determine teachers' perceptions about the effect the multiage program has on student learning at Kingsley Elementary. This study will provide documentation that will allow other school systems, educators, and concerned individuals interested in the multiage program to have access to the perceptions of teachers at Kingsley Elementary who are already working in a multiage program. This information will also provide the Sullivan County Board of Education with data concerning the perceived advantages and disadvantages of the multiage program at Kingsley Elementary.

**DURATION:** Each participant will be interviewed for approximately 15 minutes.

**PROCEDURES:** During an interview, each participant will be asked 5 research questions pertaining to their perceptions of the multiage program at Kingsley. Responses will be written down by the principal investigator.

**POSSIBLE RISKS:** There will be no possible risks. Each participant's right to privacy will be maintained. No names will be used. All information will be treated confidentially and will not be revealed.

**CONTACT FOR QUESTIONS:** If you have any further questions about this study you may call Sandra Ramsey at 423-239-8217, my home phone or at 423-288-1460, my work phone. I will try to answer additional questions that you might have. Any further information that you request regarding research subject's rights may be obtained from the Chair of the Institutional Review Board at 423-439-6134.

**CONFIDENTIALITY:** Every attempt will be made to see that my study results are kept confidential. A copy of the records from this study will be stored in a file cabinet in my home study for at least 10 years after the end of this research. The results of this study may be published and/or presented at meetings without naming individuals as a subject. Although your rights and privacy will be maintained, the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, the ETSU Institutional Review Board, FDA, the VA (Research and Development Committee), and ETSU Education Department do have free access to any information obtained in this study should it become necessary and should you freely and voluntarily choose to participate. You may withdraw at any time without prejudice.

**SIGNATURES:** The nature of the project has been explained to me as well as is known and available. I understand what my participation involves. Furthermore, I understand that I am free to ask questions and withdraw from the project at any time, without penalty. I have read and fully understand the consent form. I sign it freely and voluntarily. A signed copy has been given to me.

\_\_\_\_\_  
SIGNATURE OF VOLUNTEER                      DATE

\_\_\_\_\_  
SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR                      DATE

## **APPENDIX J**

### **Verbatim Transcripts of Responses to Interview Questions**

#### **Regarding Teaching in Multiage Classrooms**

### Interview Question 1

What are the current Kingsley Elementary teachers' attitudes toward the Multiage Program?

Teacher One replied, "I don't like it. I don't like the wasted time in changing classes. Children are lined up in the hall waiting for the next teacher to take them, and discipline problems become evident. Discipline really suffers. To make this a more productive situation, I would change the wide gap between 1-3. I think discipline would be better if the levels K-1, 2-3, and 4-5 were developed. We would have a better program."

Teacher Two explained, "This program really doesn't do what we were told it was going to do. We were told that it would be better by the older ones helping the younger ones. But, the older ones sometimes take on the characteristics of the younger and this causes problems."

Teacher Three mused, "It's mixed. Especially 1st level teachers feel it should be kept first level. Students need time to bond to the teacher. They can't read yet. They can't keep up with their belongings. Yes, I think the program has produced mixed opinions."

Teacher Four reported, "They don't like it. There is too much wasted time changing classes. Discipline has gone down hill. Some kids will do good in multiage. It doesn't work in this area. The socio economics in this area are too low."

Teacher Five stated, "I believe that with some students. traditional school is better. Also, first grade should never be put with 2nd and 3rd graders."

Teacher Six replied, "Oh, I feel like the attitudes are good, overall."

Teacher Seven explained, "I feel they are mixed. Some are positive and some would rather have self-contained classes. Some are frustrated with changing classes, which causes disruptions and discipline problems."

Teacher Eight voiced, "Well, I think that about three-fourths of the teachers here are for multiage while about one-fourth stand against it."

Teacher Nine answered, "I believe about 40% are happy with our multiage program. I think about 60% have mixed feelings."

Teacher Ten said, "I think they are still working through some things. I think it seems to be working pretty well. I think things that are working for one group is a continuum there."

Teacher Eleven expressed, "I think that the teachers like parts of the multiage program and feel that parts don't work. I also think that new teachers are overwhelmed at the work for preparing for so many levels."

Teacher Twelve mused, "Overall, I think the whole thing is not very positive or very negative. If anything, I think it might be leaning towards the negative."

Teacher Thirteen said, "Well, I think it leans towards the positive side."

Teacher Fourteen responded, "I think most attitudes are very good."

Teacher Fifteen expressed, "I think the teachers feel this program needs to be evaluated. We need to compare the last couple of years' test scores. We are never told anything about if our program is succeeding in increasing test scores. Everything is a secret more or less."

Teacher Sixteen voiced, "I think the program is working very well."

Teacher Seventeen replied, "I really think the attitudes are mixed."

Teacher Eighteen responded, "I am glad you asked me that question. I think teachers feel this program should be on its way out."

Teacher Nineteen said, "I'm going to say that this program is hard on teachers. Even veteran teachers. You prepare three different lessons. You give three different tests. It is much harder work than the traditional curriculum."

Teacher Twenty answered, "I think about 70% is positive and about 30% is negative. We need to revise this program. We were told in the beginning that we would be given a questionnaire after five years to see our feelings about the program. That didn't happen. Here it is six years into the program and nobody cares what we think about how it is working."

Teacher Twenty-One voiced, "My opinion is that multiage is fine with the exception of math and reading. It should be grade level. I'm sure the test scores have shown that. Multiage is fine in science and social studies."

Teacher Twenty-Two expressed, "I really think the attitudes show that math and reading need to be on grade level. I feel the majority wants grade level."

Teacher Twenty-Three said, "Not positive. I'll give it a four to a negative. Teachers are tired of it. It doesn't do what it says it's supposed to do."

Teacher Twenty-Four expressed, "The majority of teachers are fearful of telling how we feel. Some like parts of the program and we also see where improvements need to be made. I see frustration. Nobody wants to listen."

Teacher Twenty-Five replied, "I see that the attitudes are mixed, but leaning towards wanting to give this program back to our elementary supervisor."

Teacher Twenty-Six reported, "I really don't think that most teachers like the program. It really wastes too much time. Children do too much playing. Really, they aren't learning. We are the ones who get blamed with the test scores."

Teacher Twenty-Seven responded, "I think it is about half and half."

Teacher Twenty-Eight said, "I think they are mixed. I guess about 50 to 50."

Teacher Twenty-Nine answered, "Well, I think a mixture for and against. Changes need to be made such as grouping patterns of K-1, 2-3, and 4-5. There is too big of a gap between first and third grades"

Teacher Thirty voiced, "It is not real good."

Interview Question 1

What are the current Kingsley Elementary teachers' attitudes toward the multiage program?

1. There is too much wasted time between classes.

Teacher One  
Teacher Four  
Teacher Seven  
Teacher Twenty-Six

Frequency - 4  
Percentage - (13.33%)

2. Discipline has suffered because of the multiage program.

Teacher One  
Teacher Two  
Teacher Four  
Teacher Seven

Frequency - 4  
Percentage - (13.33%)

3. Change the wide gap between 1-3.

Teacher One  
Teacher Three  
Teacher Five  
Teacher Twenty-Nine

Frequency - 4  
Percentage - (13.33%)

4. Mixed feelings, pro and con.

Teacher Three	Teacher Twenty
Teacher Seven	Teacher Twenty-One
Teacher Eight	Teacher Twenty-Four
Teacher Nine	Teacher Twenty-Five
Teacher Eleven	Teacher Twenty-Seven
Teacher Twelve	Teacher Twenty-Eight
Teacher Seventeen	Teacher Twenty-Nine

Frequency - 14

Percentage - (46.67%)

5. Multiage doesn't work in this area.

Teacher Four  
 Teacher Eighteen  
 Teacher Twenty-Three  
 Teacher Twenty-Nine

Frequency - 4

Percentage - (13.33%)

6. Traditional is better for some students.

Teacher Five

Frequency - 1

Percentage - (3.33%)

7. The attitudes are good overall.

Teacher Six	Teacher Fourteen
Teacher Ten	Teacher Sixteen
Teacher Thirteen	



Frequency - 5  
Percentage - (16.67%)

8. Too much work.

Teacher Eleven  
Teacher Nineteen

Frequency - 2  
Percentage - (6.67%)

9. Needs more evaluation.

Teacher Fifteen  
Teacher Twenty  
Teacher Twenty-Four

Frequency - 3  
Percentage - (10 %)

10. Kingsley should return to traditional.

Teacher Five  
Teacher Twenty-Two

Frequency - 2  
Percentage - (6.67%)

### Interview Question 2

Before beginning the multiage program at Kingsley Elementary School, what training from a teacher education institute or any staff development did you receive?

Teacher One said, "We visited other multiage schools in KY, TN, and NC to get ideas on how to get a multiage school started. I think that the schools in NC were the best. We should continue to visit other multiage schools to get new ideas. We get worn out with the same old, same old. We also had several inservice meetings that we went to on the multiage program. I wonder if our supervisor will ever give us a refresher class on multiage? We need it!"

Teacher Two answered, "We visited two multiage schools in NC and TN. We had several staff meetings on multiage. We felt that we were prepared to begin this new program."

Teacher Three voiced, "We had several after school faculty meetings. Then, our supervisor said we would all go visit other systems that had multiage schools. I never got to go. Somehow, I missed out on that."

Teacher Four expressed, "I worked at a multiage school before coming here. I can't say that I've had any training."

Teacher Five explained, "We had several inservice meetings. I was out on maternity leave so another teacher did mine. Our faculty visited other schools, but I did not."

Teacher Six mused, "Before I worked here, I did my student teaching in a multiage school. That is all the training that I've had."

Teacher Seven said, "The only training that I have had is by working here for several years. I've learned a lot from my teammates. That is the best way to learn I think."

Teacher Eight replied, "All I've had is a summer workshop at Indian Springs Elementary School. I've learned a lot from other teachers here."

Teacher Nine reported, "I attended staff development programs and by class observations at other schools."

Teacher Ten responded, "I visited schools in KY and West VA. I also was a multiage principal before coming to Kingsley."

Teacher Eleven said, "We had staff development programs on multiage, and some of us traveled across the state to visit other multiage schools."

Teacher Twelve said, "Well, we had several staff development programs."

Teacher Thirteen answered, "Yes, we had staff development programs and we visited schools in KY and TN."

Teacher Fourteen answered, "Yes, student teaching in a multiage school in Johnson City, TN."

Teacher Fifteen voiced, "I guess just two years teaching at Central Heights, which is a multiage school. I am self taught I guess."

Teacher Sixteen expressed, "Yes, I received training from Sullivan Elementary where I taught. We learned from each other."

Teacher Seventeen explained, "I have had none. You were doing multiage before I came here. I did go to a workshop one time."

Teacher Eighteen recalled, "None. I learned from experience and from watching the other teachers. We didn't talk about multiage when I graduated."

Teacher Nineteen explained, "None. I've been to a workshop or two in the summer, but not necessarily on multiage. Nothing in college either."

Teacher Twenty replied, "We went to schools in NC, KY, and TN. The best school was in NC."

Teacher Twenty-One reported, "None. We had several meetings here but I never got to attend any."

Teacher Twenty-Two responded, "Trial and error."

Teacher Twenty-Three said, "None."

Teacher Twenty-Four answered, "I attended a workshop in Alabama."

Teacher Twenty-Five voiced, "None. Just by watching others and from members of my team."

Teacher Twenty-Six expressed, "Meetings at Kingsley is all I've ever had."

Teacher Twenty-Seven explained, "We had a lot of staff development meetings. We had no choice in the matter."

Teacher Twenty-Eight recalled, "The only training I had was with student teaching in a multiage school."

Teacher Twenty-Nine said, "Yes. We had a lot of staff development. We also had several visits to multiage schools in KY and TN."

Teacher Thirty reported, "Observations of multiage classes. I also went to a conference in Alabama."

Interview Question 2

Before beginning the multiage program at Kingsley Elementary School, what training from a teacher education institution or any staff development did you receive?

1. Visited other multiage schools.

Teacher One	Teacher Thirteen
Teacher Two	Teacher Twenty
Teacher Ten	Teacher Twenty-Four
Teacher Eleven	Teacher Twenty-Nine
Teacher Twenty	Teacher Thirty

Frequency - 10

Percentage - (33.33%)

2. Need to receive more training in the future.

Teacher One

Frequency - 1

Percentage - (3.33%)

3. Received training from staff meetings.

Teacher Two	Teacher Twelve
Teacher Three	Teacher Thirteen
Teacher Five	Teacher Twenty-Six
Teacher Eight	Teacher Twenty-Seven
Teacher Nine	Teacher Twenty-Nine
Teacher Eleven	

Frequency - 11

Percentage - (36.67%)

4. Worked at a multiage school.

Teacher Six  
 Teacher Fourteen  
 Teacher Fifteen

Teacher Sixteen  
 Teacher Twenty-Eight

Frequency - 5  
 Percentage - (16.67%)

5. Training from teammates.

Teacher Seven  
 Teacher Sixteen  
 Teacher Eighteen  
 Teacher Twenty-Five

Frequency - 4  
 Percentage - (13.33%)

6. No training in multiage.

Teacher Seventeen  
 Teacher Eighteen  
 Teacher Nineteen

Teacher Twenty-One  
 Teacher Twenty-Three  
 Teacher Twenty-Five

Frequency - 6  
 Percentage - (20 %)

7. Trial and error.

Teacher Twenty-Two

Frequency - 1  
 Percentage - (3.33%)

### Interview Question 3

What advantages are perceived in the multiage program at Kingsley Elementary School?

Teacher One said, "The advantages of the program are peer tutoring, cooperative groups, and team teaching. However, the team teaching has good and bad points. Sometimes the older ones get tired of helping the younger ones."

Teacher Two answered, "Well, the younger ones do learn from the older ones, but the older ones regress sometimes. Sometimes the older ones want to act like first graders."

Teacher Three voices, "Well, when this program was set up, children were supposed to go at their own pace. Yet, children are still in grade levels. The community still feels like we have grade levels."

Teacher Four expressed, "One advantage is that teachers get to know their students because they have them for more than one year. Socially, I think students gain from helping each other."

Teacher Five explained, "I think an advantage would be the cooperative groups learning as well as team teaching."

Teacher Six said, "I feel children get more hands-on experience. They get to communicate with different age groups and have leadership roles. They become more independent."



Teacher Seven recalled, "I see peer tutoring and cooperative groups as an advantage."

Teacher Eight replied, "I think children learn to get along together in a multiage setting. More social skills."

Teacher Nine reported, "It allows children to work at their own level, team teaching is an advantage. It also takes away the fear of failure."

Teacher Ten responded, "It offers team teaching, peer tutoring, and enhances self-esteem. It also allows teachers and parents to have a better knowledge of each other."

Teacher Eleven said, "I think that team teaching is wonderful."

Teacher Twelve answered, "In social studies and science, we can specialize and do more hands-on learning."

Teacher Thirteen voiced, "Team teaching, peer tutoring, and hands-on learning."

Teacher Fourteen expressed, "Younger students are more advanced by picking up on the older ones tolerance and patience. All children are not the same."

Teacher Fifteen expressed, "Since I have been in multiage, I see that the older ones are a big help to the younger ones."

Teacher Sixteen explained, "More flexibility, cooperative learning, and peer tutoring."

Teacher Seventeen mused, "Well, I don't know of any."

Teacher Eighteen said, "I don't really see a lot of advantages. Peer tutoring, I guess. We don't do too much cooperative grouping."

Teacher Nineteen replied, "I think the older ones enjoy helping the younger ones. I also like the cooperative groups and peer tutoring."

Teacher Twenty reported, "I think social development, peer tutoring, and team teaching."

Teacher Twenty-One responded, "Children help each other and enhance their own learning. Another is that children learn by helping each other."

Teacher Twenty-Two said, "The older ones work with the younger ones. They learn from each other."

Teacher Twenty-Three answered, "The strongest advantage is in rotating the students to alleviate constant problems. It also helps teacher unity."

Teacher Twenty-Four voiced, "I think peer tutoring and cooperative groups are advantages of the program."

Teacher Twenty-Five expressed, "I guess cooperative groups and team teaching."

Teacher Twenty-Six explained, "The playing. The children love to play at our centers."

Teacher Twenty-Seven answered, "Well, the social skills that children learn from each other. They learn how to work out problems and get along. They are more well-rounded students."

Teacher Twenty-Eight said, "Team teaching and cooperative learning are advantages for teachers and students."

Teacher Twenty-Nine replied, "Peer tutoring. It gives the older ones a chance to develop leadership roles. Also, I think that cooperative learning and new friendships are advantages of the program."

Teacher Thirty reported, "The peer tutoring, cooperative groups, and the hands-on learning are advantages to our program."

Interview Question 3

What advantages are perceived in the multiage program at Kingsley Elementary School?

1. Peer tutoring, cooperative grouping, and team teaching.

Teacher One	Teacher Thirteen	Teacher Twenty-Five
Teacher Five	Teacher Sixteen	Teacher Twenty-Eight
Teacher Seven	Teacher Eighteen	Teacher Twenty-Nine
Teacher Nine	Teacher Nineteen	Teacher Thirty
Teacher Ten	Teacher Twenty	
Teacher Eleven	Teacher Twenty-Four	

Frequency - 16  
 Percentage - (53.33%)

2. Younger students learn from the older students.

Teacher Two	Teacher Nineteen
Teacher Four	Teacher Twenty-One
Teacher Six	Teacher Twenty-Two
Teacher Fourteen	Teacher Twenty-Seven
Teacher Fifteen	

Frequency - 9  
 Percentage - (30 %)

3. Feels like we still have grade levels.

Teacher Three

Frequency - 1  
 Percentage - (3.33%)

4. Teachers get to know their students better.

Teacher Four  
Teacher Twenty-Three

Frequency - 2  
Percentage - (6.67%)

5. There are no advantages.

Teacher Seventeen

Frequency - 1  
Percentage - (3.33%)

6. Children get hands-on experiences.

Teacher Six  
Teacher Twelve  
Teacher Twenty-Six

Frequency - 3  
Percentage - (10.00%)

7. Multiage promotes social skills.

Teacher Eight  
Teacher Twenty-Seven

Frequency -2  
Percentage - (6.67%)

8. Children develop leadership roles.

Teacher Six  
Teacher Twenty-Seven  
Teacher Twenty-Nine

Frequency - 3  
Percentage - (10 %)

9. Rotating students alleviate constant problems.

Teacher Twenty-Three

Frequency - 1  
Percentage - (3.33%)

#### Interview Question 4

What disadvantages are perceived in the multiage program at Kingsley Elementary School?

Teacher One said, "I think that the disadvantages to this program is too much wasted time. The students have to stand out in the hall waiting, then they have to get situated after they get in. So, we waste too much instructional time waiting."

Teacher Two answered, "I feel that the first grade should be by themselves. They might want to include Kindergarten at some point. I think that it should be a K-1, 2-3, and 4-5 situation. Who do I need to tell that to?"

Teacher Three voiced, "Well, the time changing classes adds up. Keeping up with books and papers. They lose their things. First grade should not even be in the multiage for a while."

Teacher Four expressed, "Lack of parental concern, discipline, too much wasted time of task, lack of consistency, study skills and no one using time wisely."

Teacher Five explained, "Too wide of a reading difference between 1st and 3rd. The older students sometimes become frustrated with having to help younger ones. Also, not enough structure for some students which lead to discipline problems."

Teacher Six answered, "I feel like it should be K-1, 2-3, and 4-5. Too much age difference between 1st and 3rd."

Teacher Seven said, "Lack of skill time. I may be talking out of both sides of my mouth, but, what are we required to teach we should be in self-contained classes. We are limited."

Teacher Eight replied, "Skill levels are wrong. It should be K-1, 2-3, and 4-5."

Teacher Nine reported, "Too verbal. I don't think we have much discipline problems, but we are never on task."

Teacher Ten responded, "Some students need to be taught on grade level due to differences in skills."

Teacher Eleven said, "I think the challenges are there. The matter of having to re-explain the program to the general public is a problem. The public questions what is going on more in multiage than in traditional due to outcome-based education."

Teacher Twelve answered, "Third grade and fifth grade are not challenged. We have to water down the lesson so the younger ones can learn. It is very disturbing."



Teacher Thirteen voiced, "The younger ones are learning things that they don't need to know from the older ones. We have to water down for older ones in math. Also, no multiage textbooks."

Teacher Fourteen expressed, "These children are at different stages of learning and need to be with their own age group."

Teacher Fifteen explained, "I feel, when I'm teaching that everything goes over the 1st graders' heads. I feel frustrated."

Teacher Sixteen answered, "We waste a lot of time and can't be flexible due to the tight schedule. Also, I feel there are discipline problems."

Teacher Seventeen said, "I think we need to do more group work. You need less seat work."

Teacher Eighteen replied, "I think 1st grade needs to be out. They miss out on their skills."

Teacher Nineteen responded, "First grade should be by itself. There is too big of a gap between 1st and 3rd. Changing classes causes discipline problems. It also takes too much time while they settle down."

Teacher Twenty said, "Discipline is a big disadvantage. I also feel that discipline in our team is different in all three classes. We need to be more consistent with our discipline rules."

Teacher Twenty-One answered, "Sometimes a child will get hung up on some teacher that they might have a problem with. Three years is too long. There might be personality problems."

Teacher Twenty-Two voiced, "Well, our level twos are coming through. Level ones are all right."

Teacher Twenty-Three expressed, "Too much wasted time. The fifth and third get left out. They aren't challenged. I think it should be K-1, 2-3, and 4-5."

Teacher Twenty-Four explained, "Too much time in the halls changing classes. Discipline is inconsistent among team members."

Teacher Twenty-Five said, "Time scheduling, time conflicts. It takes away from integrating academic subjects. It's too structured."

Teacher Twenty-Six answered, "We have to water down subjects to the older ones."

Teacher Twenty-Seven replied, "Hall discipline is not good. We are not covering all the basics. We do flowery things like writing in journals."

Teacher Twenty-Eight reported, "Children learn more in traditional settings. As far as math, it needs to be more on grade level."

Teacher Twenty-Nine responded, "Children have a lot of learning time. There is such a big difference between 1st and 3rd. The older ones lose out."

Teacher Thirty said, "Time management. Changing classes is a problem.  
Less emphasis on basic skills. Not enough time to teach the basics."

Interview Question 4

What disadvantages are perceived in the multiage program at  
Kingsley Elementary School?

1. Too much wasted instructional time.

Teacher One	Teacher Eight	Teacher Twenty-Four
Teacher Three	Teacher Sixteen	Teacher Twenty-Seven
Teacher Four	Teacher Nineteen	Teacher Thirty
Teacher Seven	Teacher Twenty-Three	

Frequency - 11

Percentage - (36.67%)

2. First grade needs to be by themselves.

Teacher Two	Teacher Fifteen
Teacher Three	Teacher Eighteen
Teacher Six	Teacher Nineteen
Teacher Eight	Teacher Twenty-Three

Frequency - 8

Percentage - (26.67%)

3. Lack of discipline.

Teacher Four	Teacher Nineteen
Teacher Five	Teacher Twenty-Four
Teacher Sixteen	Teacher Twenty-Seven
Teacher Twenty	Teacher Thirty

Frequency - 8

Percentage - (26.67%)

4. Too wide of a reading difference for majority of students.

Teacher Five  
 Teacher Ten  
 Teacher Fifteen  
 Teacher Twenty-Nine

Frequency - 4  
 Percentage - (13.33%)

5. Older ones become frustrated and not challenged.

Teacher Five	Teacher Fifteen
Teacher Eight	Teacher Twenty-Three
Teacher Twelve	Teacher Twenty-Six
Teacher Thirteen	Teacher Twenty-Nine

Frequency - 8  
 Percentage - (26.67%)

6. Children are too verbal.

Teacher Nine

Frequency - 1  
 Percentage - (3.33%)

7. The program has to constantly be explained to the public due to outcome-based education.

Teacher Eleven

Frequency - 1  
 Percentage - (3.33%)

8. No multiage textbooks.

Teacher Thirteen

Frequency - 1  
Percentage - (3.33%)

9. Children need to be with own age group.

Teacher Fourteen  
Teacher Twenty-Eight  
Teacher Twenty-Nine

Frequency - 3  
Percentage - (10 %)

10. More group work needed due to nonstructure.

Teacher Seventeen  
Teacher Twenty-Five

Frequency - 2  
Percentage - (6.67%)

11. Three years is too long with one teacher.

Teacher Twenty-One

Frequency - 1  
Percentage - (3.33%)

12. Intermediate students are doing well.

Teacher Twenty-Two

Frequency - 1  
Percentage - (3.33%)

### Interview Question 5

Which program at Kingsley Elementary School, traditional or multiage, allows the most effective use of classroom teaching and learning time?

Teacher One said, "I think traditional allows the best use of time. When you are teaching one grade in your own classroom you have more time to spend if you run over and need more time. You can also change which subject you want to teach and when you want to teach it. I guess I am saying the traditional setting is more flexible. You can develop integrated subjects."

Teacher Two answered, "I feel that the traditional method is because if you are doing science you can do an in-depth study, especially with the older ones. Parents were never given a choice. That 5-year questionnaire was never done."

Teacher Three voiced, "Traditional works best. The multiage doesn't seem to be working here at Kingsley. That 5-year questionnaire was never given to me, or did I miss something? I think that with changes the multiage program could be a good program, but not the way we are doing it."

Teacher Four expressed, "I think traditional, but we don't have traditional, of course. We have some very low socioeconomic students who would benefit from a more structured environment. It's difficult in special classes in the short time to teach skills with such a wide range of teaching abilities. You can do more research in the library or classroom with 2nd and 3rd grade classes. First grade should not even be in the multiage."

Teacher Five explained, "Multiage works best for me and my students. We have cooperative groups and we can help each other. No one is out there alone. Also, we like the peer tutoring. The older ones seem to enjoy helping the younger ones. I enjoy facilitating learning and this program helps me to do that. I would never go back to traditional. I feel 1st should be taken out and have a 2-3, 4-5 grouping."

Teacher Six responded, "Well, I enjoy both. I really feel multiage keeps all children in successful situations. I really wish 1st grade were not blended into 2nd and 3rd. It would be even better because I feel that 1st graders hold back the 2nd and 3rd."

Teacher Seven said, "I feel traditional is the best. You can better fit the lessons to the skill levels of the students."

Teacher Eight replied, "I think they are about the same. It really doesn't matter that much to me."

Teacher Nine reported, "I would like a mixture of both. I think grade levels with cooperative groups, team teaching, and hands-on learning would be great."

Teacher Ten responded, "I think that multiage does. I think that under a traditional setting you have the students attention, but in multiage they become more involved."



Teacher Eleven said, "Traditional. The reason I think that is because if we were not accountable on T-Caps, multiage would be a whole lot of fun. However, since we are, traditional is a much stronger program for teaching the skills that are asked on those tests."

Teacher Twelve answered, "I would say that it is about equal in teaching time. I like both programs."

Teacher Thirteen voiced, "I see it as multiage is working."

Teacher Fourteen expressed, "Due to the low economy in this area, I think that multiage works best here. It really does help children get along better with each other. I see that as a plus."

Teacher Fifteen explained, "Traditional. Our children need more stability. Changing classes causes our children to keep up less with their belongings."

Teacher Sixteen said, "Multiage. It suits all children. It helps us reach the individual differences of each one."

Teacher Seventeen voiced, "Multiage. I've done both. I think this program allows us to reach all children in some ways. I also like traditional."

Teacher Eighteen replied, "Traditional. It's more acceptable to the public and it is not good for resource kids. It's hard for them to keep up with their belongings. It is hard for 1st grade students to keep up with anything."

Teacher Nineteen reported, "Traditional. You have some children all the time which allows for less time being wasted. When the students change classes, they are unattended and discipline problems occur."

Teacher Twenty responded, "Of course multiage does. You have peer tutoring which is a big help."

Teacher Twenty-One said, "Really in both we teach and learn. It doesn't vary a whole lot in that area."

Teacher Twenty-Two answered, "Traditional. It allows for more teaching time at their grade level."

Teacher Twenty-Three voiced, "Traditional. You can teach the skills that your grade level needs to know without having to water it down for the older ones. We had to make gains this year or we would be on probation. So, skills are better taught at grade level."

Teacher Twenty-Four expressed, "Traditional. There are less disruptions. More flow with the classes. We have more time to finish grade level. Let's faced it, multiage is fun for kids but skills are not as strong when those T-Caps are given. Check the scores. We needed to make gains on those T-Cap tests this year."

Teacher Twenty-Five explained, "Traditional. We have to teach the skills being asked on T-Caps. We needed to make gains this year. I don't know, but, I think we have more control in the traditional classes."

Teacher Twenty-Six said, "Multiage. Children are always learning. Skills get taught because children help each other. You remember more when you do hands-on learning. Children love it."

Teacher Twenty-Seven replied, "Traditional. We have time to teach skills that are asked on T-Caps. We are held accountable."

Teacher Twenty-Eight replied, "Multiage. I like it best because there are more social interactions."

Teacher Twenty-Nine reported, "Traditional. Students come out much stronger but they lack the social skills found in multiage."

Teacher Thirty responded, "Multiage because it teaches social skills. In this area we need to learn how to get along with one another."

Interview Question 5

Which program at Kingsley Elementary School, traditional or multiage, allows the most effective use of classroom teaching and learning time?

1. Traditional allows the best use of teaching and learning time.

Teacher One	Teacher Eleven	Teacher Twenty-Three
Teacher Two	Teacher Fifteen	Teacher Twenty-Four
Teacher Three	Teacher Eighteen	Teacher Twenty-Five
Teacher Four	Teacher Nineteen	Teacher Twenty-Seven
Teacher Seven	Teacher Twenty-Two	Teacher Twenty-Nine

Frequency - 15

Percentage - (50 %)

2. Multiage allows the best use of teaching and learning time.

Teacher Five	Teacher Sixteen	Teacher Twenty-Six
Teacher Ten	Teacher Seventeen	Teacher Twenty-Eight
Teacher Thirteen	Teacher Twenty	Teacher Thirty

Frequency - 9

Percentage - (30 %)

3. Both programs work well.

Teacher Five	Teacher Twelve
Teacher Eight	Teacher Twenty-One
Teacher Nine	

Frequency - 4

Percentage - (13.33%)

4. Multiage needs changes.

Teacher Three

Frequency - 1

Percentage - (3.33%)

5. First grade needs to be out of the multiage program.

Teacher Four

Teacher Five

Teacher Six

Frequency - 3

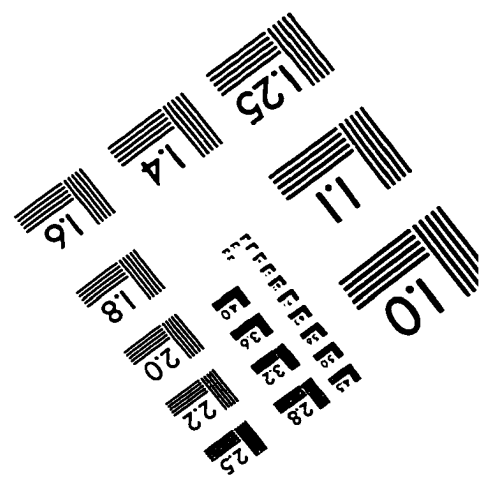
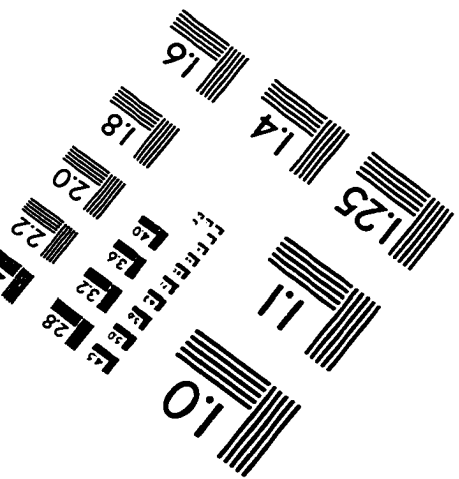
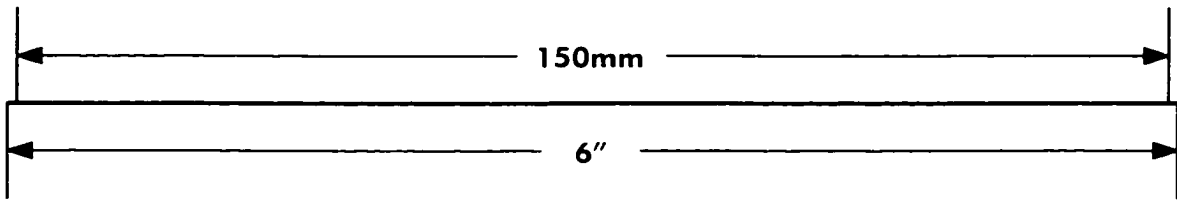
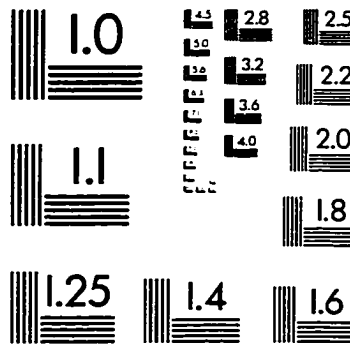
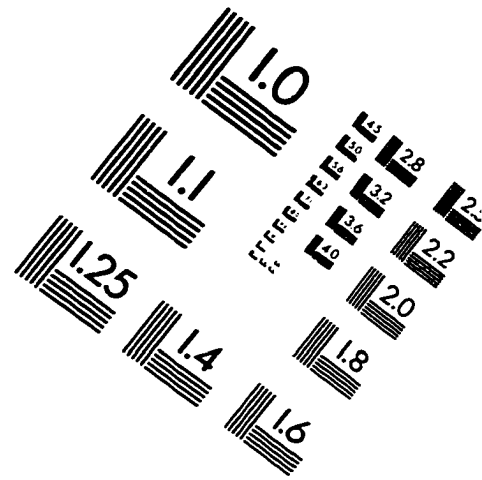
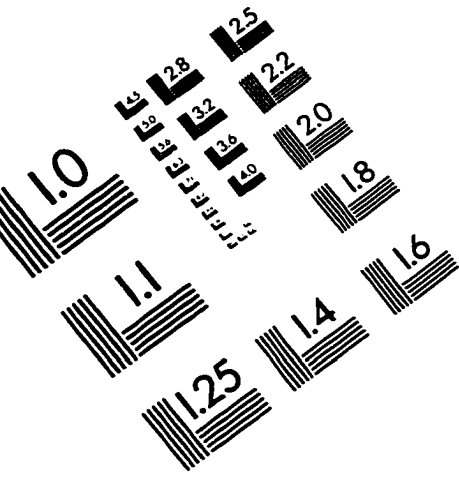
Percentage - (10 %)

## VITA

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# IMAGE EVALUATION TEST TARGET (QA-3)



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