BEST PRACTICES OF MULTIGRADE TEACHING IN LUNA, APAYAO, PHILIPPINES

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Abstract: **Apayao, the youngest province in the Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR) has numerous remote elementary schools. Luna, the government center of the province has twenty four multigrade teachers in Luna District, all of them are handling two Grade levels each. This study is intended to document best practices of multigrade teaching in Luna, Apayao, Philippines. The descriptive survey method of research was used with interview, secondary data analysis and photo and video documentation were used.**
Results revealed that: the multigrade teachers of Luna are relatively young and they are in their prime years of teaching, nine of them are teaching multigrade for less than a year; eight of them are teaching for one – five years; two are teaching for six to ten years; two are teaching for eleven to fifteen years; and three of the respondents are teaching for about sixteen to twenty years. Majority are married. Most of the teachers finished a degree of Bachelor of Elementary Education and pursued masteral degree. All of the teachers handled two grade levels. Most of them live quite a distance for five to twentyfive kilometers away from school;3.there are sixteen practices of the Multigrade Teachers in Luna District applied these are the use of Daily Lesson Log (DLL), "To Do List" , Shifting Lessons, use of Para teacher or the little teachers, Cooperative learning and Peer Tutoring, Multiple Intelligences Class, Instructional Materials (IMs) Resource Sharing, Organizing Instructional Materials (IMs), Indigenizing the Curriculum, attending INSETs; Collaborative Effort between Parents and Teachers in Promoting Projects, Partition of Class, the use of Anecdotal Record, Treatment of the Minority (Aetas) pupils and maximization of idle time; as the school heads of Luna District evaluated these sixteen practices of the Multigrade teacher, here are the four best practices: To Do List, Maximization of Idle Time, para teachers, the use of partition boards.

Keywords: **Multigrade teaching, Instructional practices, school –related practices, school improvement, Luna, Apayao.**

1. INTRODUCTION

In Philippine educational system, the most common classroom type is the single grade and this has been the typical classroom since the public school system is organized in the Philippines. However, in remote barangays where the number of children enrolled could not meet the required number to organize a single grade class, multi grade classes were adopted. Aside from the distance of the barangay and the small number of children for each grade level, the shortage of teachers, fund and school buildings were also among the factors that led to the organization of multigrade classes in the different parts of the country.

Section 4 of the Republic Act 896 known as the Elementary Education Act of 1953 authorized the organization of classes with more than two grades each. It provides "where there is not enough number of children to meet the minimum

requirements for organizing one grade of two grade combination classes, the Secretary of Education may authorize the organization of such classes following terms set forth by the Board of National Education" [1].

The organization of multigrade classes is an answer to the problem on access to education for children in the remote and isolated villages the country. Multigrade teachers are key factors in providing meaningful learning experiences in these classes in order to sustain pupil's interest and to make learning more effective.

It is obvious that a combined class of students differs a lot from the conventional type of a student class of a single grade. That means that the way that the students of the multigrade class should be taught must be different as well. It is true that the function of the teacher in the multigrade classroom is multidimensional or to be more accurate it is much more complicated and demanding than the role of the teacher in the monograde school respectively.

The main function of the multigrade teacher is to teach students by imparting knowledge not just follow a curriculum. Teacher must be able to develop skills and inculcate desirable values and attitudes among pupils. The teacher is expected to be versatile and utilize different strategies to make learning meaningful and effective for all students in his or her classroom, no matter what individual differences may exist among the students (www.ea.gr/ep/muse/data/meth_ function.htm).

There are twelve (12) Multigrade Schools appearing with twenty four (24) teachers in Luna District. In order therefore to properly find out the best practices of multigrade teacher in Luna District, the researcher decided to undertake this study.

Statement of the Problem

This study is intended to document the best practices of multigrade teachers in Luna district. Specifically, it sought to answer the following objectives:

1. Determine the profile of multigrade teachers in Luna, Apayao.

2. Identify the practices of multigrade teachers in Luna District along the following areas: a.) Classroom instructional Preparation and management; b.) Evaluation of Instruction; c.) Preparation and utilization of Instructional Materials; d.) School-Community relations; e.) Time management; f.) Homeroom guidance; and g.) Ground improvement.

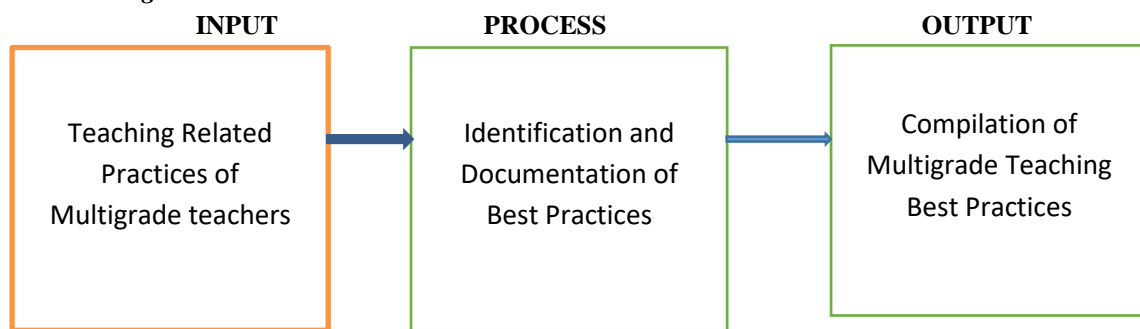3. Identify the best practices of multigrade teaching in Luna, Apayao.

Research Paradigm

INPUT	PROCESS	OUTPUT
Teaching Related Practices of Multigrade teachers	Identification and Documentation of Best Practices	Compilation of Multigrade Teaching Best Practices

Figure1. The paradigm of the study showing the input, process and the output. The conceptual framework adopts the input-process –output model.

The input consist of the practices of multigrade teachers in teaching-related areas, the process includes identification and documentation of best practices yielding to the compilation of Multigrade Teaching Best Practices as the output.

Review of Related Literature

Multigrade Classroom

The multigrade classroom can be more of a challenge than the single-grade classrooms. Skills and behavior required of the teacher may be different, and coordinating activities can be more difficult. But what does research tell us regarding the skills required of the multigrade teacher?

A study of UNESCO in 2015 (Practical Tips in Teaching Multigrade classes) cited Ten Major lessons that are useful as a multigrade teacher, in ensuring the best quality learning the students: **Understand the diversity and complexity of your students** – by gender, age, family and socio-economic background, language, ability, and special education needs – and see this diversity not as a problem to be solved but as an opportunity to be used to produce better learning. (2.) **Personalize your teaching** (and eventually your assessment methods) to respond to the different backgrounds and learning styles/needs of each of your students. (3.) **Make your classroom "child-friendly",** especially for new students coming directly from their families to the school; this means not only teaching what needs to be taught but also ensuring that the classroom is healthy, welcoming, inclusive and protective of children of all different backgrounds and abilities and that your teaching is sensitive and responsive to the needs of both boys and girls and promotes student participation in the classroom. (4.) **Adapt the standard national curriculum** to both the local culture and context and to your multigrade situation. (5.) **Be creative in Bour management** of the multigrade classroom, arranging whole grades, mixed grades, large and small groups, pairs and space for individual work. (6.) **Be flexible in your use of time**, moving from one kind of group to another and balancing the attention you give to strong students acting as peer tutors and weaker students needing extra attention. (7.) **Be innovative in the development and reproduction of teaching and learning materials** - use locally available resources and make them relevant to the local context and culture. (8.) **Use the students' mother tongue as the medium of instruction,** ensuring initial literacy in that language (e.g. by Grade 3) and then, where appropriate, helping students transfer the literacy skills in that language to the national language(s). (9.) **Take advantage of whatever resources there are around you to help you in your work** – your principal/ head teacher, parents and the local community, and other schools relatively close to your school which can form a cluster and share useful experiences, materials and lesson plans. (10,) **Master the other skills needed to help a small, remote, often poor (and poorly-supported) school succeed**. Multigrade teaching is a challenge in itself, but working with your teaching colleagues to make your small school "work" requires other skills as well: making do with limited resources and trying to raise more; carrying out a school self-assessment of its achievements and its needs and developing a school improvement plan; mobilizing support from impoverished and often disempowered and disinterested parents; and gaining the support of local community leaders – all of these are skills useful in schools with multigrade classrooms.

Simon Veenman's (1995) work is another of the often-referenced studies conducted on the topic of multiage education. Veenman's work synthesized the research of 38 other studies into cognitive and non-cogitative effects on the elementary school level. His data inclusion criteria consisted of "only studies involving explicit comparison of multigrade and multiage classes with a single-grade and single-age classes" (p. 326). In addition his study met a number of methodological criteria including experimental and control groups, standard measures of academic achievement, comparability samples, duration of multiage grouping, normality of students sampled, same level of teacher training and equal numbers of experimental and control teachers.

The work of Mason and Burns (1996) is a counterpoint to Simon Veenman's publication. Mason and Burns reviewed all the same studies as Veenman and came to a different conclusion based on the contention he overlooked "selection bias, novelty effects, additional training, and other such factors" [2] (p. 309). Researchers looking for data and evidence regarding the multiage model are best served reviewing the work of Veenman and Mason and Burns, which will be analyzed later in this study most researchers and practitioners agree that successful strategies for multi-grade teaching depend on adequate supplies of learning materials to support individual and group-based learning. This enables teachers to spend time with some groups   of learners while other learners work alone, in pairs or in small groups. (p.16) Although having appropriate materials is imperative for classroom success, the presence of them does not guarantee quality of learning. The materials need to be high value and pertinent to the learning outcome. These materials are not a substitute for effective teaching, but they do play a vital part in an integrated teaching strategy.

Teacher preparation is another vital area that needs to be properly addressed in order to facilitate a successful multiage learning environment. According to Little's (2004) study, multiage teachers "generally have to rely on their training in the principles of diversity and differentiation in coping with the demands of the multiage class.[3]"

Instructional Practices In Multigrade Classes

There are four (4) identified key instructional dimensions affecting successful multigrade teaching: **1.) Group strategically**. This will encourage students of different backgrounds to include each other in their work. You may then

want to group students by age or grade for skill subjects (such as reading and writing, arithmetic, and science) **2.) Prepare flexible and appropriate materials.** For grouping to be effective, materials and teaching must be varied and made challenging to accommodate the learning needs of students with different levels of ability. Develop a variety of worksheets to be used with diverse groups in multigrade classroom situations; these could include teacher-guided activity sheets, group learning worksheets, individual practice worksheets, and peer directed instruction sheets. **3.) Promote self-paced learning.** While helping students to perform activities together, at the same time ensure that they are allowed to move through the curriculum at their own pace. This should help them achieve the set learning objectives for each grade's curriculum. **4.) Give extra attention to children with special education needs.** Ensure that students with disabilities, learning difficulties, and other needs can achieve milestones as others do.

School and Community Involvement

Multigrade schools are often located in remote and difficult to reach areas. They may be far from the educational center and receive little pedagogical support [4,5]. The communities in which they are located may not see the value of education, and may speak a different language to the official one of the school. For these reasons, it is essential that the community be involved in the life of the school. Parents can be asked to come in to act as a resource, the curriculum of the school might extend out into the community, or the community can be asked to support the school in other ways. Multigrade teachers should be trained in approaches that help to develop relations between the school and the community

Learning and Teaching In Multigrade Settings

Angela W. Little paper prepared for the UNESCO 2005 EFA Monitoring Report described multigrade teaching often fail to indicate whether they have arisen through necessity or choice. This is unfortunate since the conditions that give rise to learning and teaching in multigrade settings will themselves have an impact on the quality of the teaching-learning transactions. For example, if the numbers of learners per class group is very large, and teacher numbers few then parents' and teacher demands will, understandably be for more teachers. A description of the conditions in which multigrade learning and teaching settings arise is not the same as a judgment about the conditions under which multigrade is desirable. For example, consider a primary school in which 100 learners are spread across 6 grades. The local education authority deploys only one teacher. This teacher has, of necessity, to engage in multigrade teaching. Though necessary, multigrade teaching is not, in this case, desirable. In a second example the local authority deploys 3 teachers, spread across six grades of 100 learners. The school divides these into 3 class groups, of around 33 per class, each spanning two grades of curriculum. Here, multigrade teaching may be both necessary and desirable.

The Positive Impact Of Multigrade Teaching

Expansion of Access. Multigrade teaching is extremely important in relation to the EFA goal of access and the Millennium Development Goals designed to combat poverty. For millions of children worldwide the only type of school to which they will gain access, if they gain access at all, will be multigraded. Economically and socially disadvantaged areas comprise disproportionate numbers of multigraded schools. To the extent that these children have a chance of any schooling at all it is likely to mobile and multigraded.[6]

Cognitive achievement effects. Pratt (1986) reviewed 30 studies from the USA and Canada between 1948 and 1983. Multigrade classes spanned 2-3 years of age[7]. There was no general pattern in the achievement results (usually, but not always, achievement in maths and reading). Learners in multigrade classes showed higher achievement in maths and reading in ten studies, worse in five and no difference in thirteen. Miller's review of 21 studies in the USA confirmed the general picture. Learners in multigrade classes performed no better and no worse than students in monograde classes. Veenman's (1995) review of studies mainly from OECD countries distinguished achievement results in different types of mono and multigrade class – (i) multigrade, formed of necessity, from imbalanced or inadequate enrolments; (ii) single-grade and (iii) multi-age, non graded, formed for pedagogical or philosophical reasons[8]. He found no evidence to suggest that learning in multigrade or multi-age classes was inferior to that in monograde classes. Mason and Burns (1997) confirmed the general picture of no consistent cognitive achievement differences [9].

Social and personal learning effects. Pratt (1986) identified 15 studies that addressed, variously, children's friendships, self concepts, altruism and attitude to school. Overall, he claimed that the socio-emotional development of learners in multigrade groups is either accelerated or showed no difference, when compared with learners in monograde groups, a

conclusion confirmed in Miller's (1991) review of 21 studies[10]. And in her review of studies from the US and UK, Ford (1977) reports positive and negative findings on the reduction of anxiety levels, the maturity of friendship patterns and on personal and social adjustment and positive findings on self concept, self esteem, and attitudes to school[11].

Several studies focus on teachers' perceptions of the benefits for students of learning in multigrade settings. A UNESCO/APEID study (1989) collated perceptions about the benefits of multigrade teaching from educators in twelve countries in the Asia and Pacific Region [12]. These included: a.); Learners develop self study skills; b.) Learners cooperate across age groups, resulting in collective ethics, concern and responsibility; c.) Learners help each other; d.)Teachers can organize both remediation and enrichment activities for low and high achievers respectively more discreetly than in monograde classes.

A recent study of 47 multigrade teachers and head teachers in an inner city area of London, England, reported a number of positive 'opportunities' presented by the multigrade classroom[13] . The most commonly mentioned (24/47) was the opportunity for 'cognitive stretching' of the younger, less able and lower achieving learners, expressed variously by teachers as 'stretching', 'modelling', 'moving on and developing', 'extending', 'looking up and emulating'. The second most commonly mentioned (13/47) was the opportunity for the use of peer tutoring learning strategies. While such strategies are not unique to multigrade classes, the strategy appears to work particularly well in the multigrade class. Unlike cognitive stretching, which was considered a benefit mainly for the less able, the lower achieving and the younger learner, peer tutoring was perceived to benefit all pupils, cognitively, socially and personally. More able, higher achieving and older learners 'cement' their learning through teaching and helping others. The less able, lower achieving and younger learners look up to and learn from others. A third commonly mentioned opportunity (12/47) was 'behavior stretching', or the opportunity for younger learners to learn appropriate social behaviors from the role models offered by older learners.

Alongside the perceived benefits for learners must be noted the perceived challenges posed by the multigrade classroom for teachers. In the study of multigrade teachers in London these included: a.) the age-graded structure of the National Curriculum and the associated expectations of curriculum coverage and assessment/achievement targets (24/47); b.)the range of ability of pupils in those multigrade classes where learners have been assigned on criteria other than ability homogeneity (14/47); c.) the pressure to prepare one group of learners within the multigrade class for critical public assessments (11/47) (in this case, Key Stage Tests for Years 2 and 6)

In the Peruvian Amazon multigrade teachers perceive the monograde class as the desirable norm; the multigrade as the 'second class' necessity. Teachers feel unprepared to work in mulitgrade classrooms, judge that children don't 'get the same' as in monograde classrooms and report that they have insufficient educational materials to support learning in the multigrade classroom. The isolated and isolating conditions of work and the poverty of the communities served by multigrade schools reinforce teachers' negative attitude to the school [14].

Angela W. Little (2004) made a study on Learning and Teaching Multigrade Setting. The study revealed that there is some evidence that learners in multigrade setting may be at an advantage, in terms of social and personal learning, over those in monograde settings; and at no disadvantage cognitively [15].

Miller reviewed selected research studies of multigrade classrooms in Canada, Finland, eight developing nations (India, Korea, Maldives, Nepal, Thailand, Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Indonesia), and the United States[16]. Based on information about the perceptions of multigrade instruction of principals and teachers, the following issues are emphasized: (1) teachers need special methods and must be well organized to teach; (2) teachers should be trained to teach multigrade classrooms; (3) teachers should be prepared to use cross-age tutoring; (4) social studies and science instruction need special adaptations; (5) there is a need for teaching materials; (6) there is a need for individualized teaching; and (7) incentive should be provided for multigrade teachers. Typically found in rural areas, multigrade classes range from one-room schools spanning five or more grades, to more typical elementary schools with combination classes of two grade levels. Studies of instruction in multigrade classrooms across rural America reveal that teachers use various methods to juggle the wide levels of student needs. Six key variables affecting successful multigrade teaching identified in the research were: (1) classroom organization that facilitates student learning, independence, and interdependence; (2)

classroom management and discipline that emphasize student responsibility for their own learning; (3) instructional organization and curriculum that allow for a maximum of cooperative and self-directed student learning; (4) instructional delivery and grouping that improve the quality of instruction; (5) self-directed learning strategies; and (6) peer tutoring.

Beukes emphasized that some significant negative effects on achievement associated with multi-grade instruction. The data indicated that teachers lack management and organizational strategies for multi-grade teaching. Effective multi-grade teaching involves the use of a range of organizational strategies in the classroom. Curriculum, learning materials, teacher education and assessment are necessary components of an integrated strategy for teaching and learning. Surrounding these strategies is the need for national policies (for curriculum, materials, teacher education and assessment) that recognize, legitimate and support learners and teachers in multi-grade settings [17].

The natural varied composition of a multilevel classroom has specific advantages for learners:

Multilevel programming recognizes that each student is at a different stage of learning and focuses on the developmental stage of the learner; of necessity, the focus moves to individual learning along a continuum; b.) Multilevel classrooms provide opportunities for students to gain self-knowledge as they interact with older and younger peers; c.) Multilevel classrooms allow for continuous progress. All learners can be challenged. d.) Multilevel classrooms provide students with stability and an ongoing relationship with a teacher.

2.   METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The researcher made use of the descriptive qualitative method of research. It is descriptive since the researcher described, documented and analyzed phenomena related to multigrade teaching. The researcher used these strategies because of the nature of the study which is meant to identify and describe best practices of multigrade teachers.

Locale of the Study

The study was conducted in Luna District, Division of Apayao, Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR) specifically in the 12 multigrade schools during the school year 2015-2016. Apayao a mountainous province has a far-flung areas that were not yet reached by electricity. The villages in these remote barangays have small population and putting up complete elementary is not possible. The list of participating schools where multigrade classes were conducted is shown in the table below.

Table 1. Participating Schools and Number of Grade Levels

Schools	Total
Bayugao Elementery School	6
Cagandungan East Elementary School	6
Cagandungan West Primary School	4
Calabigan Primary School	4
Calayucay Primary School	4
Calpacaypayan Primary School	2
Catamoyoan Elementary School	6
Luyon Primary School	4
San Gregorio Primary School	4
San Isidro r Luna Elementary School	6
San Jose Primary School	4
Salvacion Elementary School	4
TOTAL	54

Respondents of the Study

All the 24 multigrade teachers of Luna District of the study were the respondents in this study.

Table 2. Distribution of Participating Schools and Number of Teachers

Schools	No. of Teachers
Bayugao Tribes Elementary School	3
Cagandungan East Elementary School	3
Cagandungan West Primary School	1
Calabigan Primary School	2
Calayucay Primary School	2
Capagaypayan Primary School	1
Catamoyoan Elementary School	2
Luyon Primary School	2
San Gregorio Primary School	2
San Jose Primary School	2
San Isidro Norte Elementary School	1
Salvacion Elementary School	3
TOTAL	24

Research Instrument

The researchers used an unstructured interview, survey questionnaire, observation, secondary data and photo documentation.

An unstructured interview was used. An interview guide was crafted to guide the researcher in the identification and documentation of best practices in multigrade teaching along with the following areas: Classroom Instructional Preparation, Evaluation of Instruction, Professional Growth, School-Community Work, Homeroom Guidance, and Ground Improvement.

The survey questionnaire consists of the profile of the respondents which includes age, civil status, and highest educational attainment, length of service and distance of the residence from the school.

The researcher also utilized observation as data gathering tool. This was conducted during interview sessions with multigrade teachers. Available records such as IPCR, PAST, pupils' records, teachers' records were also taken for secondary data analysis. To substantiate data gathered during interviews and observations, photo documentation was done.

Data Gathering Procedure

In the conduct of this study, the following procedures were undertaken:

The researchers asked permission from the Schools Division Superintendent and the coordinating principal of Luna District. After permission was granted, the copies of the questionnaire were distributed personally by the researcher to the multigrade teachers of Luna District. During the process of administering the questionnaire and interview sessions, observations were conducted to multigrade teachers to identify best practices exhibited by these teachers.

Prior information from the district coordinating principal was sought to identify teachers with exemplary performance in multigrade teaching, and the management of the school. This information gave the researcher the guide in identifying and documenting the best practices employed by multigrade teachers in the district.

The following criteria guided the researcher in identifying the best practices: originality, 45% (novelty of the practice), Effectiveness, 50% (contributory to improving classroom instruction), and cost effective, 5%.

Analysis of Data

Descriptive statistics such as frequency counts and percentage were used to analyze profile of respondents.

Data were presented in narrative form bearing the detailed information on how the best practices of multigrade teaching was conducted. All substantial data were documented using a camera. Pictures were presented in plates and figures with description.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Profile of Multigrade Teachers in Luna District

Table 1. Profile of Multigrade Teachers in Luna district

Variables	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Age	21-25	9	38
	26-30	3	13
	31-35	2	8
	36-40	5	21
	41-45	1	4
	46-50	4	17
Civil Status	Single	6	25
	Married	17	71
	Separated	1	4
Highest Educational Attainment	BEED Graduate	8	33
	BSE Graduate	0	0
	BSE w/ Elem. Units	1	4
	BEED w/ MA Units	10	42
	BSE w/ MA Units	3	13
	MA Graduate	2	8
Length of service	1-11 months	9	38
	1-5 years	8	33
	6-10 years	2	8
	11-15 years	2	8
	16-20 years	3	13
Number of Grade level handled	2	24	100
Distance of Residence from School	1-5 kilometers	13	54
	6-10 kilometers	3	13
	11-15 kilometers	2	8
	16-20 kilometers	4	17
	21-25 kilometers	2	8

Nine (9) or 38% of the respondents are within ages 21-30, followed by 36-40 years old. Majority of them are married and finished Bachelor of Elementary Education and pursued master's degree. Seventeen out of twenty four of the teachers are one to five years in the service. This is due to the common practice of DepEd division office that new recruit teachers are hired to teach in the remote areas to fully expose them beyond their comfort. Accordingly, they will be transferred to better schools after 2 to 3 years of teaching. Eleven teachers out of twenty four live in a distance of six to twenty four kilometers away from the school. This implies that since they come from other Barangays, they are expected to travel in going to schools where they are presently assigned.

Table 2. The Multigrade Schools of Luna, Apayao

School	No. of multigrade	No. of teachers	Location
Bayugao Tribes Elem. School	3	3	Bayugao, Turod
Cagandungan East Elem. School	3	3	Cagandungan East,
Cagandungan West Primary School	1	1	Cagandungan West
Calabigan Primary School	2	2	Calabigan
Calayucay Primary School	2	2	Calayucay
Calpacaypayan Primary School	1	1	Capagaypayan

Catamoyoan Elementary School	2	2	Catamoyoan
Luyon Primary School	2	2	Luyon
San Gregorio Primary School	2	2	San Gregorio
San Isidro Norte Luna Elem. School	1	1	San Jose
San Jose Primary School	2	2	San Isidro Norte
Salvacion Elementary School	3	3	Salvacion

There are twenty four multigrade classes in Luna, Apayao. Most schools has two and three multigrade classes in which combination classes are grades one and two, three and four, and five and six Practices of Mutigrade Teachers in Luna, Apayao

Table 3. Practices of Multigrade Teaching in Luna, Apayao

Practices	Use and Feature
Daily Lesson Log	For time management, DLL is use to as the guidepost sketch of everyday activities.
To Do List"	For time management, listing of daily priority activities.
Shifting Lessons	Evaluation of instruction, in shifting lessons the teacher leave an activity to the other grade while the other class is ongoing.
Use of Para Teachers	Classroom instructional Preparation and management, the teacher will entrust the subject matter to the pupil who understood the lesson well.
Peer Tutoring	Classroom instructional Preparation and management, The higher performing student is paired with a lower performing student to review critical academic or behavioral concepts.
Use of Differentiated Learning Activities	Evaluation of instruction, a process to approach teaching and learning for students of differing abilities in the same class.
Use of Cooperative learning	Evaluation of instruction, it is the instructional practice of placing students into small groups and having them work together toward a common goal. Each group member learns new material and helps other group members learn important information.
The Multiple Intelligences Class	Evaluation of instruction, processing information that can be activated in a cultural setting to solve problems or create products that are of value in a culture.
Instructional Material Sharing	Preparation and utilization of Instructional Materials, Sharing of IMs enables other teachers to collect ideas in improving and even inventing IMs to be used by their colleagues.
Organizing IMs	Preparation and utilization of Instructional Materials, organizing Instructional Materials for daily lessons.
Indigenizing the Curriculum/ use of Mother tongue	Preparation and utilization of Instructional Materials, explanation of lesson by the use of the vernacular if the pupils can't comprehend.
INSETs	Professional Growth, In–Service training program is frequently organized every year to orient new comers or to orient the old ones.
Collaborative Effort between Parents and Teachers in Promoting Projects	School-Community relations, working together for school benefits.
Partition of Class	Classroom instructional Preparation and management, during discussion the teacher will use an improvised divider to avoid disturbance on both grade levels.
Anecdotal Record	Homeroom guidance, anecdotal notes are used to record specific observations of individual student behaviours, skills and attitudes

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	as they relate to the outcomes in the program of studies.
Treatment of Minority (Aetas)	Homeroom guidance, treatment of minority to boost their self-confidence.
Maximization of idle time	Classroom instructional Preparation and management, learners are given opportunity to do more projects during vacant time.

There are seventeen practices of the Multigrade teachers in Luna District these are; the use Daily Lesson Log (DLL), "To Do List" ; Shifting Lessons; Para teacher or the little teachers; Peer Tutoring; Cooperative learning; Multiple Intelligences Class; Instructional Materials (IMs) Resource Sharing; Organizing Instructional Materials (IMs); Indigenizing the Curriculum; attending in Service Training (INSETs); Collaborative Effort between Parents and Teachers in Promoting Projects; Partition of Class; Anecdotal Record; Treatment of the Minority (Aetas) pupils and maximization of idle time

Table 4. Evaluation of School Heads on the Identified Practices Multigrade Teaching in Luna, Apayao

	Criteria			Total	Rank
Practices	Originality 45	Effectiveness 50	Cost 5		
Use of Daily lesson log	36	45	4	85	7
To do lists	42	48	4.5	94.5	1
Para-Teachers	39	47	4.5	90.5	3
Shifting Lessons	38	42	4.2	84.2	8
Cooperative Learning & Peer Tutoring	39	43	4.3	86.3	6
Differentatied Learning Activities	35	44	4	83	9
Multiple Intelligences	40	39	3	82	10
Sharing of Instructional Materials	32	42	4.3	78.3	12
Organizing Ims	31	41	3.1	75.1	13
Indigensizing the Curriculum	32	38	3.1	73.1	14
INSET	29	40	3.2	72.2	16
PTA-School Project collaboration	29	40	3.3	72.3	15
Partition of classes	41	45.5	3.5	90	4
Anecdotal Record	42	43	3.2	88.2	5
Treatment of Minority	40	38	3.8	81.8	11
Maximization of idle time	40	47	4.5	91.5	2

The four best practices having a rating of 90 and above from the school heads are 1.) "To Do List 2.) Maximization of Idle Time,3.) Para Teachers, and 4.) Partition of class.

The 'To Do List"

The "to do list" is a listing daily activities. Activities are listed in chronological order in the order of priority or importance. One of the most important reasons for keeping a to-do list is the organization. Organizing your tasks with a list can make everything much more manageable and make you feel grounded. Seeing a clear outline of your completed and uncompleted tasks will help you feel organized and stay mentally focused. Having a list of all your tasks will allow you to sit down and make a plan. One study showed that fifteen minutes spent planning could save an hour of execution time!

"*As a Teacher In Charge and a Grade five and six adviser, there's a lot of things for me to prepare. I usually forget things, that's why I was encouraged to use To Do list, and I found out that it is effective. Before I usually pass our school reports late at the District office kasanu ngamin agsasanga ti maubra (there's a lot of things to be done), I really don't know what to do then, but when I used To Do List I can submit our school reports on time and I used to identify my priorities",* says teacher Joemer Lumbo the Teacher In Charge of Salvacion Elementary School. *"If you want to save*

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time, used To Do List", says Teacher Lorna Gamos, *Handling double grade means double work,* she continued..*"Without planning and listing the priorities, you will waste time. Just like me when I'm still new in the service as a Multigrade teacher, I really don't know what to prepare first, I even pray and ask the creator why me? I wanted to escape, but I have no choice but to find a way on how to manage my time wisely and properly. Until such time that I learn about this, "To Do List". When I apply it, I can see the effect of doing things in order, according to priorities. I prepared Instructional Materials, DLL, and reports on time smoothly and according to priorities.*

Maximization of idle time

Idle time is unproductive time and it is associated with waiting. This should not be observed in classes. Maximizing learners' time can contribute to orderliness in class. To keep students busy during in between or vacant time, students are given opportunity to do some projects like making of "stick broom", "seat cover" out of cut plastic and more. All of the combined pupils are involved in this project, after furnishing this will be sold and serve as a classroom fund. With this, the learner's social skills will develop.

Pupils, especially in higher grade are encourage to play chess, Sci-Damath, word factory, and scrabble to improve their vocabulary and social skills. Maximization of idle time is also important in maintaining good mental and physical health. Pupils' learn by themselves through independent learning forming an interactive learning community [18]

Dimmalus ti aglawlaw mi manipud idi kanayon kami nga agkarkartib ti plastic para ti project mi, says Mark John Omotoy one of the grade four pupil of Luyon Primary School. *Ilako mi dagitoy sagad nga maaramid mi diay market tapos nu malako minton usaren mi a kas pundo ti classroom, isu nukua igatang ni Ma'ami ti floor wax ken pag kaan mi nukuanu adda ti okasyon ditoy iskwela,* he added.

According to teacher Marilou Barroga, she observed that most of the learners learned to be more responsible and disciplined because of the activity that they are doing. Ocampo, et. al suggested cooperative learning as one strategy to minimize grammar error in English[19] *"nagbalin da nga responsible, instead nga mapan da agay-ayam, mapan da latta agkartib, agbirok ti mapidot wenno saan agay-ayam da ti chess (they became responsible, instead of playing they choose to make school projects and played).*

Para-teacher

The teacher entrusts the lesson to the pupil who understood the lesson well. This is very effective in lessons that develops skills such as reading, counting, arithmetic and others. She then allows the others to be taught by the said pupil. Students learn how to help one another and themselves. At an early age, students are expected to develop independence. The effective multigrade teacher establishes a climate to promote and develop this independence. For example, when young students enter the classroom for the first time, they receive help and guidance not only from the teacher, but from older students. In this way, they also learn that the teacher is not the only source of knowledge *(ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools Charleston WV).*

The Little teacher or para teacher in class helps me in many ways. I let them teach their classmates who are struggling. During vacant time, I usually instruct her to gather her classmates and teach them something. *Example, i-paskil nukua or i- prepare ko nukua tay tarpapel (stories/ poem) diay blackboard nga naubrak tapos ibagak lattan ken little teacher nga ipabasana kanyada,"* says Teacher Joemer Lumbo. When Teacher Jennifer used this practice too, she noticed that her pupils improved especially in reading,*" Limmaing da nga agbasa"* (they improved in reading), *ken immadu pay ti time ko nga agarmid ti sabali nga maubra* (I have a lot of time to do other things)",

Partition of Classes

It is a good practice applied by Salvacion Elementary School to divide or to put a partition during discussion. This is to avoid disturbance on both grade levels that leads them to concentrate on their own works. Teacher Razie Batay-an says, "*As a new multigrade teacher, I'm struggling on how to handle the pupils' behavior especially during discussion, they usually play and disturb the other grade. Especially that I'm handling grade one and two pupils. At first I don't know what is the use of the movable divider. Ti ammok ket bulletin board laeng (all I know is just a plain bulletin board). Only to find out that this was used by teacher Shery Ann Baria to divide the class during discussion. She was the former teacher here at Salvacion Elemenatry School. Double purpose gayam,(for double purposes) bulletin board same time for*

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partition of classes. When I try to use it I see changes, a lot of changes. Both grades became more focus on their work. I seldom scold my pupils. Oh diba mayat? Usarek met atoy improvise divider ko ah, Said Sheryl Otrillo. *I found it effective during discussion so that they can focus more on their work. Uray they are already in grade three and four mayat latta.*

4. SUMMARY

1. There are twenty four multigrade teachers in Luna District, all of them are handling two Grade levels each.

2. The multigrade teachers of Luna are relatively young and they are in their prime years of teaching, nine of them are teaching multigrade for less than a year; eight of them are teaching for one – five years; two are teaching for six to ten years; two are teaching for eleven to fifteen years; and three of the respondents are teaching for about sixteen to twenty years. Majority are married. Most of the teachers finished a degree of Bachelor of Elementary Education and pursued masteral degree. All of the teachers handled two grade levels. Most of them live quite a distance for five to twentyfive kilometers away from school.

3.There are sixteen practices of the Multigrade Teachers in Luna District applied these are the use of Daily Lesson Log (DLL), "To Do List" , Shifting Lessons, use of Para teacher or the little teachers, Cooperative learning and Peer Tutoring, Multiple Intelligences Class, Instructional Materials (IMs) Resource Sharing, Organizing Instructional Materials (IMs), Indigenizing the Curriculum, attending INSETs; Collaborative Effort between Parents and Teachers in Promoting Projects, Partition of Class, the use of Anecdotal Record, Treatment of the Minority (Aetas) pupils and maximization of idle time.

4. As the school heads of Luna District evaluated these sixteen practices of the Multigrade teacher, here are the four best practices: To Do List, Maximization of Idle Time, para teachers, the use of partition boards.

5. CONCLUSION

Considering the foregoing findings, the researcher arrived to the following conclusion:

The manner the multigrade teachers, apply the best practices in teaching affects the academic performance of the pupils.

There are seventeen (17) practices in teaching the multigrade in Luna District these are; the use Daily Lesson Log (DLL), "To Do List" ; Shifting Lessons; Para teacher or the little teachers; Peer Tutoring; Cooperative learning; Multiple Intelligences Class; Instructional Materials (IMs) Resource Sharing; Organizing Instructional Materials (IMs); Indigenizing the Curriculum; attending in Service Training (INSETs); Collaborative Effort between Parents and Teachers in Promoting Projects; Partition of Class; Anecdotal Record; Treatment of the Minority (Aetas) pupils and maximization of idle time. These practices are helpful in delivering their daily lessons.

As evaluated by the head teachers of Luna District, the four best practices that was practiced by the multigrade teachers are; "To Do List, Maximization of Idle Time, Para Teachers, and the Partition of class.

Recommendations

Based on the foregoing findings and conclusion the researcher offers the following recommendations:

1. Package the documented best practices in the form of a Learning resource materials for other teachers and beginner teacher including preservice teachers to use as additional reference materials,

2. Disseminate the documented practices in meetings, lack sessions, seminars, conferences and for a multigrade teachers are encouraged to apply the documented best practices of other schools for the attainment of educational goals and objectives,

3. Test the effectiveness of the documented best practices if it is suitable to monograde classes and multicultural classes, and

4. Similar study should be conducted to account other best practices in Multigrade teaching in the province.

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