

Challenges and Indulgences behind Multigrade Teaching: A Case Study

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Abstract:

Multigrade teaching is a strategy to improve access to and the quality of elementary schooling through the Multigrade Program in Philippine Education (MPPE) launched in 1993. It is designed to deliver effective instruction to a class of learners composed of various grades, ages, and capabilities with only one teacher assigned who capitalizes on multi-leveled instruction. With its implementation, there are teachers who express difficulties encountered in delivering multigrade instruction. However, aside from problems, teachers also experience fulfillment in teaching multigrade classes. To address the concern of unveiling truths in multigrade teaching, a case study anchored on Curriculum Evaluation and Thorndike's Laws of Learning was conducted using interviews, focus group discussion, written responses, and field notes as sources of data with Thematic Analysis for interpretation. The information gathered was used as inputs to help advance the implementation of the Multigrade Program in Philippine Education.

Background: DepEd Order 81, s. 2009 stipulates that multigrade education is one of the department's strategies to provide access to quality education for all school-age children in remote communities where enrolment does not warrant the organization of monograde classes. This order implies the institutionalized implementation of the Multigrade Program in Philippine Education. Leyte Division is not an exemption to this order. At present, the division has opened different multigrade classes for Grades 1 to 6 adopting combination and multi-classes schemes depending on the need of the particular community where the multigrade program is being offered.

Materials and Methods: This research is qualitative research adhering to the phenomenological methods. According to Polit & Beck, (2012), the phenomenon or case can be a person, a group, an organization, or an event. The use of a single case study is an appropriate design for certain circumstances, including when the case represents (a) a critical situation to test the theory, (b) an authentic case, (c) a regular case that can facilitate understanding of usual circumstances, (d) an open case that previously has been inaccessible, or (e) a longitudinal case (Yin, 2014). The study is considered "a common case that can capture an understanding of usual circumstances" because of the experiences of teachers in the implementation of multigrade teaching.

Results: The challenges encountered by multigrade teachers were categorized into six themes: (1) Lesson Planning, (2) Utilization of Resource Materials, (3) Assessing Learning, (4) Managing Teaching-Learning, (5) Monitoring Performance, and (6) Submitting Reports.

Conclusion: The following are the conclusions drawn from the findings of the study: (1) The multigrade teachers are experiencing challenges in multigrade teaching particularly in lesson planning, utilizing resource materials, assessment of learning, management of teaching-learning experiences, monitoring of learning performance, and submitting reports, (2) There were three sources of indulgence that multigrade teachers identified such as remunerations, professional development, and teaching support, (3) Coping mechanisms for multigrade teaching were identified as being resourceful, building linkages, and managing time, and (4) The multigrade teachers consider the available remuneration such as hiking and hardship allowances as sources of motivation, the professional development opportunities as confidence-booster, and teaching support as stress-relievers.

Key Word: Philippine Education, Multigrade Teaching, Challenges, Indulgences, Case Study, Thematic Analysis

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I. Introduction

The multigrade system is in operation already for quite some time but it was not regarded as a very viable alternative delivery system to provide access to basic education, including good instructional practices through the provision of complete grade levels in all public elementary schools. The multigrade program was launched as a systematic and viable means of meeting the goal of education and providing Education for All (Scribd & Cervantes, 2011).

DepEd Order 81, s. 2009 stipulates that multigrade education is one of the department's strategies to provide access to quality education for all school-age children in remote communities where enrolment does not warrant the organization of monograde classes. This order implies the institutionalized implementation of the Multigrade Program in Philippine Education. Leyte Division is not an exemption to this order. At present, the division has opened different multigrade classes for Grades 1 to 6 adopting combination and multi-classes schemes depending on the need of the particular community where the multigrade program is being offered.

In order to consider the prevailing issues concerning the implementation of DepED Order No. 96, s. 1997, known as the "Policies and Guidelines in the Organization and Operation of Multigrade (MG) Classes", some guidelines were provided, including regular conduct of monitoring and technical assistance on the implementation of the multigrade program at the division level, including the submission of monitoring reports on the findings/results for use as basis in planning enhancement programs and policy formulation at all levels.

The Philippine Constitution, particularly Article 14, sections 1 & 2 contemplates that the state shall provide a quality education that is accessible to all citizens in the country. Likewise, Section 1 of Rule VIII, Book V of the Executive Order No. 292, otherwise known as Administrative Code of 1987, states that "Every official and employee of the government is an asset or resource to be valued, developed and utilized in delivering primary services to the society.

The aforementioned legal basis implies the call for concerned educators and curriculum supervisors, especially those who are supervising the implementation of the multigrade program to do something in order to solve the current issues that cause some problems in the implementation of the program. The study was conducted to address the issues and problems on multigrade teaching in Leyte Division in order to provide inputs for policy directions and to improve the implementation of the Multigrade Program in Philippine Education.

Literature Review

The following concerns were reviewed to establish a bird's-eye-view on varied perspectives regarding multigrade teaching.

Multigrade Program Implementation

Multigrade teaching implies the school situations where the number of pupils in different grades is so small that the pupils of several grades together add up to a normal or slightly larger than a normal class. It refers to the combination of classes in a school with more than one-grade level assigned under the tutelage of one teacher. Multigrade teaching in multilevel classes in larger establishments, ungraded early childhood education units, and special multilevel aggregation of pupils (Cervantes, 2011).

Similarly, Cornish (2006) stated that multigrade teaching is a kind of teaching structure that occurs in multigrade classes. In terms of actual practice, it has several schemes or types of classes. One is the multi-grade classes where learners from different classes with different grade levels are put together. Another is the composite classes which are formed by necessity and can be changed again to mono-grade the following year in case the enrolment already warrants. The practice in the Philippines is the offering of multi-level classes and combination classes where subject grouping, individualized instruction, and contextualization are adopted.

According to Little (2006), paradoxically a multigrade pedagogy is viewed by many as a second-best and/or old-fashioned education and by many others as 'progressive'. Its stress on the learner, on differentiation, on mastery and learning readiness, on formative assessment, on learning how to learn, and on the development of social and behavioral skills and attitudes, including the cognitive formation aligned with current trends or 21st century brand of education.

The Situation of Multigrade Teachers

Membreve, (2019) posted that "most new teachers are often assigned to handle a multigrade class, a situation they did not experience during their teacher training days." She also mentioned that every day teachers are able to discover possible schemes to make multigrade instruction more interesting and effective.

The experiences of the multigrade teacher are varied from one another. Many teachers who find themselves in settings that require multigrade teaching are either untrained or are trained in mono-grade pedagogy. Many teachers in multigrade settings have few if any teaching/learning resources and many teachers

in multigrade settings regard the multi-grade classroom as inferior to the better-resourced mono-grade classroom found in large, urban schools, staffed by trained teachers (Little, 2006).

In the context of Philippine implementation of multigrade teaching, a similar concern is experienced by teachers because of the advent of mother tongue-based multilingual education wherein within a multigrade class several mother tongues are identified such as Waray-Waray (with variations), Filipino, English, and Cebuano (with variations). Instructional delivery becomes challenging on the part of the multigrade teacher because of this.

The foremost concern of educators and implementers is about identifying the needed appropriate actions or strategies that can be applied such that the above-mentioned issues and concerns regarding the implementation of the Multigrade Program in Philippine Education can be addressed and solved.

Addressing Issues and Concerns of Multigrade Teaching

Several researchers mentioned that improving the delivery of multigrade instruction is not impossible by doing the following actions: 1.) Instructional resources and physical environment in multigrade classrooms must be arranged and organised in a way that will facilitate student learning, independence, and interdependence; 2.) Additional resources allow learners to experience and explore the materials through various senses, thereby catering for learners with different learning styles; 3.) It is necessary that resources specifically meant for multi-grade classrooms be developed; 4.) The internet and other information and communication technology resources available at schools should enable these schools to network effectively; 5.) Establishing a compelling culture of teaching and learning through well-organised classrooms that include workstations, charts, pictures, books and evidence of the learners' work; 6.) Innovative classroom organisation contributes towards effective teaching and learning, a library corner for instance, could serve as a workstation that occupies some learners while the teacher focuses on other learners; 7.) Workstations could also help to ensure that some learners are kept busy while the teacher is engaged in teaching one of the other grades; 8.) Teachers must have good classroom management strategies to use multi-level activities, learning centres or workstations; 9.) Seating arrangements are key for multi-grade classrooms and has an impact on the use of the chalkboard; 10.) Teachers should think of creative ways to display the learners' tasks, such as displaying them on big pieces of cloth pasted on an entire wall or displaying learners' work in separate folders made from local materials; and 11.) Multi-grade teaching requires additional learning materials because learners often need to work independently (MSimanga, 2019; Joubert, 2010:60; Jordaan, 2006; Mathot, 2001:40; Department of Basic Education, 2010:4; Nawab and Baig, 2011:170; & Mathot, 2001:53).

Theoretical Framework

This study was based on the evaluation and systems approach theory. Arguments on the importance of conducting an evaluation of a program implemented were provided by Kusek and Rist (2004) as follows: one needs to be able to assess results for him to be able to differentiate success from failure; one has to foresee success, for him to compensate for success, not failure; one needs to see success for him to learn from it; one needs to recognize failure in order to correct, and if one can show results, he can win the support of others. In this study, evaluation was focused on the challenges and indulgences brought by multigrade teaching.

The other theory used in this study is the systems approach theory which was proposed by Ludwig von Bertalanffy in 1940. This theory considers an organization as a system that can either be closed or open. In most cases, organizations are identified as open systems. An open system interacts with its environment by way of inputs, throughputs, and outputs (Grimsley, 2018).

The system approach considers the organization as a dynamic and interrelated set of parts where each component represents a unit or a sub-system. The continued and meaningful collaboration of sub-systems leads to the attainment of organizational goals. Thus, every sub-system is a system and has sub-systems that together make an organization a set of mutually dependent parts and their sub-parts (Tanuja, 2018).

In this study, a systems approach can be seen between the relationships of the school system with the following players: multigrade teachers, learners, other school staff, school heads, and parents. Through this study, the concerns of the major players were asked to know their actual situation and experiences.

The study identified certain experiences in multigrade teaching. The findings of the study, including the implications were utilized as inputs in recommending measures to improve the situation of multigrade teachers and to address the issues and concerns on multigrade teaching they had identified as needing improvement and immediate action.

Problem Statements

As per actual observation and review of literature, it was noted that multigrade teachers are experiencing difficulties and problems regarding the implementation of the multigrade program. This is the

reason why this study was conducted to know if these same problems and difficulties are also prevalent in Leyte Division; hence, the conduct of this study.

Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of this study was to identify the problematic areas regarding multigrade teaching in Leyte Division, including the positive experiences they got as implementers. Furthermore, the study also aimed to provide recommendations in terms of uplifting the situation of the multigrade teachers and enhancing the implementation of the program, particularly in Leyte Division.

Research Questions

The following specific questions regarding the multigrade teaching were answered in this study:

1. What are the challenges and indulgences encountered by multigrade teachers in Leyte Division?
2. How do multigrade teachers cope with the challenges they had encountered?
3. Why do they consider some experiences as forms of indulgences?
4. What inputs can be drawn from the findings of the study that can serve as bases in recommending innovations, programs, projects and activities to improve the situation of the multigrade teachers and the implementation of the multigrade program in Leyte Division?

II. Material And Methods

This chapter discusses the research design, research locale, research participants, sampling, research instrument, research procedure, ethical consideration, data saturation, reflexivity, and data analysis.

Research Design

This research is qualitative research adhering to the phenomenological methods. According to Polit & Beck, (2012), the phenomenon or case can be a person, a group, an organization, or an event. The use of a single case study is an appropriate design for certain circumstances, including when the case represents (a) a critical situation to test the theory, (b) an authentic case, (c) a regular case that can facilitate understanding of usual circumstances, (d) an open case that previously has been inaccessible, or (e) a longitudinal case (Yin, 2014). The study is considered “a common case that can capture an understanding of usual circumstances” because of the experiences of teachers in the implementation of multigrade teaching.

Research Locale

The study was conducted in Leyte Division covering schools offering the multigrade program. It is the biggest division in Region VIII composed of seven school areas such as Area I, II-A, II-B, III, IV, V-A, and V-B. Leyte Division is situated in the island of Leyte which also houses four other divisions.

Research Participants

The participants of the study are purposively sampled teachers teaching multigrade to elementary learners in Leyte Division with at least one school year experience as such. This is considered because teachers who are new in the service are most likely to experience challenges and difficulties. However, teachers who are more than a year in multigrade teaching may also encounter difficulties that need to be addressed, hence they were also included.

Research Instrument

The research utilized two means to collect data. First was an open-ended questionnaire given to them to answer, the second was an informal interview to validate the teachers' responses in the open-ended questionnaire (Bernard, 2000), and the third was through field notes prepared during the field observation conducted (Bhat, 2019).

Research Procedure

To gather the data needed for the study, the following was done by the researcher: a.) oriented the participants of the study individually about the research; b.) conducted the semi-structured interviews with documentation; c.) conferred with the individual participants as to the possible schedule for the field observation; d.) visited the research settings for the conduct of the actual field observation; e.) browsed into possible documents such as school records, pictures, learning resources, office documents that can serve as an additional source of data. The researcher made sure that interviews were well-documented, field observations were thoroughly documented as field notes, and other sources of data scrutinized objectively with due permission of the multigrade teachers and their respective school heads.

Triangulation

In this study, the researcher triangulated data by using three sources such as coded/transcribed responses, documentation, and direct observations with field notes. The manner by which the researcher did this research was supported by experts as discussed in the succeeding paragraphs. According to Kulkarni (2013), “triangulation means using more than one method to collect data on the same topic, a way of assuring the validity of research through the use of a variety of methods to collect data on the same topic, which involves different types of samples as well as methods of data collection in order to capture different dimensions of the same phenomenon.

Ethical Consideration

In this study, ethical consideration was done in a fashion that is supported by experts as discussed in the succeeding paragraphs. Some important ethical concerns that should be taken into account while carrying out qualitative research are anonymity, confidentiality, and informed consent (Truscott, 2004). To address the abovementioned concerns for ethical purposes, the consent of the participants was sought, including permission was sought from concerned school administrators, both division and school levels.

Data Saturation

In the coding process, the response of the participants was grouped according to their similarities which served as the themes. The common response was grouped together and summarized as suggested by (Bernard, 2012). Repeated responses were not considered anymore and as suggested, further or follow-up interviews were done in cases where lacking responses were found in some items until saturation was reached (Brod et al., 2009; Rubin & Rubin, 2012).

Reflexivity

To ensure reflexivity there is a need to make the relationship between and the influence of the researcher and the participants guarded (Jootun, McGhee, & Marland, 2009). In this study, the researcher tried to detach himself from his being the Division Education Program Supervisor assigned to multigrade curriculum implementation so that he can objectively consider the responses of the participants and reflect on the implementing guidelines of the program in Leyte Division.

Data Analysis

To analyze the data gathered from written responses and documented, interviews were subjected to transcription then the transcribed data were analyzed utilizing Braun and Clarke’s (2006) Thematic Analysis procedure. In the conduct of data analysis, the researcher became the instrument in the analysis, where he made judgments about coding, theming, decontextualizing, and re-contextualizing the data as suggested by Starks & Trinidad (2007).

III. Result and Discussion

The following are the findings of the study or the answers provided to the specific research questions.

Challenges Encountered in Multigrade Teaching (MT)

There were six themes that came out with particular sub-themes shown in Figure 1 below. The discussions for the identified themes are found in the succeeding paragraphs.

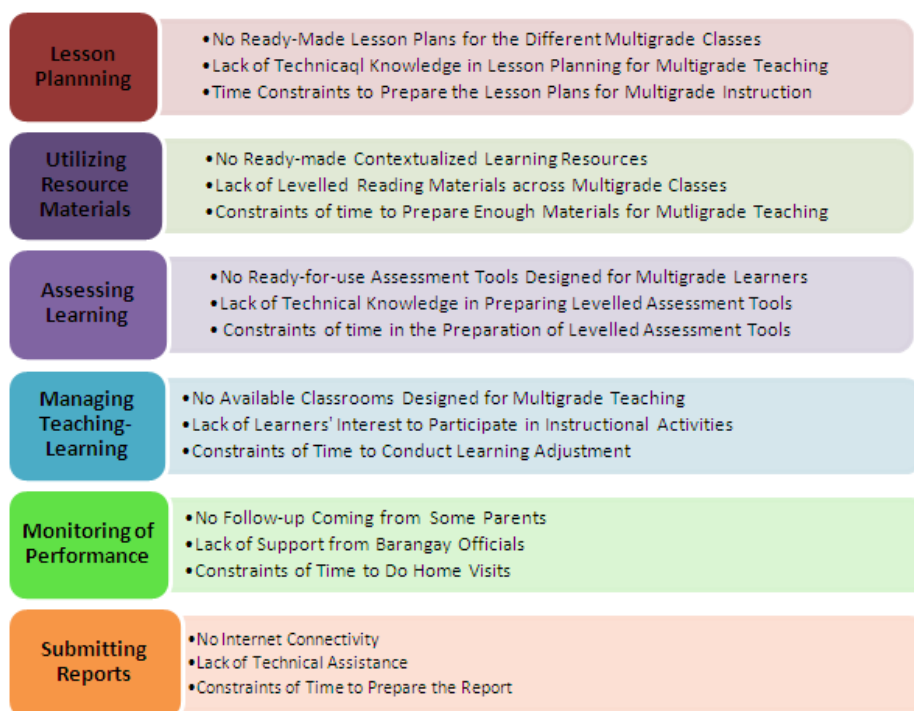


Figure 1. Themes & Sub-themes on Challenges in Multigrade Teaching

Lesson Planning

In terms of multigrade teaching, teachers find difficulty in lesson planning because there are no ready-made lesson plans where they can pattern and contextualize the lesson plans for their own classes. Although there are available lesson exemplars according to multigrade teachers these are not enough, because these are just samples; their concern is more on the guide or sample for other competencies which were not covered by the lesson exemplars provided.

Lesson planning becomes a source of challenge because they still lack the know-how on multigrade teaching despite the orientation seminars or the training workshops they had attended. The training and actual multigrade teaching are very much different. During training, it seems that multigrade is not that difficult but in reality, teachers need a lot of experience before they can really say that they are already experts and 100% confident in the field of multigrade teaching.

Lack of time to prepare lesson plans is one of the most challenging parts of the teachers' work as multigrade teachers. They said that while the learners are given tasks for independent learning, they are taking the chance to do lesson planning and preparation of learning resource materials. Meaning, the availability of ready-made lesson plans and resource materials can really save teachers from the multi-tasking that they experience at present.

Utilizing Resource Materials

As regards utilizing resource materials in multigrade teaching, according to teachers, the absence of ready-made lesson plans and contextualized resource materials makes their tasks more challenging and difficult. In teaching multigrade learners, leveled instructional materials need to be provided to address the learning needs of all learners, but there is a lack of these resource materials.

Therefore, multigrade teachers do not have the choice but to prepare instructional materials for their own use in their respective multigrade classrooms. Aside from a lack of resources or raw materials, another challenge is the constraint of time. They are supposed to do all their tasks in the classroom before they leave their classroom towards home, but there are only around two hours for them to finish everything they need to prepare for the following day's lesson. So, there really is a need to devise something or provide something to unload the workload of multigrade teachers in order to uplift them from this situation.

Assessing Learning

Meanwhile, in the case of assessment of learning, the challenging part is the provision of leveled and individualized assessment tools because according to teachers, it is not also proper to provide assessment tools that are uniform for all learners when in reality, these learners belong to different grade levels and were exposed to different learning practice exercises. The lack of knowledge on assessing learning for multigrade classrooms

is one of the reasons why assessment becomes a challenging task for teachers. Meaning, multigrade teachers still need more training on this concern.

Managing Teaching-Learning

As to concerns regarding how to manage actual teaching-learning processes, multigrade teachers experience difficulty in terms of managing the space, especially during group activities. According to them, it would be better if there are classrooms built or design for purposes of operating multigrade classes and for the conduct of multigrade instructions.

Another source of the challenge is the learners' lack of interest to pay attention to lessons or actively participate in classroom activities. One definite reason why learners are not interested is that they cannot relate to the learning experiences or the instructional materials being provided to them are not interesting. This means that contextualization really is very important for multigrade teaching and to provide enough materials for hands-on utilization of all learners for individualization of learning experiences.

Monitoring Performance

Based on the responses of teachers they experienced challenges in asking the full support of the parents in doing the follow-up of the learning performance of their children, especially when they are doing their homework and assignment at home. During PTA meetings, teachers found that some parents really could not do the follow-up because they are constrained in terms of know-how because they themselves were not able to avail of formal schooling and some of them are school drop-outs. Meanwhile, others parents argued that they are too busy with their work and already very tired when they arrive home to still find time to do the follow-up of their children's school tasks.

Some multigrade learners are identified as "Pupils-at-risk" of dropping out from school. Despite feedback from some barangay officials, still learners continue to be absent because of tasks on the farm or they are the ones left home to take care of their siblings while the parents are doing tasks on the farm. This means, that a more intense linkage with the barangay officials need to be done so that they will help in encouraging the parents to send their children back to school and regularly attend classes, if this is not possible then they can coordinate with the multigrade teachers what scheme can be adopted for these learners.

According to teachers, they wanted and attempted to visit the homes of their learners but they are able to reach out only to those whose houses are accessible, others are really very far and with dangerous pathways that only those who are used to it can possibly manage. So in this case, teachers are able to reach out only to parents through the PTA meetings. This is only good if all the parents are attending, but reality says that there are parents who do not attend meetings for different reasons.

Submitting Reports

Multigrade teachers mentioned that submitting required reports is one of the sources of their difficulty because of the following reasons: no internet connectivity, lack of technical assistance, and constraints of time to prepare the reports. There are reports which are required to be prepared with the help of the internet connectivity including submission. Yet, there are times that problems on connectivity were experienced to a point of stress.

It is far better or advantageous for the multigrade school which is near from their respective district offices and from the division office because they can submit reports by going directly to the district or division offices, whichever is asking the report. But a little difficult for those whose schools are hours away from the district office or the division office. There are also times when multigrade teachers consider that they do not understand what reports to prepare and sometimes they have no one to ask about it because there are no other teachers in the school.

Another concern is the lack of time to prepare the report, especially if the report is to be submitted at the earliest possible time or ASAP. This becomes a challenge for multigrade teachers because they are supposed to attend to the learners and at the same time prepare the report, so, they end up doing multi-tasks.

Indulgences from Multigrade Teaching (MT)

In terms of gratifications or advantages brought by multigrade teaching, there were three themes that came out with particular sub-themes for each. The themes and the corresponding sub-themes are shown in Figure 2 below. The discussions for the identified themes are found in the succeeding paragraphs.

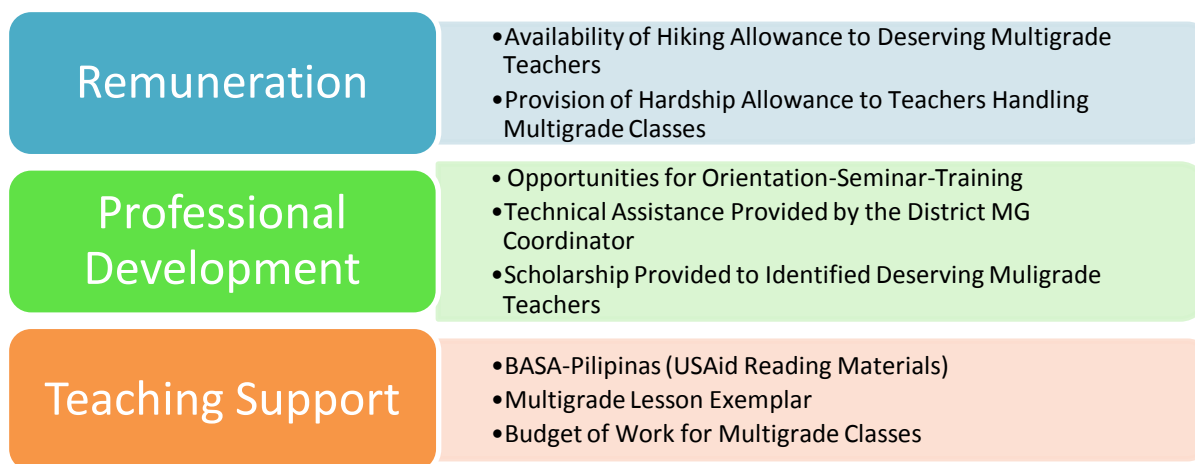


Figure 2. Themes & Sub-themes on Indulgences in Multigrade Teaching

Being Resourceful

In times where lack of resources is being experienced, the most effective coping mechanism is to apply the 3Rs according to the multigrade teachers. The first is to identify which needs to be trimmed down in terms of use to economize and to make the available resources last longer. Another is to reuse, there are instructional resources or assessment tools utilized in the previous school years which can still be used. In this case, proper storage is very important for easy access to stored instructional materials. Previous lesson plans could also serve as a reference in writing lesson plans for the current learners, especially that there are no ready-made lesson plans available. Recycling can also be done to some used instructional resources, for example, if the back portion is still unused, teachers can still use it for the new set of learners. Manipulatives and counters can still be used as long as they still serve the purpose of making learning more meaningful and relevant.

Teachers also bring the learners outside the classroom and use the plants and other structures in the school environment as teaching resources. Using the real materials is the most effective, it is just advised that precautionary measures are adopted to make sure that learners are safe.

If there is internet connectivity, multigrade teachers also adapt some free to download resource materials for use in teaching multigrade learners. However, they advised that teachers need to be careful in downloading materials because they might be charged with plagiarism.

Building Linkages

As a form of linkage, the junior MG teachers ask for Technical Assistance from more experienced or senior MG teachers within the school. There are times that technical assistance comes from senior MG teachers from other schools, especially during district-level meetings or during the conduct of LAC Sessions. Another form of linkage is through reaching out to parents and community officials for assistance or help which are related to the implementation of the curriculum, especially on follow-up of learners at home and provision of needed resources that is being provided through the Homeroom PTA or GPTA and the local officials of the barangay council and municipal office.

Lastly, the linkage was done by coordinating closely with School Heads & DepEd Officials for Guidance such as those related to the preparation of budget of lessons, integrated competencies, leveled materials, contextualization, the conduct of adjustments such as remediation, reinforcement, and enrichment, construction of assessment tools appropriate for multigrade instruction and grading system.

Managing Time

One of the identified means to manage time is to implement the “Time-on-Task Policy” or the maximization of the teaching-learning time which is one of the expected responsibilities of teachers regardless of status or type of learners handled. In the case of the multigrade teachers, it is crucial for them to use this standard because they have a different structure. Teachers are handling not only one class but two or three classes combine in one class. In this situation managing time on a “time-on-task basis is very important and matters so much.

Part of the maximization of time is to devise a scheme for time adjustment for purposes of facilitating self-contained multigrade classes. The basis in managing time on this concern is the readiness and capabilities of the learners. Learning paces of the multigrade learners are being considered and the level of difficulty of the

lessons being provided to learners with different capabilities, backgrounds, and interests. According to the multigrade teachers, this is the most challenging this to do with the multigrade set-up.

The multigrade teachers cannot avoid experiencing multi-tasking in order to address the constraints of time for the instructional preparation. They make sure that while learners are given learning tasks they also prepare their lesson plans and resource materials for the following day. There are even times that they also find time in complying with reports asks from them by their school or district heads for submission to the division office.

Multigrade Teachers' Rationalization for the Identified Indulgences

In terms of the rationalization done by the multigrade teachers on the identified indulgences, the study formed three themes with particular sub-themes for each. The themes and the corresponding sub-themes are shown in Figure 4 below. The discussions for the identified themes are found in the succeeding paragraph

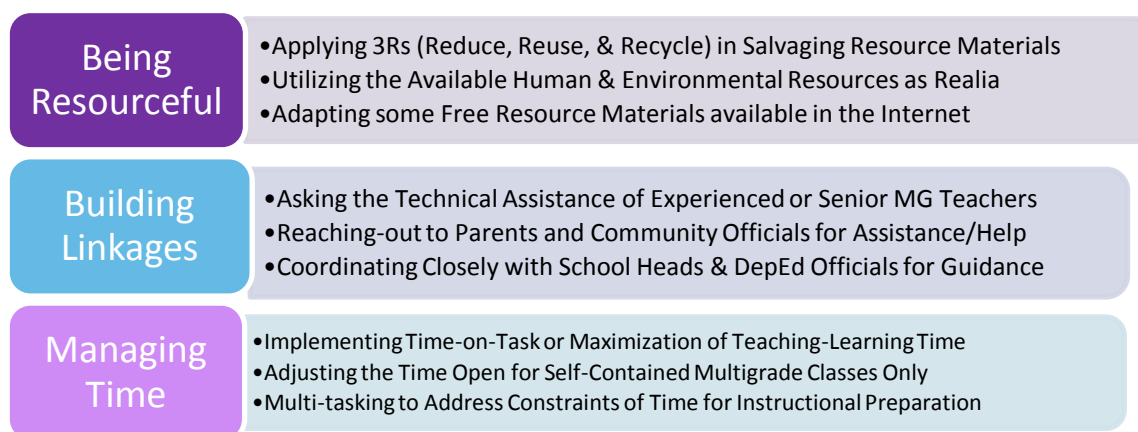


Figure 3. Themes & Sub-themes on Coping Mechanisms of Multigrade Teachers

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Multigrade Teachers’ Rationalization for the Identified Indulgences

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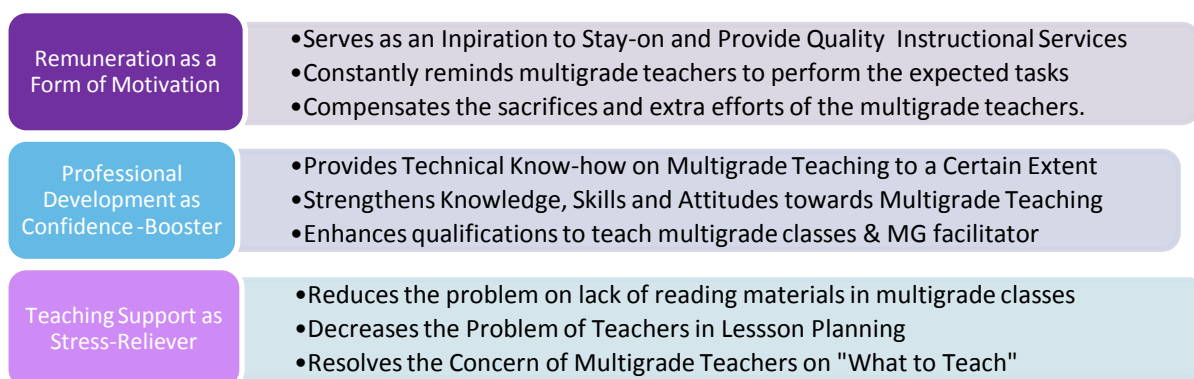


Figure 4. Themes & Sub-themes on MG Teachers’ Rationalization of the Indulgences Identified

Remuneration as a Form of Motivation

The remuneration provided to multigrade teachers such as their hiking and hardship allowances were considered as forms of inspiration to move on or stay on as multigrade teachers, although there are still some who would seek to be transferred to monograde classes because of different reasons.

According to them, it also serves as a constant reminder that they need to do good because other teachers are not enjoying the same privilege but they are doing their tasks as expected, how much more multigrade teachers. The multigrade teachers feel that the sacrifices that they experience in teaching multigrade classes, including the extra efforts and time they spent in preparing lesson plans and resource materials are being well compensated.

Professional Development as Confidence-Booster

The opportunities provided to multigrade teachers for professional development were recognized by them as something that made them more ready and confident to handle multigrade learners. That technically, they already earned a level of confidence as implementers of the program. The orientation seminars and training workshops also enhanced their knowledge skills and attitude towards multigrade teaching. They also considered that qualifications-wise, they can confidently say that they are qualified to teach multigrade learners but are still open to necessary improvement for quality and excellence of service. However, they suggested that training be done on a district level so that it can be treated as live-out and they can still be with their families.

Teaching Support as Stress-Reliever

The teaching support received by the multigrade teachers such as BASA-Pilipinas reading materials, lesson exemplars, and the budget of lessons were considered as stress-relievers. According to them, this

teaching support reduced their problems on lack of reading materials for use in the classroom and at the same time decreases their problems on what to use in making teaching more effective.

However, they still suggested the provision of ready-made lesson plans for multigrade teaching and the availability of contextualized learning resources for ready use. With the provision of the budget of lessons, the multigrade teachers were saved from the concern of determining what to teach, all they need to do is prepare the lesson plans and the instructional materials.

IV. Conclusion

This part provides the conclusions drawn from the findings of the study and the corresponding recommendations forwarded to improve the implementation of multigrade teaching in the Leyte Division.

Conclusions

The following are the conclusions drawn from the findings of the study:

1. The multigrade teachers are experiencing challenges in multigrade teaching particularly in lesson planning, utilizing resource materials, assessment of learning, management of teaching-learning experiences, monitoring of learning performance, and submitting reports.
2. There were three sources of indulgence that multigrade teachers identified such as remunerations, professional development, and teaching support.
3. Coping mechanisms for multigrade teaching were identified as being resourceful, building linkages, and managing time.
4. The multigrade teachers consider the available remuneration such as hiking and hardship allowances as sources of motivation, the professional development opportunities as confidence-booster, and teaching support as stress-relievers.

V. Recommendation

For purposes of improving the multigrade teaching and the situation of the teachers, the following are recommended based on the findings of the study:

1. Propose the provision of the multigrade allowance on a monthly basis, if possible be incorporated in their monthly salary, and consider other forms of incentives such as awards for Best Practices and Outstanding Teaching Performance.
2. Come up with institutionalized profiling of multigrade teachers and multigrade schools that can be used as a source or basis in the provision of allowances, design training proposals, recommending for professional development, fund sourcing for possible projects, tracking of performance, and enrolment.
3. Include the school heads as participants in the orientation seminars and training workshops on multigrade teaching.
4. Facilitate district-level live-out multigrade training so that teachers need not leave their families for three to five days.
5. Intensify the provision of technical assistance by considering a more frequent schedule and utilizing other modes of delivery or accessibility to availing of technical assistance.
6. Build linkage with more possible donors of teaching-learning materials for multigrade instruction such as extending school linkage with the community and parents for support and joint projects and involving the barangay officials in disseminating schedules of meetings and encouraging all the parents to attend.
7. Facilitate the provision of ready-made lesson plans for multigrade instruction to augment the lesson exemplars provided.
8. Conduct curriculum review for multigrade instruction to identify competencies that need sub-tasking and combining/lumping.
9. Make instruction contextualized through the provision of learning resources such as lesson plans, instructional materials, and assessment tools.
10. Propose the building of classroom which are designed and structured for multigrade instruction.

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