

Multi-Grade Classroom: A Hindrance In The Way Of Effective Teaching In Elementary Education

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Abstract

This study was conducted to examine the “Multi-Grade Classroom Hindrances”, in the way of effective teaching in Elementary Education. Multi-grade teaching is that type of teaching where a single teacher is teaching more than one class/grade. Multi-grade teaching has become one of the priority topics in the lower case. The reason for bringing this issue onboard is the recognition that multi-grade teaching has a potential to improve quality of teaching. This study was conducted based on to identify the challenges faced by teachers while teaching multi-grade classes. A qualitative research was conducted in district Malakand Khyber pakhtunkhawa Pakistan, having for four circles. From each circle one sample multi-grade school and from every school one teacher with multi-grade classes were purposively selected. Data were collected through individual interviews with four teachers of multi-grade classes’ sampled schools and semi-structured interviews were conducted with four teachers each from the four identified schools. Data were also collected through lesson observations from every sampled school. Data were categorized according to themes and then analyzed inductively. The results revealed that multi-grade teachers experienced a number of challenges (hurdles in lesson plan, work overload, hurdles in classroom management etc). The study thus, recommends that the Department of Elementary Education should increase teachers, strengthen and arrange special training for multi-grade teachers and provide resources which can help in multi-grade teaching.

Keywords: Multi-grade teaching, Mono-grade teaching, Elementary Education, Primary education curriculum

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Introduction

Education is the process of facilitating learning. The learning is turning as addition and expansion prior schema. This process of learning begins

before birth i.e. in the womb. Once the child is admitted into the education step at this level he encounters a different experience. At this level child needs an institute for effective learning. But

unfortunately some schools have less number of teachers than the grades because of some causes which introduce the process of multi-grade teaching. Getting formal education occurs in a series of steps and is imparted in different ways. To begin Primary education is being imparted in varieties of ways .i.e. multi-grade teaching and mono-grade teaching. Teaching of multi-grade is a type of teaching where one teacher is teaching more than one class instead of a single grade at a time, while teaching of mono-grade is a type of teaching to students where the teacher teaches only single class at a time (Anyia, 2013). A known obstacle to the teaching of more than one class is to run the classes because when one class is working on an assignment, the teacher keeps busy with other classes (Taole & Mncube, 2012). As like, supervise time efficaciously as good as keep parent and residual people relationships are the face required to be raised to establish good multi-grade teaching and multi-grade learning direct participation (Mulyran Kyne, 2007). Neglect the challenges, multi-graded teaching, and multi-grade learning have several positivity like having a suitable flexible elastic organized plan, produce many ways to push and capable learning, to learn to a greater extent in informal class's environment and friendly connection (Jordaan, 2006).

Being away from receiving suitable needful training for those teachers who teach in multi-grade classes, being away in getting suitable human, material assets and being away in keeping the required help from the main educators give up the necessary training. Constructing multi-grade and their teaching techniques have been obstructed by the reality that mostly the educators do not choose to

inhabit in rural region of the countries, where more classes of the multi-graded classrooms have to be available (Taole & Mncube, 2012). The large numbers of the teachers teaching at multi-graded classrooms disclose that they open multi-graded teaching difficulties and challenges. The sum-up that they were feels lonely and not aware just as it should be what was understandably expectable from them to do (Taole, 2014)._Teachers sense that there is a burden in Multi-grade classrooms making of lesson plans, strategies for management of the classroom, necessary services and facilities, required resources for teaching, and people support of the residential area that kick in and to make better learning. As stated by Mulaudzi (2016), there are mostly problems faced by Multi-grade teachers in Elementary Education these are: Curriculum management, workload, class setting, student output, and shortness of help. In the Philippines, the most challenges in multi-grade class are making and formulating daily plans for lessons, the lack of teaching resources, class setting invigilation, well-known dissimilar plans in instructing multi-grade classes, use of teaching strategies in real teaching-learning conditions, shortage of school resources, plans of actions, the large size of the class, bad teaching of teachers, lack of before and during in-service training of teachers in particular ability relevant to multi-grade teaching, and related around the educational achievements of students (Mirando, 2012). Other than the problems of teachers in a multi-grade atmosphere, they give the best output for the learning of students' learning achievement to be creative and purposeful (Naparan & Alinsug, 2021). Yet they spent part of their Monthly salaries

on different learning tools, A.V aids, for their school's students (Castigador, 2019).

Statement of the research problem

This is common in the literature that multi-grade education is internationally common and position considerable needs on single-grade teaching. It was required to start a study on the hindrance faced by teachers in classes where more than one grade is at the Primary education level. This study had investigated the hindrance faced by multi-grade teachers at Primary level education. In (2019) when the researcher joined a primary school so there were only two teachers the researcher was the third one in a five-grade primary school so we started multi-grade and faced different challenges. Teachers had to educate not a single means more than single grade in one class at the same place, time and they were accountable for their learning. So therefore researcher consider this situation that to investigate the topic “hindrances faced by multi-grade teachers in the Primary level at district Malakand Khyber pakhtunkhawa Pakistan”.

Significance of the Study

When problems in multi-grade teaching were pointed out and directed, this improves multi-grade teaching and removes all barriers at the Primary level. This research facilitates curriculum designers, planners to pick out complications with concern to multi-grade teaching for the finding answers for problems. This research have also facilitate the teachers for the removing the problems which they face during teaching learning process. This study also facilitates the school's management for taking steps for removing the barriers that teachers face in the multi-grade teaching.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the research were:

1. To explore the challenges faced by teachers of multi-grade classrooms in the implementation of Primary education curriculum.
2. To find out ways which can be used for effective learning in teaching of Multi-grade primary education?

Research Questions

1. What were the teachers' perspectives about the challenges related to multi-grade classrooms in the implementation of effective Primary education?
2. Which strategies can be used for effective learning in Multi-grade teaching for primary education?

2. Literature Review

(Little cited Brown, 2012) stated that multi-grade teaching term means what? She defines it as the teaching to multi-grade teaching means teaching to students of not same ages, not same grades and not same capability group. She also differentiated multi-grade from single-grade teaching where learners in equal grades are to be looking the same in respect of ages as well as abilities. Also, differentiated teaching of multi-grade from mixed-age in grade teaching happens where there is a clear difference in age in the alike class. (Joubert, 2010) stated that teaching of multi-grade classes is the teaching to students of various grades at alike moment and alike setting, that some words are open up in the literature to describe multi-grade teaching. He identified that the word 'mixed grades', 'forced different age grades' and 'forced different class' are

normally used to organize development with the essential and the feature of registration and admission. (Hargreaves et al., 2001) stated that multi-grade classes are classes where a single teacher is responsible for more grades of students at a time. They also stated that the word is mainly used to add mixed classes, different-age grades and grouped family classes. (Brunswick, Valerien cited Brown, 2008) stated that teaching in M.G is the teaching of only one teacher means a single teacher is accountable for students of multi ages expanding on a different class, and using a changing curriculum. (Brown, 2008) expresses that teaching multi-grade does not come along to take pleasure a mutual explanation within researchers and education someone who practices. He identified that for several, the idea left deeply disputed, and this is not easy to construct an agreement about what is meant by it. In this study, the meaning according to me, researcher found to a great extent proponent is expressed that teaching of multi-grade is teaching where there is only one teacher is accountable for students of different ages expand over some classes, and not use the same curriculum. This is a suitable definition for this study due to classes of multi-grades in the specified schools consisting of students of several grades and ages, which have no same curriculum, unite and taught combine by only one teacher. Multi-grade schools are those schools where the group of children of not equal grades are taught in the same classroom and are mostly located in remote, sparsely populous regions (Enayati, Movahedian & Zamani, 2016).

Multi-grade and mono-grade in Pakistan

(Nasir-ul-Haq, 2017) conducted a study on the

teaching of multi-grade, according to him, means a type of teaching where only one teacher is educating instead of a single grade, there are more grades, not a single grade for learning in a class. In Pakistan multi-grade teaching in which different ages children sit together in one class for learning purposes and the teacher teaches at a time to them. (Joubert, 2010) argues that when for different grades there is one teacher for teaching in the classroom, so this is called multi-grade teaching. When the researcher joined the school in January (2019) as primary teachers so there was multi-grade teaching because of fewer teachers than the class numbers. And especially this multi-grade system affected the Primary level. And it is important to focus on the Primary level more than other classes. So multi-grade teaching will affect the Primary level and there will be hindrances that are faced during multi-grade teaching at Primary level education. According to (Du Plessis & Mestry 2019), Multi-grade teachers face some challenges in the effective teaching-learning process as unavailability of resources, financial problems, and parents' interest in their children's learning. Multi-grade teaching requires children's individual learning styles ability not found in the classrooms. Multi-grade teaching is teaching in which there is more than one class in a classroom for teaching the students at a time while single-grade education is teaching in were a teacher teaching only a single class at a time (Anyia, 2013). In a rural area of Pakistan instruction are more in multi-grade because of lack of teachers and class space and fewer teachers than class numbers teaching to the classes (nawab, & Baig, 2011). It is therefore

researcher sum up that it is required to start an investigation on the hindrance faced by a multi-grade teacher at the Primary education level.

Challenges of Multi-grade teaching

In multi-grade classes, teachers facing different problems normally observed with students' ability, as facing problems when writing and some other writing challenges. It is searched out from teachers these challenging to sharpen the abilities of students coming from different grade levels. They are required to make out their time good for them to support well the students of various year stages. In some cases, multi-grade atmosphere poor administration, not practicing peer tutoring so much, and presenting not information in an analytical setting (Blease, & Condy, 2015).

(Little, 2004) draw the atmosphere in which multi-graded teaching problems originates as follows:

- (i) Schools having regions where the rate of population growth is low are normally more disjointed and access problem, where the enrolment rate is low, in such regions these schools may have fewer teachers than grades, which have the responsibility of more than one grade.
- (ii) Those schools which consist of groups of classes widespread across in not equal position, in which some grades are a multi-grade classroom for equal cause as mention previously and many are mono-grade. many teachers in the like 'schools' pass mostly time with classes of multi-grades, many with single grade;
- (iii) Where the number of teachers and students are low and when there before no single-grade or single grade teaching;

(iv) Where in school regions of population growing and increasing in the rate of students, but upper classes still low rates so the teacher number will be few;

(v) Where some parents admit their children to favorite schools due to some transport and distance reasons causes low rate in schools learners, and also teachers, causes classes of multi-grade;

(vi) where the number of students registered in a class surpasses the official average on size, essential the multi-grade teaching because of combining of some students from a grade with students from another grade;

(vii) The mobile school where a teacher displace with migratory and pastoralist students spanning an extensive range of grades and ages;

(viii) Where the teacher presence is low as well as there is no option for arrangement of another teacher for their class;

(ix) Where officially number of the teacher is sufficient but the teacher number is deployed less (due to different reasons);

(x) Where students are organized in more than one grade instead of a single grade classroom. Little identified this status;

The above mention discrimination between multi-grade teaching originates with the essential and option. Term (I to ix) mentioned above originated through essentiality. The essentiality, which is mostly stimulation in under progress countries, originates the features of students (one to seven), or also teachers from (seven to nine). Term (x), commonly link up with more grades in industrialized countries, is of a variant nature entirely and shows an option produced by those

who make policies and teachers about by what way to vary and develop the standard of teaching methodology. (Brunswic, cited Valnerien Brown, 2008), develop when the teaching multi-grade is taken in charge, it is many times planted as a solution of essentiality: oftentimes on the base of politically or educationally systematization. The reason that when the teaching of multi-grade is originated for causes of essentiality, the proof proposed that it is stimulated by geographically or related to population limits (confusing settings, less population, changes in population due to migration, schools which have a lot of far areas), or leading or teaching methodology related challenges (more absenteeism, availability of teachers, low rate of learners at upper classes, competition among schools that seeing by students' family, guardian as being of not same output). (Valerien and Brunswic cited Brown, 2008), more debated, at the moment multi-grade teaching is originate for some political causes, this is stimulated by territorial growing and movement to block the movement of persons to the urban areas, that is, the dream to keep a school place in a designated neighborhood. They more indicate that during the option is built because of educational causes, it is built by introductory teachers, no matter of the position or kind of the school (Brown, 2008). (Little at all, 2004), Settle on the status under which teaching of multi-grade originate. Certain statuses are choice and necessity. Out-of-the opinion demonstrated by authors aforementioned can simply find that a lot of causes for teaching in multi-grades those are of necessity were preferably than the choice.

Social and professional Isolation

(Berry, 2001) stated that professional as well as social separation is also the problem experienced by multi-grade class' teachers. He identifies that teaching in multi-grade occurs in the far distance and in hard to reach the school. Teachers only do not have the hardness of handling teaching to multi-grade class, it also has some other problems like less availability of different things, not regular supervision, and low living environment.

Teaching multi-grade and parents' attitude

Manner of parents to the teaching of multi-grade is, reported by Brown (2008), another problem experienced by teachers of multi-grade. Also, he indicates that, other than the clear use-value of family help in education, it looks that teachers of multi-grade do not ever observe it easy to get a family's help. He also stated that parents and family' worry about it that multi grades classroom is not good. (Jordaan and Joubert, 2008), stated that their looks present low seriousness in multi-grade education worldwide. Schools having multi-grade are generally viewed as being a school of second-rate; schools that families would not like to admit their children to go to schools having a multi-grade system.

Materials for teaching

(Kyne cited by Brown, 2008) identified that teaching material resources also run to be written also for the single grade class. Therefore, they make grade-levels textbooks and frame them to be given up by the teacher to the students. (Brown, 2008) also stated that there is certify to propose that these types of resources are not suitable and good in teaching of multi-grade.

Organizing of classroom

(Taole, Mncube, 2012) stated that management of classroom is also a challenge in respect to the teaching of M.G. It seemed that the teacher is teaching single group, while the second would be working with also working with task given by the teacher. The task will be completed by students without teachers' full attention and support. In most occurrences, the students do not do the tasks given by the teacher to them. The teachers do even not talk about tasks due to using only to hold them and engage in their work and the teacher is working with the other grade. Instructors also identified that they worked the same time to teach various grades in the same class than one could use to teach simply mono-grade. (Taole and Mncube, 2012) stated that, anticipate their training on management of time for an educator who teaches in classes of multi-grade. What may be deducted from the talking above various problems are there that multi-grade teachers faced in a multi-grade classroom. These problems require to be covered for effective teaching in a multi-grade classroom. The passing of teaching multi-grade trust on the finding and help by various interested other than only on the teacher.

To what extent does multi-grade education exist today?

The incidence of multi-grade school rooms global is developing, not just in nations that are growing economically, but in well-resourced nations as nicely (Mulryan-Kyne, 2007). In the early Nineteen Nineties, one in seven classrooms in Canada turned into multigrade, a "conservative estimate" based on a comprehensive examination commissioned by using the Canadian Education Association. At the time of the have a look at there has been

tremendous increase inside the range of multi-grade classrooms across Canada. This boom turned into attributed to declining enrollments in rural districts, and growing enrolments in city districts coupled with mandated trainer-scholar ratios. Although there has no longer been a national examination on multi-grade classrooms inside the beyond twenty-two years, there is proof that the quantity of such classrooms continues to rise (The Ottawa Citizen, 2008). There is a need for modern statistics at provincial, territorial and national levels to correctly map the superiority and location of multi-grade classrooms. In British Columbia, the Ministry of Education does not mainly accumulate statistics on multi-grade classrooms. Using a ratio of faculty enrollment to the number of grades taught, one can deduce from the data which schools are multi-grade. Where the ratio is identical to, or less than fifteen students consistent with grade degree, the idea is that kids are taught in multi-grade school rooms within that faculty. Based on September 2012 enrollment figures, an estimate of 166 multi-grade trendy public colleges exist in this province (BC Ministry of Education, 2013). This method, but, does not as it should become aware of the multi-grade lessons that exist inside the one's schools, nor does it monitor multigrade classes that exist within mid-to-big sized fundamental and excessive faculties. Many personal, alternative and federally-funded band schools inside BC are multi-grade. The need for complete data is obvious.

3. Research Design & Methodology

Research Method

This research study was conducted through a qualitative research method. According to

(McMillan & Schumacher 2006), the qualitative research method is a method in which investigator receiving data with the help of face to face interview with the sample persons in their circumstance. Qualitative research approaches explains and analyze participant's individual and combined socio actions, impression, thinking, and perceptions.

Design of Research

This research was design under the narrative inquiry. Narrative inquiry is an inquiry in which the investigator explores the lived experience of participants by answering the questions in research (Bleakley 2005). Narrative inquiry enables the investigator to concentrate the experience of persons. The reason for applying the narrative inquiry was to equip persons to make narrative responses of the questions and get more answer of the persons' lived experiences (Gray 2009).

Population

Population is the combination of persons or participants of interest to the investigator, the group through which the investigator the output of the research to be obtain. The total set of the participants for the research closed by the researcher who possess specific characteristics is called population (Gay 2009). The population for this research study were comprises all 71 multi-grade teaching schools' 182 primary multi-grade teachers of four circles in district Malakand, Khyber-pakhtunkhwa Pakistan.

Sample and sampling procedure

The group of those participants from whom the data is collected for the research is called sample (Schumacher, 2006). For this research, researcher

has applied the convenient sampling technique. The sample collected through convenient sampling it is easy and convenient way to access data because this study is not funded self-supported by researcher. For the collection of data related to this study took from four circles of district Malakand, Khyber-pakhtunkhwa. From each circle one multi-grade school was our sample for this study, and from each school one multi-grade teacher considered for interview. 4 circles, 1 school from each circle and 1 teacher from every school were selected as sample through convenient sample. So there are 4 teachers selected for face to face interview. Also from the sampled school one class also selected for lesson observation.

Data collection through Research instrument

In this research, instrument applied for the gathering of data was face-to-face interviews and non-participative lesson observation from multi-grade teachers. Because of use of face to face interview and class lesson observation, Researcher was able to receive the multi-grade teacher's responses to examine their feelings, values and attitudes. Interviews provide the investigator command over the line of questioning (Creswell, 2009). To create an easy environment for conversation, during interview researcher used interviews semi-structured and also consist of questions which open ended that were less in numbers and also intended to raise opinion of the persons. Semi structured interview having question of open ended which is fairly specific in its design (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006). In also gives time for answer to respondent to think before response. Researcher also used audio recorder to

control completion of the verbally conversation and also to ensure materials for checks and reliability. Firstly we permitted from the schools for collection of data from sampled schools. After permission we communicate with the head teachers of sampled schools for arranging dates for interview. Teachers were interviewed at their schools on the date which decided. And the duration of interview was about thirty minutes. The interview recorded in tape.

Data Analysis

Firstly we analyzed data by utilizing an inductive process for arranging data in groups and established patterns among them (themes and sub-themes), it prepared for analysis.

With the help of interviews of individuals the following themes were come up.

Theme 1: challenges that faced by multi-grade teachers, with sub-themes are

Hurdle in lesson plan, Work overload, Classroom management, Performance of learners, Support from high authorities, Assessment, Relative training and Instructional material.

Theme 2: Effective methods which can be used for effective M.G primary teaching, with sub-themes are Solution for lesson plan challenge, Solution for work overload, Solution for classroom management, How to enhance the learner performance, what kind of support do you need?, Solution for assessment challenges, How to enhance the ability of teachers by what kind of training and Solution for challenges related to instructional materials

4. Results of the study

In this portion we analyzed and interpreted the data that obtained through the interview of question of participants and also analyzed the data which

Data collection procedure

collected through the lesson observation of sampled schools' teachers and their classes of primary schools in district Malakand, Khyber pakhtunkhawa Pakistan. Different grades combined in multi grade classes that observed and collected data according to need. From every sampled school data were collected one multi-grade class through lesson observation. The researcher observed the classes that have the number of students are mentioned following.

Table 1: Combination of grades and number of learners per grades

For lesson observation researcher observed one multi-grade class from every sampled school.

Classes of Sample Schools	Grades Combined	Number of students in multi-grade classroom
Class AA	Grade Prep	19
	Grade 1	10
	Grade 2	14
		Total number of students= 43
Class AB	Grade 2	21
	Grade 3	24
		Total number of

		students= 45
Class AC	Grade 3	17
	Grade 4	28
		Total number of students= 45
Class Ad	Grade 4	20
	Grade 5	29
		Total number of students= 49

The above table shows that there are more than 40 students in every multi-grade class.

So this shows the work overload for the multi-grade teachers. Researcher also observed and noticed the following.

Classroom management

Researcher observed in multi-grade classes that there were no specific arrangements for students sitting. Some students found in groups, pairs while some students were found single during learning and activity also. The purpose of this was that teacher teaching and giving activity according to students' arrangement in effective classroom but there was no seating arrangement of learners.

Teaching materials

It was observed during the lesson observation that there was no specific notes instructional material for specifically multi-grade classroom. Teachers use only textbook as an instructional material for multi-grade classroom.

Learner's participation and attention

During observation of lesson plan researcher

observed that the students of different grades were found not mixed as like the students of single grade. And when the teacher was busy in one grade the other students were found not attentive and not took participate.

Teaching methodology

During the observation of lesson the teachers were used their textbook for teaching, there were nothing special for multi-grade class.

Assessment of learners

During the assessment of multi-grade classes it is found that the task given to different grades was same in the multi-grade classroom and teachers treated their results same, which was not assessed the students well.

Lesson plan

It was found in the lesson observation of multi-grade classes that some teachers were found without lesson plan while some teachers had found with lesson plan but they not followed their lesson plan.

5. Conclusions

The aim of this research was to explore the problems that faced by instructors of M.G and also the solution to eliminate the hurdles that faced by multi-grade teachers. It was clear from the research that multi-grade teaching is using hugely, but the teachers of multi-grade classes faced various problem. Some problems are identified with the help of this study were hurdles in lesson plan, work overload, hurdles in classroom management, learner's performance, lack of support from high authorities, assessment problems, unavailability of multi-grade instructional material and lack of relative training. These challenges were also the

hurdles in the improvement of quality education. This study also identified the way that how to eliminate these problems. The effective way to solve this problem was to recruit more teachers according to the need. But also argues that except this, there were also some ways which can make effective the multi-grade teaching, as like to train the teachers for effective lesson plan, classroom management and for effectively teaching methodology in multi-grade classroom. And also provide different instructional material which can facilitate the multi-grade teachers.

6. Recommendations

Recommendations were made on the base of this study, and these are meant to address the challenges that faced by multi-grade teachers. According to the data the department recruit more teachers, train the teachers for multi-grade teaching to reduce work

overload, train for lesson plan preparation, train for assessment of multi-grade, train for classroom management, provide instructional material, provide support to the multi-grade schools. The research reported that there were multi grade classes where 4 grades were setting in one class. The quantities of children in such class were more than the stipulated learner and teacher ratio by far. The Department should focus on this that the number of grades in multi grade classes does not more than 2. It will make the class manageable and thus it will make the curriculum implementation easier. This research on teaching of M.G at elementary level explored can be more with the help of more study. My recommendations for more study on primary level are following. The further study should be on the base of learners as like this study was the base of teacher's challenges.

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