

Initialit

Composite classroom

Fact sheet



Can Initialit be used in a composite / multi-age / multi-stage classroom?

Yes, Initialit can be used in a composite classroom, but there are several important factors to consider for effective implementation, such as:

- ▶ Number of children in the class / in each year level
- ▶ Skill level of children in the class
- ▶ Levels of Initialit being implemented (e.g., Initialit-F and Initialit-1)
- ▶ Support in the classroom (e.g., teacher aide, Learning Support Teacher)

Checking the skill level of children in the classroom

It is a good idea to assess children in your composite class prior to commencing instruction, as you would normally do. This will enable you to more easily determine which level of the program (Initialit-F, Initialit-1, Initialit-2) is better suited to each child's skill level. When beginning instruction at the start of the year, assess children on the relevant Screener for their year level. If the Year 1 Screener is too challenging for some Year 1 students, the Foundation Screener (and therefore the Foundation program) may be more appropriate.

Once assessed, group children according to instructional level. This means they can receive instruction that is at an appropriate level for their skill, filling any gaps in phonic knowledge, tricky words and other foundational reading skills before moving on to more complex skills.

MultiLit is happy to provide advice on assessment and grouping of children.

Which levels of Initialit can be taught together in a composite classroom?

It is possible to implement Initialit-F and Initialit-1 in a composite classroom. These two levels of the program follow a similar model of implementation, and as a result timetabling to use both levels in one classroom is manageable.

Because Initialit-2 differs considerably in its implementation from Initialit-F and Initialit-1, it may be difficult to implement this level of the program at the same time as another level. Initialit-2 works on the assumption that most children are well on their way to reading independence and are no longer requiring the type of phonic instruction provided in Initialit-1 and Initialit-F. If children struggle

on the Initialit-2 Screener, they may be better suited to an earlier level of the Initialit program.

It will be very difficult to implement all three levels of the program in one classroom.

Implementation

Based on the assumption that there are two levels of the program being implemented in one classroom, typically Initialit-F and Initialit-1, there will effectively be two groups running in the classroom: one group will receive explicit instruction on the mat while the second group works on small-group consolidation activities. The groups will need to rotate, so each group receives an explicit on-the-mat lesson ideally four or five times per week.

With additional support in the classroom: A trained teacher's aide or Learning Support Teacher can run the small-group activities (e.g., reading groups, word building, Sounds and Words Books) while the classroom teacher delivers the explicit on-the-mat lesson or vice versa.

Without additional support in the classroom: The classroom teacher will need to manage both groups of children. This will require good classroom behaviour management and planning. The frequency of the explicit on-the-mat lesson may need to be reduced to three times per week (instead of four or five) to allow enough time to deliver two programs. Independent activities will need to be demonstrated to ensure children can work without close teacher support.

Groups can be combined for the Storybook component of the program, differentiating the comprehension questions and vocabulary as required.

More than one composite class in the school

If there is more than one composite class in the school, consider assessing all children as described above, then splitting into instructional/streamed groups across the classes. This may mean that some Foundation children are in a group with Year 1 children, some Year 2 children in a group with Year 1 children and so on. The explicit instruction each group is provided with will be best suited to their skill level, working through the most appropriate level of the Initialit program (F, 1 or 2). Small-group consolidation activities can occur in these streamed classes, or children can return to their 'home' class for this time, to allow each class teacher to work with children from their own class in reading groups and so on.

Using InitialLit-F and InitialLit-1 in a composite F/1 classroom

Suggested timetable

Each school and each classroom will have its own structures to work within. Below is one suggestion of how to implement InitialLit-F and InitialLit-1 in a composite F/1 classroom, with some additional teacher aide support.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
9:10 – 9:20	Whole-class explanation of today's small-group activities	Whole-class explanation of today's small-group activities	Differentiated small-group activities – teacher-led group to focus on Sounds and Words Books, decodable readers	Whole-class explanation of today's small-group activities	Differentiated small-group activities (with teacher/ teacher aide , or independent) – teacher-led group to focus on Sounds and Words Books, decodable readers
9:20 – 9:50	Group 1: explicit on-the-mat InitialLit-F lesson Group 2: independent activities (worksheets, bingo, tricky words, etc)	Group 1: explicit on-the-mat InitialLit-F lesson Group 2: independent activities (worksheets, bingo, tricky words, etc)		Group 1: explicit on-the-mat InitialLit-F lesson Group 2: work with teacher aide on word building and independent activities	
9:50 – 10	<i>Fruit break</i>	<i>Fruit break</i>	<i>Fruit break</i>	<i>Fruit break</i>	<i>Fruit break</i>
10 – 10:30	Group 1: independent activities (worksheets, bingo, tricky words, etc) Group 2: explicit on-the-mat InitialLit-1 lesson	Group 1: independent activities (worksheets, bingo, tricky words, etc) Group 2: explicit on-the-mat InitialLit-1 lesson	Other literacy activities e.g., differentiated writing activity	Group 1: work with teacher aide on word building and independent activities Group 2: explicit on-the-mat InitialLit-1 lesson	Other literacy activities e.g., differentiated writing activity
10 – 10:30	Storybook lesson		Storybook lesson		

Further advice

If you would like further advice and support on using InitialLit in your composite class, please contact us at

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