

## The Pedagogical Competencies of Multi-Grade Teachers: A Literature Review

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**Abstract:** According to Anya (2013), multi-grade teaching may be defined as a process of teaching in which a single teacher teaches more than one grade at the same time and condition. The multi-grade approach can be analyzed with small-grade teaching, where an instructor is in charge of only a single grade in a multi-grade teaching order, which is arranged level-wise. The major aim of the study was to provide an understanding of Multi-Grade teaching. The major objectives of the current literature review were to provide the historical perspective of multi-grade teaching, to highlight the competencies of Multi-Grade school teachers, and to highlight the importance of multi-grade teaching with the consequence of the literature review. According to Siddiqi (2012), the aims of education are applied by instructors, and teaching design is a way to change this method and practice from instructor to learners. On the basis of the review, it was concluded (Moeini et al., 2016) that most elementary schools have almost one or two teachers who manage five classes at a time, which shows the pedagogical and professional competency of the teachers. It was further recommended that Due to the pedagogical competencies of teachers, the task is not difficult, but there is a need for regular training with incentives for the teachers to motivate them for such type of professional attitude.

**Keywords:** Multi-Grade Teachers, Pedagogical Competencies, Instructor, Education, Learners

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### Introduction

Ben Peretz (2011) argued about the differences that there is harmony among researchers, which has the most positive impact on multi-grade teachers and their knowledge. Various scholars in the past have defined teacher knowledge by combining two levels: (i) multi-grade teachers' knowledge and (ii) Knowledge of general pedagogical principles and techniques and competencies of subject issues to be taught.

### Objective of the Study

The objective of the study will be as follows under

1. To review the historical perspective of multi-grade teaching and the competencies of elementary school teachers
2. To highlight the importance of Multigrade teaching with the consequence of a literature review

### Historical Overview of Multi-Grade Teaching in Pakistan

Khan (2010) argued that Pakistan is an undeveloped country and has the majority of the population. Pakistan is one of the biggest territories in the world, and half its population lives in rustical regions. The majority of the people are

illiterate and not properly guided. Educational training about the importance of multi-grade teaching is compulsory, according to Mulryan-Kyne (2004), an area that is physically and from a population point of view disadvantaged and is subjected to less population density, being separate and difficult to reach in terms of transportation, communities, and foundation. Multi-grade teaching is the quality of such a region. The small number of students has created such classrooms having many grades in one room, which means the grade of elementary schools, which are supervised by a single teacher to educate students of diverse grades in a single room, is very painstaking due to which the performance of teachers is not satisfactory. The reports of UNESCO (2015) show that multi-grade teaching is a type of teaching in which one instructor teaches students of double or more than one grade or level.

According to Veenman (1995), in Pakistan, the government supports having complete chances of education for every child living in the territory. In command to such achievements, multi-grade teaching is very helpful in rustical regions where there is a lack of elementary schools. Multi-grade teaching is teaching a condition from class one to class 5th, and more than a single grade is taught by a single teacher. According to Warwick (1989), 58% of elementary schools are eligible to adopt a multi-grade school system in Pakistan. Shah et al. (2011) stated that the multi-grade teacher's professional development program in Pakistan can be sketched back to 1804 when two departments for proper training were established in Lahore and Karachi, and these departments delivered non-formal teacher practical and proper professional training programs.

During 1854, the departments at Karachi were in normal condition and were offered Junior Vernacular certificates. The department at Lahore opened different institutions. According to Siddique (2004), in Pakistan, after independence on 14th August 1947, there were a total of twenty-two teachers in the multi-grade training department. The admission criteria for enrollment in these programs were high and elementary education. When the proper practices and completion of professional training the professional trainees were completed, the institute awarded two types of professional certificates: Junior Vernacular (J.V) and Senior Vernacular (S.V). Furthermore, the J. V. certified were qualified as primary school teachers, while those having S.V. were eligible for teaching at the elementary level (Ahmed, 2012).

According to Heafner (2019), multi-grade teachers need pedagogical training and professional development, which play the most important role in learning achievements. Hooegeveen et al. (2009) argue that multi-grade teachers with an optimistic moral character towards pupils, which is very positive and should be the goal of their teaching. It would be the performance of the multi-grade teacher's pedagogical competencies and best quality and professional development that shape the student's ideas. Shulman (1987) says that the pedagogical competencies contain many strategies in multi-grade teaching, which are connected to pupils' misconceptions. The writer has listed many other approaches to multi-grade pedagogy, such as conditional knowledge and norms of teaching practices under the umbrella of teaching pedagogical training.

Little (2001) argues that in his investigation, many reasons in situations education at different territories have been developed into multi-grade teaching for the purpose of those who have employed it for pedagogical competencies. Many instructors did hard work in the world, and multi-grade teaching outlined their work, but no attention is given to the proper system of multi-grade teaching in schools by education institutions. According to (Ahmad et al., 2020), multi-grade teacher education refers to the analysis of educational training developments from different perspectives of instructors as they make the record of the multi-grade classroom for the first time. She stated that multi-grade teaching practices satisfied both the theoretical and practical practices required for teaching conditions.

According to Funtua (2015), multi-grade teaching is student-centered in a classroom in which students learn across one to double, and more levels are taught by the same instructor at the same condition. According to (Birch & Lally, 1995 Anya, 2013), multi-grade instruction involves teaching students who are in multiple modules in a single grade through a single teacher. This condition usually interacts with classes with each other, such as class prep (1<sup>st</sup>) to 4<sup>th</sup> in a few territories such as Pakistan and Australia, and it can interact with groups learning up to 6<sup>th</sup> grade. As Juvane (2005) declares, the study of a multi-grade teaching curriculum for the instruction of learners in the different



levels in a single classroom at the same condition with a single teacher required for all levels. Multi-grade teaching has become one of the major topics of all tasks on the teaching professional agenda. According to Aziz (2012), the Pakistani education system does not meet the aims and many challenges related to the curriculum and teaching process. There are numerous pieces of research on the overall impact of multi-grade teaching and pedagogical competencies at the elementary level. Very critical and social techniques can be seen in the overall Pakistani education system.

According to Titus (2004), multi-grade teachers communicate different traits of various instructors who are unprofessional in one-grade pedagogy. Moreover, Mansoor (2011) argues that in Pakistan, the multi-grade method of teaching an instructor of pupils teaches from class one to class 6th. A single classroom is used for students learning. The enrollment ratio might be dependable in showing 60 percent of pupils in only a single classroom. According to studies, a positive multi-grade method of a combined classroom allows for the expansion of social techniques as the instructor engages and combines through instructors and shares different discoveries. Multi-grade pedagogical and social competence in the growth of older children drop out of their position as instructors and develops new younger students drop out their opportunity to critical observation and moral characters of their older class fellows. It creates a less practical experience for students in the multi-grade setting in a classroom context. Brown (2010) argued that multi-grade terms identify and investigate the multi-grade system and method to discover the difference in psychological realization when there is a conflict with multi-grade levels. According to Murkatik (2020), multi-grade teachers must have professional aptitude categorized into two levels: academic and pedagogical. Multi-grade academic competence is the instructor's content knowledge of the subject, and multi-grade pedagogical competence refers to the teacher's professional training.

### **Multi-Grade Teacher's Pedagogical Competencies**

According to Snyder and Anderson (1986), multi-grade teachers play a key role in classroom instruction activities that impact the achievements of pupils. Teacher's pedagogical competencies are the capabilities to achieve learning objectives, which combine provision, implementation, and critical assessment of the taught. These multi-grade competencies should be maintained by every teacher in order to achieve the goal of learning and teaching objectives. The professionals deal with the educational level of multi-grade combined tasks with the outcome fundamental basic, curriculum, identification of psycho perspective readiness significance of program, classroom, and evaluation, as well as multi-grade feedback.

According to research, the multi-grade pedagogical competencies are attached to the teacher's impact on the teaching and learning levels of classroom management and the instructor's communicative ways of developing classroom conditions. As Katāne et al. (2006) argue, multi-grade teachers' competencies are most importantly assessed so that the pedagogical competencies of multi-grade teachers should be conditioned and connected with the growth of the entire life of students and the education system. According to Habib et al. (2023), pedagogical competencies are defined as the set of knowledge, techniques, and practical experiences needed for future planning and to enhance the capability of teaching and learning. As Selvi (2010) discussed, the main purpose of education is changing very quickly depending on the requirements of the region; therefore, the grade teachers are responsible for operating educational levels to equip powerful impact of professional competencies.

As Stronge (2018) discussed in the qualities of effective teachers, the multi-grade pedagogical competencies need instructors who are ready to teach 21st-century learners. They analyze psychological frameworks and add a variety of related competencies that are required for the improvement of teachers. This design and framework setting still misses a few related competencies that are considered fundamental in the current situation of multi-grade education.

### **Academic Performance of Students through the Multi-Grade Teachers**

Due to pedagogical competencies, the academic performance of students, like grades, in the classroom test can be affected. The reason for the impact on marks and standardized test grades is for the future to evaluate student's



academic capability, and there is a correlation between the grades of students and the performance of multi-grade teachers. The scores vary, and prophecy is made from the pupil's performance and personality aspects Duong et al., (2016). As Dutta (2017) argued, student's academic performance and results differ due to the impact of their teacher's pedagogical competency. According to Garcia (2010), a friendly relationship with the pupils of the instructor often leads to the growth of students' academic performance because the connection between students and teachers makes a precious and positive impact and motivates the students regarding their academic performance due to the multi-grade teachers. In this context, Yunus (2011) argued that the multi-grade optimistic relationship between teacher and student increases the motivational level of the students and also develops their academic performance. They succeed in their grades in those subjects that are taught by their true and beloved instructor. It means that a close connection between a student and his teacher helps and motivates him in learning performance.

Angela (2004) stated that a multi-grade frame of education is the best selection for pedagogical technique in far-flung areas where the population is lower than in other areas. Mostly, one or two teachers are chosen to teach all the primary classes; if the educational sector has a large number of students detached in separate classes in the area of education, then a grade teaching methodology is best. Very few teachers supervise and direct the multi-grade classes, with few staff members to teach mono-grade classes. Multi-grade teaching skills are on a priority basis where the statistics of teaching members are not up to mark, and the population is increasing very fast. UNESCO distributed a thorough report on the multi-class design of education in Pakistan. Jamaladini et al.(2022) have stated that an approach that has immediate effect must be keenly implemented to produce a sudden and strong increase in student participation in schooling and training of the teachers to perfect multi-grade conditions. Multilevel schooling ensures that instructors control small villages, and this is possible if teachers are professionally trained to teach multi-grade classes and provide assistance in producing clear lesson plans and multi-grade stage outline schedules.

### **Multi-Grade Curriculum Planning**

According to Little's research study (2001), in most of the territories with developing economies, curricula that are relevant to multi-grade teaching are professionally practiced. Such instructors, when practicing multi-grade teaching, find it difficult to practice in real classroom situations and feel psychological pressure during teaching time in such setups. Moreover, Juvane (2005) and Little (2005) highlighted that multi-grade materials are accumulated together in a booklet that is individually made for the curriculum, which is to be shown. The outlines related to the teaching techniques were further added and included. For multi-grade teachers, the curriculum is also challenging because such instructors need content written individually.

As cited by Knaub (2016), Bandy (1980) conducted a research study and surveyed 500 teachers and 50 school teachers and highlighted the following perceptions of school principals of multi-grade teaching;

- a. Multi-grade Teachers need needs for small class outline
- b. outlines grade Teachers must be trained to teach multi-grade classrooms.
- c. Teachers must be prepared how to use this system
- d. Non-experience should work jointly with the experienced.

In contrast, the perceptions of Multi-Grade classroom teachers were;

- a. Teachers must be well. Organized to teach.
- b. Teachers should be trained in cross-age guidance.
- c. Social studies and science required special heed.
- d. The teacher is required to enhance the reading ability of the students.

### **Classroom Management**

The classroom is like the practical room of the school, where the different tasks are performed by the pupils and the instructor. The contributors declared that classroom management is a huge issue because the mono-grade system of the classroom, a single-grade, and a multi-grade classroom setting, is one that needs a strategy of unity and

management. Even partakers shared their practical experience in setting up the classes and divided them into three sections, like class ECE and sections one, two, and three sections in grade two sections, and grade three and four in the third section. As Enayati, Zameni, and Movahedian (2016) discussed regarding the management of classroom activities, they suggest that combined group tasks should be assigned to the students, and the teacher should keenly monitor the activity and the performance of the students Minaz, Tabassum, and Idris (2017). For instance, during that time, the instructor plans another activity before completing all the activities. Because of the mentioned technique method, classroom management is easily attained, and the learning outcomes are attained by the students. According to Muthambi (2016), a peer-teaching plan to manage multi-grade classrooms and develop the performance of the pupils in those classes is very much necessary.

### **Curriculum Structure**

According to Taole (2017), curriculum is the basic pillar for schools and teachers. An instructor is the Implementer of the curriculum in the class as the multi-grade situation of the class is perfectly different from the mono-grade, so it requires a different outline. Recently, the curriculum has addressed only mono-grade classes. The topics have small arrangements, which create key stoppages for teachers of multiple classes within a limited time. The curriculum of multi-grade classes requires such topics that are combined, and it is easy to choose a topic for multi-grade classes.

### **Multi-grade and Multi-age**

As Mulcahy (2000) stated, multi-grade teaching is a mix of single-grade and multi-age education systems. Hoffman (2003) argues that the multi-grade teaching method is closely aligned with that of multi-age teaching but with the instruction of an inflicted syllabus and evaluation techniques. Multi-age teaching produces positive growth and professional practice, which is based on good instruction. Pupils are given worth in what they learn and do. In a multi-age group, there is a shortage of grade design and divisions among kids, most of whom are three years old. According to Mulry-Kyne (2004), multi-grade teachers who are positive and successful teach a single grade. Realization is largely related to the one that is considerate and gratitude of multi-grade attitude to the education system is obtained.

### **The Multi-Grade Teacher's Content Knowledge**

As Menon and Rao (2006) stated, multi-grade schools have been based on their knowledge, and they have an understanding of the urban area of their country, namely, different institutions consisting of only single classes. This condition is different from that in developmental countries where single-grade schools are also shown with norms. For all reasons, both the teachers and parents in more developmental territories view the daily local multi-grade schools. All parents in the improved territories generally have a positive view of the rural multi-grade schools. Hill et al. (2008) argue that multi-grade teachers' content knowledge means having skillful and important knowledge that is understandable. Teachers should have command of what they teach. According to Table (2017), the course contents are the basic tool of the teacher on categorical and specific argument material and ground to be learned. It allows teachers to frame the curriculum outline of ethical conditions and a broad understanding of the life of the learners.

### **The Multi-Grade Teachers Pedagogical Knowledge and Training**

The teacher's pedagogical knowledge and training are based on the teaching of professional methods, which connect the classroom to the learning process. Applying unrelated skills in pedagogy and class discipline, class activity, and pupil enrolment at the school teaching style through pedagogical method and learning is for pupils in every learning aspect of development (Ahmad et al., 2020). According to Hume, Cooper, and Borowski (2019), the multi-grade teacher experience and training are conducted to influence and change pupil learning. Teacher knowledge has always been intensive and focused on teaching technique and pedagogical knowledge and the power to apply the teaching-learning aspect to the growth of the pupils and learning becomes effective for the achievement of the goals. Pedagogical knowledge brings effective and positive outcomes to the learning process.



### **The Student-Centered Approach of Multi-Grade Teaching**

Multi grade Teachers have a true belief in teaching learning practice, teacher education, class room instruction guideline and responsibility, student manner and attitude. The learning aspect behind the classroom is complicated in this type of approach. This approach involves student not only in learning different aspects being taught but also in how it should be implemented in their learning Wood (2007). According to Piasta, Connor, Fishman, and Morrison (2009), the multi-grade teacher approach is the only platform for student learning change and principle and the responsibility to produce new education to create effective learning. The student-centered approach improves student learning and understanding to achieve better outcomes.

### **The Multi-Grade Teacher-Centered Approach**

Kim (2005) suggested that the teacher always tries his best to create good students through motivation and guidance for the learning process. This approach is for the teachers to teach the students in the learning process to understand the contents easily. It is one of the significant sources for supporting information and letting the student learn easily. According to McCutchen, Abbott, Green, Beretvas, Cox, Potter, and Gray (2002), the teacher with the best control in classroom instruction is to connect the students with a better learning process. The multi-grade teachers' approach to the development of the students creates active learning, while the passive teaching-learning process for students creates knowledge of the students, and they understand all things, and the students are able to achieve their learning achievements.

### **Conclusion**

It was concluded from the above review that 21<sup>st</sup>-century teachers have dynamic roles and multiple skills that they serve as competent to build up the nation Idris, Minaz & Khan, (2022). According to Bachmann (2018), multi-grade teachers must be professionally trained and must have good experience in what they prepare for training and absorbing to go well. The pedagogical competencies, especially during multi-grade teaching, are raised by professional training and the capacity to recognize emerging trends in the field of education.

It was also concluded that multi-grade teaching at the primary level in the education system of Pakistan faces challenges for many reasons (Khan, 2010). The most highlighted challenge is related to elementary education, which is the number of teachers in urban areas and rural regions; an elementary teacher is placed in a school where he has to teach three to five classes. For that reason, it is not possible for a single teacher to maintain the classroom and even the school activities efficiently. Generally, they don't complete the courses on time, and a little part of the curriculum is covered in these situations Jakachira and Muchabaiwa, (2023).

### **Recommendations**

It is recommended from the above review that government make serious efforts to promote multi-grade teaching and design the curriculum for the achievement of long-term objectives.

Due to the pedagogical competencies of teachers the task is not difficult but there is need of regular training with incentives for the teachers to motivate them for such type of professional attitude.



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