

# Idea Board: Managing Student Levels in a Multi-Level Classroom



All English as a second language classes are, to some degree, multi-level; however, when students test at entirely different National Reporting System levels, the class becomes what is referred to as a multi-level classroom. A leveled citizenship program is one where multiple classes are offered at more than one English skill level such as Low Beginning, High Beginning, Low Intermediate, etc. The multi-leveled program offers one or more classes, but the students choose their class based on scheduling preferences rather than skill levels. All the classes in a multi-leveled program, therefore, could have a mixture of Low Beginning, High Beginning, Low Intermediate, or High Intermediate students. Even under the leveled system, the students may have been placed only according to test results for reading, and could be at entirely different skill levels for writing or speaking. Therefore, courses in a leveled program might resemble multi-level classrooms. Because of the potential for a vast range of skill levels in selectively leveled and multi-leveled programs, these courses take much more preparation than courses in which students are placed after having been comprehensively assessed at a particular level. Fortunately, there are strategies for developing courses that can meet the English-language learning needs of students in a multi-level class.

The multi-leveled program uses the same citizenship standards as a leveled system; however, the lesson plans must reflect a multi-level structure such as the model below:

## Sample Plan for a Multi-Level Class (for a 2-hour Session)

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10:00 a.m.:	Class begins. Attendance and welcome
10:05 a.m.:	Whole group summary activity (Appropriate for all levels in the classroom)
10:20 a.m.:	Whole group introduction activity (New theme and vocabulary)
10:45 a.m.:	Small group activity (Students grouped according to skill level. Teachers and volunteers circulate.)
11:05 a.m.:	Pair work activity (Higher level students work with lower level students.)
11:20–11:35 a.m.:	Break
11:35 a.m.:	Half-class activity (The teacher works with lower-level students while a teacher aide or volunteer works with higher level students.)
11:50 a.m.:	Whole group review activity and homework assignment
12:00 Noon	Dismissal

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