



Reading Instruction in Multigrade Classes: A Narrative Inquiry

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Abstract

The call toward inclusive and equitable quality education has been globally heard. Hence, the Philippines has continued to offer multigrade classes as one of the most practical means of making education available even in remote and sparsely-populated areas. Since it is a prevalent practice, there is a need for a context-specific inquiry into multigrade teachers' narratives and experiences. Further, with the current concern on students' reading proficiency, this study explores the experiences of public-school teachers handling reading instruction in a multigrade classroom in the hope to address management and instructional gaps relevant to reading instruction. A total of ten multigrade teachers participated in this study following the principles of data saturation. It utilized narrative research design which aims to conceptualize the accumulated experiences through the teachers' narratives. Using thematic analysis, the teachers' narratives and the meanings deduced were presented as teacher practices in recalibrating classroom management strategies; reinforcing reading pedagogies; and reinventing remedial and enhancement activities; and the demands and opportunities of multigrade teaching. The findings of this study provide not just relevant insights in improving reading instruction among multigrade classes but also in improving the situation for multigrade classrooms. Thus, the Department of Education may revisit the multigrade programs offered and continuously conduct monitoring in schools to ensure that the needs of both teachers and students are met; and, relevant support and resources are provided. It is further recommended that multigrade teaching be given considerable attention in pre-service teacher training systems.

Keywords: multigrade teaching, reading instruction, reading pedagogies, remedial instruction, teachers' practices

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1. Introduction

Two-fold conditions cause the implementation of multigrade, one is by necessity, and the other is by choice [1]. In the Philippine setting, it is clearly for the reason of condition considering the topographical factors that may affect the number of learners in remote school areas. In the school year 2017-2018, it was found that of the 38,911 public elementary schools in the Philippines, 7,234 were multigrade [2]. The recent data is very much higher compared to way back in the school year 2014-2015 by 5.6% [2]. The data presented shows that multigrade classes are increasing across the country. This proves that education is delivered even in the country's most remote areas where the population of learners is low. In most cases, teacher shortage becomes a concern in small schools, and dividing the class and hiring teachers may not be that practical. As a remedy, students are put together in one class where they will be taught by the same teacher known as "multigrade teaching" (MGT). Despite these limitations, the Department of Education, in its constitutional mandate, has been obliged to provide fair and equitable quality education even to remote places over its jurisdiction [3].

'Multigrade' describes a class consisting of one teacher and students from different grade levels, the opposite of the 'usual' monograde setup. This is sometimes referred to as "composite classes". Multigrade classes are offered not mainly because of pedagogical choice but of necessity [4]. In the country's current context, children are grouped according to the grade they have reached in reference to competencies, and not ages or maturity. Establishing a multigrade program in the country made education accessible even to the most remote area where the estimated population of learners is significantly low. The geographical structure of the Philippines as an archipelago means that certain regions are complicated to access, and access to education for young learners is challenging because of the limited number of schools in most remote areas [2]. Learners whose location is distant from schools and whose accessibility is difficult when it needs to cross a river or a make-shape bridge give them disadvantaged and inaccessible to learning institutions. This results in a limited number of enrollees; thus, assigning teachers per grade level might not be practical, and this is where the education authorities introduced the implementation of multigrade classes [2]. In connection with its promulgation, the Department of Education mandates the establishment of elementary schools even in the most remote areas all over

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the country [5].

In the 1987 constitution of the Philippines, article 14 emphasizes the role of the state and its respective agency in providing accessible education to its citizens [3]. The Department of Education's adherence to SDG (Sustainable Development Goals) strengthens its capability to expand education even in the country's remote areas [2]. Furthermore, the Philippine Education system was further enhanced under R.A 10533 of 2013 by implementing the K to 12 curriculum, where one of its significant implementations is compulsory, free, and equitable quality basic education. The Dep-Ed Order no. 96 of 1997 provides the basic guidelines and rationale for establishing the multigrade program in the Philippines' formal education system. The fundamental mandate of the said order includes the maximum number of learners in a multigrade class, the allocation of classrooms, the basic learning packages, teachers' incentives, and teachers' training [6]. Dep-Ed Order no. 81 of 2009 was released to improve the implementation of the multigrade program further as it highlights the 15-25% hardship allowance of MG teachers and the annual search for outstanding "Teachers" at a district or school level, which encourages MG teachers to do well in their work [7]. An amendment was also made where there will be no more specialized curriculum for a multigrade reading program while compelling the MG teachers to contextualize the instruction based on the demand of the learners.

In the implementation of the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013, section 4, it is stipulated that English and the native language shall be the dominant and primary languages in instruction. The Philippine curriculum emphasizes English as a substantial language in direct education instruction. Moreover, the constitution also promulgated that English is a powerful medium of instruction and communication [3]. Thus, mastering English should always be founded on reading and reading comprehension fundamentals. "Reading activity is one of the most important ways of learning, as it is connected with literacy and civilization development as well" [8]. Further, in Dep-Ed Order no. 14 of 2018, it is stated that "Literacy is one of the most fundamental skills a child can learn, making reading the foundation of all learning" [9]. However, according to the results of the assessment conducted by the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), it was found that the mean reading literacy score of learners in urban communities was significantly higher than the mean score of learners in rural communities [10]. The PISA assessment result significantly shows that many learners from rural communities need further instructional support on reading literacy. The study of Wilkinson, et. al. [11] has also highlighted some studies stipulating the heavy use of composite classes which may contribute to poor performance of students. This includes 8-year-old students from MG classes getting lower scores in literacy- and

numeracy-related aspects compared to those in mono-grade classes.

Consequently, educators emphasized reading competencies in the elementary years of knowledge. In fact, teaching students how to comprehend different genres is an important goal for the elementary school years, especially for grade 4 learners and beyond, when learners are expected to read a wide range of materials to gain knowledge and literary experience [12]. Therefore, reading instruction is the most crucial stage in learning development for elementary learning. Successful readers are those learners who are fluent, strategic, and joyful; moreover, these learners are future-ready and can do well in their sojourn in the educational process [13]. However, in its cruciality, teachers are technically facing issues and complexities in reading instruction outside a mono-grade curriculum. According to South African research, since teachers are trained to handle mono-grade classes, they find it challenging to adapt the transition to teaching reading in the multigrade set-up [1]. It is important to note that MGT was not part of the old pre-service education curricular offering. MG teachers learned how to handle MG classes based on actual experience.

Moreover, teaching fundamental reading skills in a multigrade program is challenging for public school elementary teachers, considering that these public elementary schools are situated in areas where learning resources, learning materials, and access to educational technologies are very much limited. Another context to consider in a multigrade class is that learners in one classroom are composed of two or more grade levels, where each group constitutes a different pace of learning. These conditions are just a few among the many contexts of a multigrade classroom. There is also a lack of research related to MGT in the country particularly exploring the teachers' actual experiences. Thus, this study explores the teachers' experiences through their narratives and practices of teaching reading in multigrade classes. Teachers were asked to elaborate their experiences based on the primary question - How do you describe teaching reading in multigrade classes? Being at the forefront of the implementation, the teachers' narratives can provide rich data and documentation on MGT practices in the country that can influence the policies for sustainable development and implementation of the multigrade program.

2. Methodology

2.1 Research Design

This research employed a qualitative research approach. McMillan and Schumacher [14] described qualitative research methods as a type of research study where the data collection tool is based on an in-person interview with research participants and the researcher. It describes the person's beliefs and personal

point of view. Specifically, this research utilized the narrative research design because it is centered on the various experiences of the respondents. It solicits relevant data and information grounded in the multiple narratives and practices of multigrade teachers who are particularly immersed in reading instruction.

2.2 Research Participants

An interview is conducted with ten teachers as participants who teach reading in multigrade classrooms. The number of participants adhered to the principles of data saturation. The researchers identified that data saturated at the 9th participant. To ensure that no more new information is discovered, a 10th participant was chosen. The first criterion is that the participants should be permanent teachers in the public education sector. Second, they should have handled reading instruction in multigrade classes in primary or elementary public schools for at least three years. Third, they must be willing to participate in the study. The participants were from the public elementary schools in two districts under the Bohol Province Division and two districts under Cebu Province Division. The selection of these research environments validates the specific "multigrade school" criteria. Under the constitutional mandate of free and equal access to quality education, the Department of Education initiates the establishment of "Multigrade schools" in the most remote areas all over the country. Multigrade schools are situated where the learners' population is low; thus, hiring teachers to cater to each grade level is an impractical option.

2.3 Research Procedures and Analysis

The researcher ensures the consent of the selected participants for an interview. The plan includes the modality or platform of the interview and the arrangement of dates. Using a validated interview guide, a 45-minute to an hour interview was conducted with the consent of the selected respondents. Data is gathered using an audio tape recorder for the transcription and data analysis segment. The meaning-making from data was done utilizing thematic analysis wherein patterns are identified and themes are derived. The data collected from the in-depth interview were transcribed and analyzed using thematic analysis steps developed by Collaizi (1978). This method starts with (a) reading and re-reading the participants' descriptions transcribed from the interview recordings; (b) extracting the significant statements; (c) formulating meaning; (d) organizing formulated meanings into a cluster of themes; (e) integrating the results of the study into an exhaustive description; (f) formulating an exhaustive description of the phenomenon; and (g) validating with the participants how the descriptive results compare with their experience.

2.4 Ethical Considerations

Voluntariness and consent were highlighted before the conduct of the study. Participants were given information about the study's objective, advantages, and disadvantages before they could decide whether or not to take part. Participants in the study were not required to reveal their identities. To protect the participants and the information gathered from them, anonymity was maintained throughout. To prevent it from being linked to other data by third parties, personally identifying information was not reflected in this study.

3. Results and discussion

This study explores the teachers' experiences through their narratives and practices of teaching reading in multigrade classes. All the multigrade teachers interviewed hold a position from Teacher I to Teacher III. They have taught in public school for an average of 8-15 years, wherein the 3-8 years of this experience were spent as multigrade teachers. There were 7 female teachers and 3 male teachers and most of them were between the age of 29-40 years old. A significant number of them (7 out of 10) lived outside the vicinity of the residential area of the school where they work in. Further, the study utilized a qualitative framework where data collected revealed themes deduced from the formulated meanings. This highlighted the segments of teaching engagements in reading instruction in multigrade classes namely: teachers' practices described through the themes - recalibrating classroom management strategies; reinforcing reading pedagogies; and providing remedial and enhancement activities; and, demands and opportunities of teaching in multigrade classes.

3.1 Teachers' Practices

3.1.1 Recalibrating Classroom Management Strategies

A conducive learning environment includes a well-managed classroom. A well-managed classroom may be traditional and unconventional methods which include disciplinary strategies, behavioral conditioning, and a variety of management approaches used by teachers. Classroom management (CM) is regarded as a core competence for teachers [15]. To achieve a high level of CM, teachers must master the following five components, according to Evertson and Weinstein [16]: (1) establishing interpersonal relationships with and among pupils, (2) optimizing pupils' access to learning, (3) encouraging pupils' academic engagement, (4) developing pupils' social skills and self-regulation, and (5) intervening when behavior problems occur. The teachers' job is not only to teach the content but more is demanded on the teachers' responsibility for the overall development and behavior of the child. In a regular classroom, teachers are expected to deliver high efficacy when carrying out classroom

management tasks. In most cases, providing an effective discussion flow also depends on the classroom management strategies that the teachers employ. Thus, teachers also need to be confident in providing an enabling environment for learning while controlling disruptive behaviors. Doing these tasks in a regular classroom with students at the same level and more or less the same age is already challenging. This challenge is doubled for teachers handling multigrade classes – with students from different grade and age levels, different interests and abilities, and varied learning levels. It is for these reasons, that the respondents of this study highlighted the need to continuously recalibrate their classroom management strategies.

In a monograde classroom, teachers already encounter challenges in differentiating instruction to sustain students' interest. As one teacher elaborated, "Even if I already know my students' multiple intelligences and levels, finding an engaging activity to support their interests is already draining for me." For these teachers, differentiating instruction takes considerable time and effort as they need to prepare 2 or more activities per lesson to cater to those with learning challenges and those with high abilities. These are mostly done through enhancement activities, after-class activities, remedial, or varying assessment tasks. In a multigrade classroom, as the respondents shared, "teachers have to be ready with more than 3 different materials and strategies for the same lesson" and then continually evaluate and recalibrate teaching-learning activities to meet students' needs. A teacher also said, "Imagine having to replicate yourself to cater to different levels all at the same time and place. It is exhausting if the teacher is not equipped to be here." Differentiating instruction can mean delivering lessons at varying levels of difficulty based on each student's ability, or it can mean teaching the same material to all students using a variety of instructional strategies.

Consequently, as the multigrade teachers continuously recalibrate their teaching strategies to address the demand of the highly-diverse class, they have also carefully selected activities to maximize instructional time and engagement time in the classroom. Instructional time is the time allotted for teaching, while engaged time is the time that students devote to learning activities. Providing instruction at student-appropriate levels is vital. Thus, teachers utilize a variety of instructional strategies like video-based lessons, lecture recordings, and app-based interactive activities with the teacher making sure that students also receive immediate feedback. Students are also engaged in pairs and small groups to accomplish tasks, use manipulative materials, and perform active learning activities that may involve a lot of singing and dancing (especially for the young graders). A multigrade classroom, for these teachers, should always be an engaging and inclusive classroom to mitigate distractions, inappropriate behavior, and disinterest. Four of the ten teach-

ers shared that they have implemented video-based lessons as an aid to teaching, especially for those who finished the activities ahead or those who needed enrichment tasks. "We cannot do it alone. Good thing we can find supplemental materials online, or sometimes we create these video lessons ourselves", a teacher said. While all of them shared to have utilized a variety of audio-visual materials in class and engaged students in singing and dancing. It was also noted that aside from well-planned lesson delivery, structuring the classroom is also seen to have a positive response from students. Creating enabling spaces for students to learn on their own, read, and rest is a plus factor for a multigrade class. The physical arrangement lessens students' stress as this can ease classroom traffic flow and provide students with their personal space.

3.1.2 Reinforcing Reading Pedagogies

Teaching in a multigrade class is one thing, teaching reading in a multigrade class adds up to the list of challenging tasks a multigrade teacher must deal with. "The task is challenging that no teacher would really volunteer to become a multigrade teacher especially that we are not formally trained during undergraduate," a teacher-participant emphasized. Moreover, The study of Doğan, et.al. [17] for instance, has reported that teaching the English language in multigrade classrooms is challenging especially since it requires proficiency in the language. Teachers also shared that the lack of sufficient time in handling the class [18] while catering to students' varied developmental levels is also a problem. Studies also documented that students in multigrade classes perform somewhat less well in reading than students in monograde classes [11]. The constraints on providing reading spaces and responding to the diversity of instructional needs among multigrade students may have affected the teachers' reading instruction. This is true for multigrade classes accommodating large class sizes. It can affect the teachers' efficiency to provide effective reading instruction. Moreover, the performance of students in international assessments especially in reading has placed reading teachers in the limelight. For instance, the Philippines ranked at the bottom for performance in reading in the 2018 Program for International Student Assessment of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) results which further revealed that 80% of these students did not reach a minimum level of proficiency in reading [19]. On the other hand, the Southeast Asia Primary Learning Metrics (SEA-PLM) Program has also reported that among the Grade 5 students, only 10% met the highest proficiency level in Reading as reflected in the 2019 results [20]. The results of these assessments call for more intensive reading instruction among schools.

The multigrade teachers have expressed that teaching reading in a classroom with students from different levels and reading needs is a daunting task. A consid-

erable amount of time is spent planning how one-on-one instruction will be done. Teachers primarily assess students' reading levels and plan for activities and reading materials for each reading level. Five out of ten teachers have created learning spaces for reading – three had a mini library and two specifically designed a reading nook inside the classroom. The rest of the respondents have put up visual learning materials like quotes, notes, and the like to motivate students to read. They have also utilized varied reading strategies like using dialogic reading, paired or partner reading, and collaborative strategic reading. As teachers attend to other students, they make sure that the rest of the students are busy reading with partners or accomplishing reading tasks in a group. It is a primary consideration, especially for multigrade classes with large class sizes. The more groups teachers form, the less time they have for working directly with students in comparison to the time available for independent activities. Some teachers have also emphasized gathering a group of students with the same reading level in their mini library and showing them videos to watch while also attending to a few who needs more help. Another teacher also emphasized the use of a reward system for fast readers to further motivate the class. One teacher also shared conducting reading aloud regularly where each student is given an opportunity to read one story, poem, or news article before the class starts. Another teacher mentioned that she finds integrating songs and dances while teaching reading an effective strategy, especially for young readers.

The reading practices of these multigrade teachers as revealed through their narratives have provided a clearer view of what a multigrade class looks like, and of the demands, it requires from a multigrade teacher. Despite these, teachers find solace when they see that their efforts are paid off. Teachers tried to overcome these hurdles, doing the best that they can for their students. Teachers who optimistically face challenges and transform them into opportunities project a good level of emotional intelligence which ultimately contributes to efficiency and efficacy [21].

3.1.3 *Reinventing Remedial and Enhancement Activities*

Regardless of the varied reading strategies used by the teachers, they still reported reading problems, especially with fluency and comprehension concerns among their students. Considering the varying reading levels and interests of their students, it is necessary to conduct remedial sessions for struggling readers. However, reading remedial and enhancement activities should be different from the traditional and repetitive practice of isolated reading skills. A teacher shared that, "Sometimes students find these after-school activities demotivating and parents find them repetitive and ineffective." Thus, these remedial activities in reading must be reinvented in order to serve

struggling readers while also challenging advanced readers.

Aside from the remedial sessions, students who belong to independent and advanced readers are also given enhancement sessions to sustain their reading interests. Four out of ten respondents have conducted separate sessions for remedial and enhancement; while all six focused more on remediation. It is important to note that the four teachers providing enhancement sessions for independent and advanced readers have reported positive responses from students. These enhancement activities according to them are proactive measures to mitigate future reading problems. This will also ensure that they provide equal opportunities for both groups of readers and not only focus their initiatives on those with problems. While all six multigrade teachers shared that their workload has somehow prevented them from organizing separate after-class sessions for students. They emphasized that considerable efforts are focused more on helping those that are non-readers and those with fluency and comprehension problems. Students who were identified as independent and advanced readers were seldom given enhancement sessions. Nonetheless, teachers assured that they also provide follow-up to these students.

Remedial instruction is the teacher's subsequent approach to learners who fail to achieve the desired reading competencies after a series of formative and summative assessments. It is important to note that this kind of after-class activity is a teacher's own initiative. It is not easy to conduct remedial sessions as this entails not just additional preparation but also extra time to be spent in school. These are all done without additional pay or benefits for the teachers. Five teachers shared that every day they spent an extra hour in school – 30 minutes conduct of the remedial session and another 30 minutes for remedial lesson preparation, checking, and feedback. While conducting their regular class sessions, teachers are also conscious of the remedial session which is an additional workload for them. Moreover, since remedial sessions intend to address the specific reading problem identified, an effective approach would be (ideally) providing one-on-one sessions for the students, which for most of them reported, seldom accomplished because of time constraints. Two teachers even reported having to conduct one-on-one reading sessions on their vacant time every day as remedial sessions in the afternoon are not enough. Moreover, one teacher has shared that she has benefited from the initiative of the Department of Education on "Brigada Pagbasa" which their district has seriously implemented. This initiative of the department is an after-school reading program inviting volunteers such as government officials, students, and teacher-retirees to assist schools in the teaching of reading. These volunteers have helped her during the conduct of her remedial classes having achieved one-

on-one reading tutorials for students. She emphasized the importance of collaboration among stakeholders to achieve the goal of 100% readers in schools. Intensive remedial reading is seen to be an effective strategy to help non-readers and struggling readers improve their fluency and comprehension skills especially if done in small groups. Remedial instruction enables those who have learning difficulties to relearn, and regardless of models, factors such as close teacher involvement, time, and place have a significant impact on the instruction outcome [22]. Educators may reimagine these activities by incorporating technology, project-based learning, and differentiated instruction to deliver more individualized and engaging experiences for all students. Incorporating varied and culturally sensitive materials can also help students find reading more relevant and enjoyable.

3.2 *Demands and Opportunities*

Teaching has been regarded as one of the most demanding professions, and a different level of “demands” has been noted by multigrade teachers. Research revealed that teachers’ job satisfaction is affected by several factors including workload and work pressure [23, 24], student misbehavior and classroom management [25], diversity in student population [26], and lack of resources and support from leadership and colleagues [27] among others. These factors can lead to burnout and exhaustion which can ultimately affect self-efficiency and efficacy.

The “demands” refer to the various responsibilities and duties of teachers wherein some are seen as obstacles in carrying out the professional duties in school, particularly with regard to multigrade classes and reading instruction. Considering the “unique” composition of multigrade classes, it is seen as being too diverse thus the need for teachers to exert a considerable amount of effort from lesson preparation, presentation, and assessment, to the conduct of remedial and enhancement activities.

Moreover, there is also an extraordinary demand for professional development among multigrade teachers. Most teachers struggle to teach multigrade, primarily because there was no training during their undergraduate studies on handling multigrade classes. As most of them shared, “Most of us, multigrade teachers are just chosen by the principal and we are not adequately trained to teach multigrade classrooms.” Large class sizes and a lack of resources are also regarded as significant barriers to effective multigrade teaching and learning environments [28].

Further, all of the teacher-respondents expressed that their degree programs have not included courses on multigrade instruction nor have they participated in any activities related to multigrade teaching. Naturally, pre-service teachers and education college students are trained for monograde setup. As stipulated under Dep-Ed Order no. 89 s.2009, it was clearly

stated that no formal or structured curriculum should be developed for multigrade classes because a multigrade teacher will be the one to design depending on the context and situation of the learner and its learning environment [7]. Being a multigrade teacher is seen to be more challenging as compared to being a monograde teacher. They shared that even with the number of years they have spent as multigrade teachers, it never got easier with time. With technology and new media, new student interests, and a short attention span, their job becomes a lot more demanding now. The two years of modular learning due to the pandemic are also seen as contributing to students’ learning difficulties, particularly in reading. The various conditions and circumstances affecting the learner’s environment raised challenges for these multigrade reading teachers. Thus, continuous training and upgrading on multigrade pedagogy, reading instruction, and classroom management is seen to be a viable solution to help multigrade teachers. Thus, school leaders need to ensure ongoing professional development in these areas.

There is also a demand when it comes to resources and facilities. Classrooms are designed primarily for a monograde setup. There are limited resources specifically allocated for multigrade classes. In a public school set up in the country, every school has a Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses (MOOE) budget that will be used to defray essential expenses for school operation and augmentation purposes. In a Dep-Ed Regional Memorandum 213 s. 2022, it is written that “the said annual MOOE allocations shall be used to fund supplies, rental, and minor repair of tools and equipment and other consumables for teachers and students deemed necessary in the conduct of classes and learning activities.” Multigrade classes are primarily offered in remote places where a particular school has no direct MOOE fund; however, such school is classified as a “cluster” school partakes a budget from a central school’s MOOE. Teachers’ narratives from the interview showed that most of them look forward to the augmentation of learning facilities even in the most remote school in the area. This includes improving physical classroom structures and installing interactive bulletin boards, mini-libraries, audio-visual devices, and learning charts in remote public schools.

Furthermore, these demands have also provided opportunities for teachers. It has afforded teachers to personally seek professional development activities without waiting for school- or district-organized activities. The study of Navarro, et.al. [29] highlighted teachers’ initiatives and resourcefulness in augmenting the deficiencies of a school system. All ten teacher-respondents expressed that they have used their own resources to pay for webinars and training about multigrade teaching, purchase books, acquire relevant teaching materials, and design mini-libraries and reading nooks. Teachers who spend extra time

with students who are falling behind without compensation are demonstrating their dedication and passion for teaching. However, even with the resourcefulness, creativity, and dedication of these teachers, administrators should offer assistance and organize programs and activities that would help the multigrade teachers.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

The practices and experiences of the multigrade reading teachers as deduced from their narratives show the need for school administrators to give attention to multigrade classes and revisit its policies. The effective implementation of multigrade programs requires strong collaboration among administrators, teachers, parents, and other stakeholders. Further, effective reading instruction in multigrade classes calls for teachers to continuously recalibrate classroom management strategies, reinforce reading pedagogies, and implement both reading remedial and enhancement sessions. Therefore, the following recommendations are formulated to help address the identified gaps and further improve the reading instruction for multigrade classes:

A. Regular school monitoring and visitation by school administrators are vital in overseeing multigrade schools. Informal school visitation and monitoring will help the school heads explore and identify possible problems these vulnerable schools face;

B. Initiate collaborative learning sessions among multigrade teachers. This affords teachers an avenue to share experiences and strategies, share resources, and design materials for multigrade teaching;

C. The teachers should be provided with annual workshops, training, and seminars on reading instruction suited for multigrade classroom set-up. Professional teachers are typically trained for monograde teaching; however, multigrade class is partly distinct;

D. The “Brigada Pagbasa” program of the Department of Education may be strengthened by tapping for more volunteers as this is seen to be effective and assistive to reading teachers; and

E. Pre-service teacher education institutions should either include multigrade teaching in the curriculum or provide special sessions in equipping the pre-service teachers to teach in multigrade classes.

The study’s key limitations include its small sample size and its concentration primarily on teacher experiences, which may not provide a full picture of the broader issue of teaching reading in multigrade classes. Thus, a study with larger and more diverse populations is required to corroborate these findings and examine other viewpoints.

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