A Handbook for Teachers of Multi-Grade Classes

Volume One

Improving Performance at the Primary Level

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UNESCO

Preface

A Handbook for Teachers of Multi-Grade Classes

Every child has a right to an education. Multi-grade classes and single teacher schools have made it possible for many children in remote rural areas and communities to exercise this right. These classes exist in both developing and developed countries. In countries such as Norway and France, they have worked reasonably well. However, in many developing countries, these classes and schools often lack educational materials, appropriately trained teachers and effective supervision. The teachers rarely receive training in how to deal with them, and are ill-prepared for managing large numbers of pupils, of different ages and levels of learning, that they confront in the classes.

If progress is to be made towards Education for All, the challenges of multi-grade classes and single teacher schools must be urgently met. Children in small communities must have access to good quality education. This is very relevant to children in widely dispersed communities, girls, who for reasons of security, must attend school near their residences, ethnic groups that prefer their children to be educated in their location as well as children living in mountainous and hard to reach areas. To this end, in co-operation with various institutions, UNESCO conducted a series of case studies in fourteen countries namely: Australia, Bolivia, Burkina Faso, China, Korea, France, Greece, Lesotho, Mali, the Philippines, Portugal, Tanzania, Russia and Zaire. Following this experience, UNESCO, jointly with the Royal Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs in Norway, initiated a programme to enhance the effectiveness of multi-grade classes and single-teacher schools. On the basis of information gained through the case studies, an inter-regional workshop on "Single-Teacher Schools and Multi-grade classes" was held in Lillehammer, Norway 2 to 6 September 1996.

The participants were drawn from the countries in which the studies were undertaken. Norway was considered an apt partner because of its long history of offering education in small effective schools. The participants discussed the issues of multi-grade classes and single teacher schools and decided that it was necessary to prepare a handbook based on the experiences of the countries. The two volumes of this handbook reflect the shared experiences of the workshop. They are not intended to replace existing materials in use in formal teacher education courses, but for use in the in-service training of teachers working in multi-grade schools, and as a handy daily reference book for them.

The Handbook for Teachers of Multi-Grade Classes

The Handbook went through a process of development, with a view to ensure that it is interactive and user friendly. It comprises ten units, each one consisting of common experiences, cases to reviewed, activities to carry out, possible responses, and a summary of what has been learnt. The approach is essentially practical rather than theoretical, and is designed to help in dealing with the day-to-day problems that multi-grade teachers face. As these schools often serve defined communities and most times there is little support from the government, emphasis is given to the need to develop close partnerships between the school and the community. This relationship not only promotes self -reliance in the provision of additional manpower and material resources, but also ensures that local learning priorities are respected and met, and that the partnership is mutually beneficial.

The reasons for establishing multi-grade classes are elaborated, and their advantages and disadvantages described. Teachers are shown how they can acquire skills, strategies and the confidence they need to work in such schools, and build the necessary partnerships, not only with the local community (its leaders as well as the parents), but also with other teachers working in similar schools. They are also encouraged to exercise initiative and imagination in adapting their teaching to the more challenging situation in which they are required to work. Advice is also given on how to obtain more support from the government and various ministries.

Suggestions are provided in the Handbook on how to modify and adapt the national curriculum, in order to meet local priorities and needs, arrange the classroom to accommodate different learning levels, organize relevant learning experiences, identify and obtain any teaching aids available in the local environment, keep careful records and monitor and evaluate students' progress.

Using the Handbook for Teachers in Multi-Grade Classes

Areas Covered

A single unit deals with only one topic. The units cover such areas as "What are multi-grade classes", "Partnerships", "Government and Peer Support", The Educational Environment", "Curriculum adaptation", "Learning Experiences", "Teaching and Learning Materials" and Monitoring, Record-keeping and Evaluation".

Cases

Each unit presents one or more cases taken from a number of multi-grade schools. This enables the teacher to become familiar with the various types of problems and challenges that may be encountered and the possible ways of dealing with them. These may include such areas as the environment in which the school is located, the teacher's concern about his or her development, the need for funds to improve school facilities, relations with parents and school absenteeism, etc. The problems highlighted are intended to be those with which the teacher may readily identify, and to which solutions must be found. They also provide references, which enable the teacher to understand that the difficulties that he, or she meets are by no means unique or unusual.

Activities

The active involvement in the learning process is essential if the necessary skills are to be acquired. This is achieved by posing a series of questions on multi-grade teaching to which answers are to be given. These may be related to the experiences in the teacher's own school or may refer to the case presented or other items found in the text. The activities are meant to create a positive attitude in teachers towards the identification and solution of problems.

Possible Responses

These enable the user of the Handbook to check whether the responses given to the questions posed as Activities are appropriate or not, and to expand further on the information given.

Summary

Each unit ends with a summary of the main points dealt with, and introduces the following one.

This Handbook will be available in hard copies and on-line from the Primary Education website, http://www.unesco.org/education/educprog/primary_edu/CADindex.html. It is hoped that teachers of multi-grade classes and single teacher schools will benefit and will also take time out to keep UNESCO informed of some of the challenges that persist and ways in which they can be addressed.
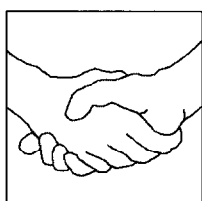
UNESCO wishes to take this opportunity to thank all those who contributed to make this Handbook a reality. However, special mention should be made of the participating countries, the Royal Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs in Norway, the Norwegian National Commission to UNESCO, the Jamaican team led by June Wallace, and John Allen.

Contents

Welcome

Welcome to the *Handbook for Teachers of Multi-Grade Classes!* As a teacher in these classes/schools, you normally face more challenges and constraints than a teacher in a single-grade class. Because of several factors, such as the larger number of students in a single class, the presence of several learning levels within a class, or the remote location of these types of schools, multi-grade teaching requires additional skills, over and above those which you already have as a normal regular teacher.

This *Handbook* was prepared as supplementary training material to help you meet the challenges, and overcome the constraints. It will also help you to confirm, and strengthen, the significant role that you play in providing education and improving literacy.

**Read on, and continue your role
in providing Education for All!**

This *Handbook* is prepared for teachers who are, or who will be, teaching multi-grade classes. It is intended to suggest strategies, which will be helpful in managing and teaching such classes. It does not replace teacher training, but is intended to supplement formal training.

Although this handbook is designed for use in the group training of multi-grade teachers, it can also be a useful resource for individual teachers. It should be kept handy for daily reference.

Objectives

After going through both Volumes of the *Handbook*, you should be able to:
* List the advantages and constraints of small schools;

- Explain the inter-relationships between the school and the national and local environment;
- Foster partnerships between your school and the community, and use these partnerships to benefit both;
- Establish peer collaboration to improve pedagogy and morale;
- Adapt the curriculum to reflect the needs of the community, and prepare lesson plans and a timetable;
- Compare and contrast the different strategies for teaching and organizing learning experiences;
- Create various learning environments for your pupils;
- Identify the different sources of teaching and learning materials in the environment; and
- Keep records of your pupils' progress and evaluate their performance.

Content

This *Handbook* is divided into two Volumes. Volume One covers your role as a teacher and Volume Two covers the more technical aspects of multi-grade teaching. Volume One comprises Unit One to Unit Five, while Volume Two comprises Units Six to Eleven. Below is a brief description of the topics covered.
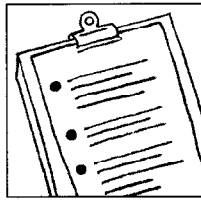
Introduction – This introduces you to the nature and objectives of this *Handbook*.

1. **What Are Multi-Grade Classes?** – This section attempts to provide a broad introduction to the term 'multi-grade classes'.

2. **The Challenge of Multi-grade Classes** – explains the existence of multi-grade classes, and describes the roles and the constraints faced by the teachers in those classes.

3. **Partnerships** – discusses the options available for utilizing available resources through partnerships with the surrounding community, and shows how the partnership between the school and the community can benefit both parties.

4. **Government and Peer Support** – covers such areas as professional development, and ways in which teachers can support each other, and facilitate short term training in multi-grade applications, and describes how government and peer support

can help alleviate the isolation, and lack of support, felt by multi-grade teachers.

5. **Educational Environment** – adresses the impact of the educational environment, both national and local, on single-teacher schools and multi-grade classes.

6. **Curriculum Development** – provides suggestions on how to modify the curriculum, and develop lesson plans and timetables.

7. **Learning Experiences** – discusses different strategies for teaching and organizing learning experiences, and offers information on their advantages and disadvantages.

8. **Management of Classes** – provides suggestions on two main aspects of the management of your classes, namely: how to arrange the actual physical environment (the classroom), and how to organize your pupils' learning environment.

9. **Teaching and Learning Sources** – identifies the different sources of teaching and learning materials in the environment, and gives some suggestions on how teachers can produce their own materials and use them.

10. **Monitoring, Record-Keeping and Evaluation** – covers essential aspects of monitoring, the record-keeping of students' progress, and evaluation.

11. **Management of Large Classes** – covers some suggestions on how teachers can manage large classes, and small groups within those classes.
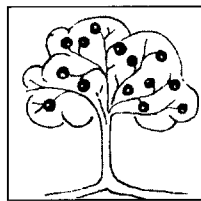
Structure of the Handbook

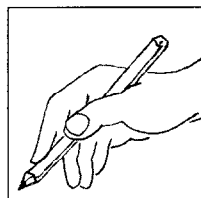Each Unit opens with the **Content** to provide a broad overview.
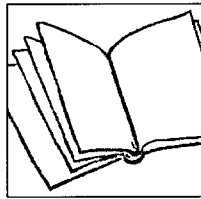
There is a **Case** which illustrates, in a real-life situation, the concepts which will be discussed in the topic. The case is introduced with an open book logo.

The content comprises sub-topics, which are introduced in big, bold, italicized print for easy reference, and specific headings within the sub-topics are highlighted in bold print.

To enhance your experience, **Activities** are provided for each topic, and even for sub-topics. These activities allow you to apply immediately the concepts that you have just learned, and help you to build the needed skills. Activities are introduced with a fruit-bearing tree logo.

Activities are followed by **Possible Responses** to provide a stimulus for your thoughts. Responses are identified with the logo on the left.

Each unit ends with a **Summary** of the main points.

A transition to the next topic is then provided, to ensure a smooth flow from topic to topic: **The Next Unit**.

Unit One:
What are Multi-Grade Classes?

A Multi-Grade Class with three arrangements of desks: the chalkboard is on the left.

Content

Case 1.1: Reaching
    one Multi-Grade School
Grading
Multi-Grade Classes
Where are they found?
Why do they exist?

Case 1.1
Reaching one Multi-Grade School

The school inspector is going to visit Thaba Limphe Primary School. He leaves his office at the District Headquarters by 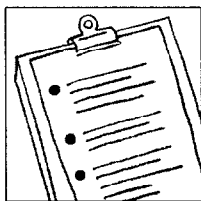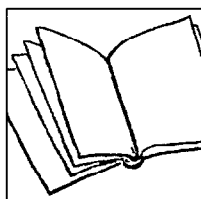public bus, and travels into the mountains for four hours. When he descends from the bus, he can see the school on the mountain-side, but he still has to go a long distance. Fortunately, he finds a villager who is prepared to rent him a horse. He rides down to a river, which is low at this time of the year, so that he can cross without getting wet. Last year, some people were drowned on their way to the school. A flash flood occurred when they were crossing the river.

Climbing from the river, the inspector follows a track along a mountain ridge surrounded by cattle-posts and small fields. On the side of the mountains, he sees small homesteads of a few huts and trees. It is around 4 o'clock, and children are coming back from school. Some children have to walk more than one hour from school to their homes, where chores, such as milking the cows and fetching water, await them.

The inspector finally reaches the school building, which consists of three rooms. The teachers welcome him, and offer him some tea and biscuits from the school kitchen. The inspector will

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stay the night in the classroom, because there is no room at the head teacher's home, which is a small one-room hut. During the night, they discuss the problems of teaching the curriculum in a way which is relevant to the pupils. The teachers complain about the lack of materials and other resources. The next day the inspector continues his round on horseback for another four hours to reach the next remote school.

The Nature of Multi-Grade Classes

Grading

Grading, as a means of separating groups of students, was probably introduced in the 1800s. The grade, then, quickly became the unit of organization in the school, or any educational institution.

As a way of determining when a child was ready to move on, and as one of the indicators of curricular achievement, grade levels were tied to age.

One class comprises students at one grade level. However one grade level, depending on the size of the school, may have several classes, all of which belong to the same grade level, although not all students may perform at the same level of competence.

Multi-Grade Classes

Assumptions are made about the ages when students enter and leave the primary School system. However, not all students perform at the same level. Some students do not perform well and repeat a grade, while others enter the school system at an earlier age. Multi-grade classes are frequently found at schools, as shown in the Case1.1, in very rural or remote communities, where populations are scattered. In those areas there are not many teachers or students, so one grade level includes students of different ages. These students are in one class, and are taught by one teacher, although there are different grade levels. For example, one class may comprise students in grades 1 and 2, or 3 and 4. Such a class is termed a MULTI-GRADE CLASS.

In this single class, students may, or may not, be of different ages, but they learn and work at different levels of

competence. They are also called *split grade classes*, or *double grade classes*. In some places, multi-grade teaching is regarded as "Alternative Education", or multi-grade classes are regarded as "Combination Classes". Traditionally multi-grade classes most aptly describe the split grade or double grade, classes. In these classes teachers are required to teach more than one curriculum simultaneously.

As in all learning environments, students bring a great diversity to these classes. The following list reflects some of the diversities found among students, and which need to be appreciated by teachers:

1. Age

2. Ability

3. Developmental level

4. Background

5. Experience

6. Motivation

7. Interest
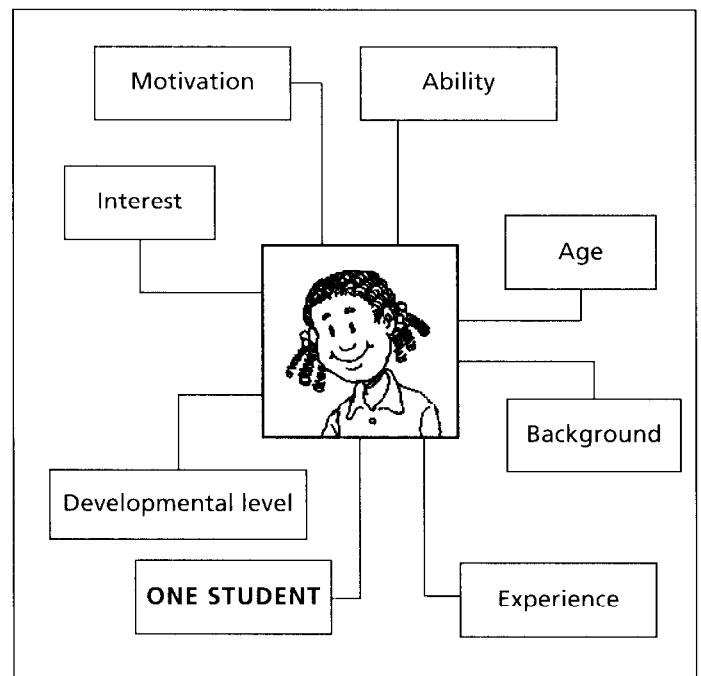
Where are they found?

Multi-grade classes tend to be associated with the "developing countries", but they are also found in other countries across the world. Some places in which they are found are Peru, Sri Lanka, Norway, Vietnam, England, France, the Caribbean, India, the United States, New Zealand, Columbia and Samoa. These classes exist for a wide variety of reasons.

Why do they exist?

Frequently multi-grade teaching is required not by choice but through force of circumstances. The multi-grade class may be a reflection of extreme socio-economic constraints, or a small population (as in the case) in the surrounding community. Most schools with multi-grade classes do not have the adequate resources they

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need to hire additional teachers, or build additional classrooms. They lack essential support personnel, such as janitors or administrative staff, and are unable to buy materials or equipment, such as overhead projectors, computers or photocopying machines.
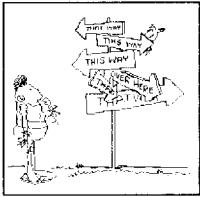
Multi-grade classes may also be the result of the geographical, socio-economic or cultural conditions of the community or neighbourhood. Some of these factors are mentioned later on in this unit.

In many countries, cultural practices require children to perform domestic and agricultural chores, such as caring for the elderly or younger siblings. For example multi-grade classes in India, allow girls the flexibility to continue their social traditions by doing kadai and zardosi (needlework). In the United States of America, one multi-grade school in a rural community was regarded as being a very exclusive school. In some African schools, multi-grade classes allowed the 3 to 6 year olds to participate in a school readiness package, while the older students received a primary-level education.
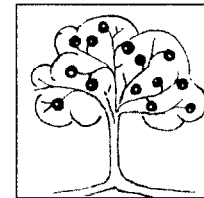
Activity 1.0
Why are there Multi-Grade Classes?

Purpose: This activity will increase your awareness of the reasons for multi-grade classes, and the critical role that they play in educating the community.

Questions: Answer the following questions and discuss them with your peers.

1. Refer to the Case 1.1 on Page 13, and list four reasons why Thaba Limphe Primary School is multi-grade.
2. Explain how your multi-grade school or class was started.
3. How would your students cope without the programme?

Possible Response

1. Each teacher could elaborate on the information below, as it relates to his/her own school.
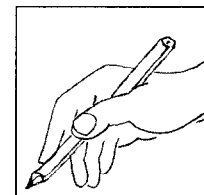
Geographical factors

• The school is in a small community in a remote area, far away from larger towns or villages, and where the population is small.

- It is for nomadic people, who are on the move all the time, so that one teacher may stay with the group.
- There are rivers, roads and mountains, which are dangerous for children to cross, and so it is necessary for them to attend school in the village.
- Many mothers/parents migrate to the towns, and leave their children in the care of their grandmothers.

Social factors

- All children should have equal access to education, independent of where they live.
- The children should have access to education within their own culture.
- Parents wish to send children to schools of their own religion.
- Parents wish to have a centre of learning in their immediate environment.

Cultural factors

- Students are a part of the community economy, and as a result they have to perform certain chores (agricultural or handicraft skill) before they go to school.
- Girls would not normally be afforded the opportunity to go to school, since they have to be prepared to become home-makers.
- Students are obliged to perform certain domestic chores before they can go to school.

Activity 1.1
How do Small Schools Contribute to Educating the Community?

Teachers should get together in small groups, and list the ways in which their schools can contribute to the well-being of the community. Some possible answers are identified below.
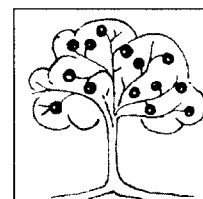
Possible Response

- Increase the levels of functional literacy and numeracy.
- Provide the opportunity for each student to go on to secondary education.
- Prepare students for a variety of post-primary choices.
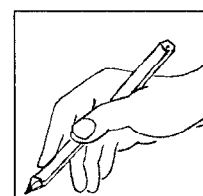
Summary
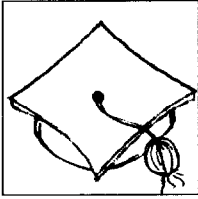
Multi-grade classes refer to one class of students, in which there are two or more groups, each performing at different competence, or grade levels. Multi-grade classes are found worldwide for various reasons.

The prime reasons for multi-grade classes may be placed into four major categories:

◆ *Low (or reduced) community population, possibly due to migration, or an increased death rate;*
◆ *Poor economic conditions, resulting in inadequate teaching resources;*
◆ *The persistence of cultural practices which would impede the attendance of students at school;*
◆ *Geographical location of the school, which may be in a remote, inaccessible village;*
◆ *Some students may be mentally challenged, and there are no provisions for special education nearby.*

Communities benefit from multi-grade classes as they probably:
• Increase the levels of functional literacy and numeracy in the community;
• Create opportunities for post-primary choices;
• Prepare students for secondary level education.

The Next Unit
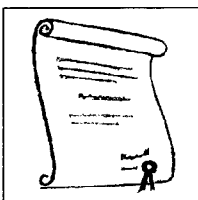
In this unit there has been some attempt to answer the question, "What are Multi-Grade Classes?" It has been established that multi-grade classes are not confined to the "developing world," but are an international phenomenon. It is clear that there are a number of advantages and benefits to be gained from multi-grade classes.

In the unit that follows discussions are based upon "The Challenges of Multi-grade Classes."

Unit Two:
The Challenges of Multi-Grade Classes

Content

Case 2.1: Population Decline Leads
    to Multi-grade Classes
Advantages
Preparedness
Multi-Skilled
Multi-Talented
Functions and Roles of
the Multi-grade Teacher
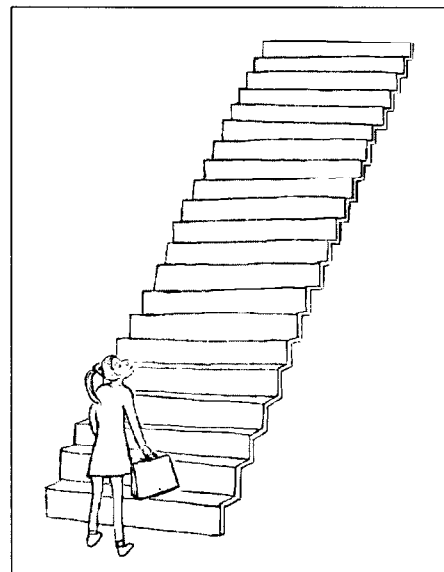
Case 2.1
Population Decline Leads to Multi-grade Classes

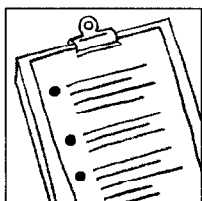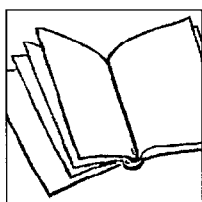*A government All-Age School was built in the 1960s in the fishing village of Port Royal in Jamaica, to serve a population of 600 students. However, during the last 40 years, the population has declined significantly, due to death and migration overseas, and dispersal to other parishes in the island. In addition, several parents, for status reasons, prefer to send their children to private preparatory schools in Kingston, usually near where they work. The enrolment of the school, therefore, has declined to approximately 160 students.*

With this population decline, and the reduction in the number of teachers, grade levels have been merged: Grades 1 and 2; 3 and 4; 5 and 6 and grades 7, 8 and 9. Most teachers are assigned from other areas, and are, therefore, unfamiliar with the community and its practices. Teachers are faced with the task of teaching multi-grade classes without adequate training.

The teachers had to acquire these skills on-the-job, and were included in the Ministry of Education multi-grade project,

through which they acquired additional skills. In addition the dynamic school principal established partnerships with the private sector and community organizations, to improve the learning environment. The Port Royal Environment Management Trust, in collaboration with the school, developed a project funded by a local agency, to establish a computer laboratory for the use of students and community members.

The Multi-Faceted Nature of the Multi-Grade Teacher

Advantages
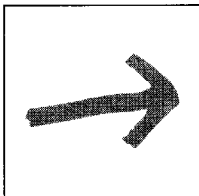
To understand fully all the challenges of multi-grade classes, it is useful to examine their potential advantages, and how the average trained, or untrained, teacher is prepared first to recognize them, and then to cope with them.

Research on the effectiveness of multi-grade teaching has indicated that, if well done, pupils can have the same, and sometimes even better results than single-grade schools.

For example, one of the studies showed that in terms of academic achievement, the data clearly supported the multi-grade classroom as a viable, and equally effective organizational alternative, to single-grade instruction. When it comes to student effect, the case for multi-grade organization appears much stronger, with multi-grade students out-performing single-grade students in over 75 per cent of the measures used. (Source: Miller, 1989).

These students can be among the high performers when the techniques of teaching multi-grade classes are mastered.

Although there are many challenges, there are several advantages. Teachers within that environment, have the opportunity to address various social issues, which assist the developmental processes, not only of the students, but of their parents as well. Such issues include:

1. Health promotion;
2. Agriculture;
3. Micro-finance.

Other advantages mentioned in the literature are:
- Low student/teacher ratio;
- An opportunity for highly individualized teaching;
- An opportunity to develop/strengthen leadership, and the cooperative and management skills, of the students themselves.

Preparedness

Frequently the teacher may not be aware that he/she is going to teach in a multi-grade school, until he/she arrives at the location.

The skills required to manage students, and teach within a multi-grade environment, are usually not taught at training colleges. Teachers also lack the support needed to be creative and innovative in using existing resources.

Multi-Skilled

In the multi-grade class environment, each teacher is expected to know, and be able to teach effectively, different subject areas at different grade levels. For example one teacher who has the responsibility for grades 1, 2 and 3 would need to know:
- Social Studies at Grade levels 1, 2 and 3;
- Mathematics at Grade levels 1, 2 and 3;
- Language Arts/English at Grade levels 1, 2 and 3.

The teacher is expected to have an array of skills and talents, in addition to those required in the specific subject areas within the normal teaching curriculum. Some of these skills and talents are:
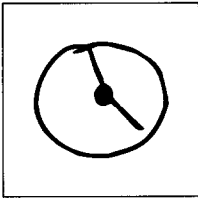- Research;
- Supervision;
- Planning;
- Organization;
- Facilitation;
- Management;
- Motivation;
- Evaluation.

Functions and Roles
of Multi-grade Teachers

As a teacher in a multi-grade class, you may have a number of functions and roles, some of which are listed below:

As Field/Action Researcher

If parents think that what the school teaches is irrelevant to their lives, there will be no motivation for sending students to schools. There would be greater advantages in involving the students in the economic activity of their parents. To meet adequately the needs of the students and the community, the teacher has to know the needs of the community. This means that the teacher is required to have some social research skills.

A teacher in a multi-grade class needs to undertake studies on methods and techniques, which improve participation and learning achievement.

EXAMPLE

In some countries, particularly in Jamaica, students' attendance tends to fall significantly on Fridays in rural communities. Teachers should determine what the parents do, why students are absent on Fridays, and the ways in which students assist their parents.

As Teacher/Learning Facilitator

The main function of the multi-grade teacher is the development of students into persons who have some knowledge, skills, and share desirable values and attitudes. The teacher should know his/her students,

Teacher of a multi-grade class

and their experiences, so that he/she can use strategies which will make learning appealing and effective. The teacher should also be able to recognize, and cater for, the individual differences which exist among the students.


EXAMPLE

In a community where agriculture is the main economic activity and the products are sold in the local market, the teacher could spend some time discussing

the activities in which students are involved. For example, teachers can teach students some sales techniques, and show how to display courtesy when selling. Students can learn to make advertising posters.

As Community Liaison/Resource Person
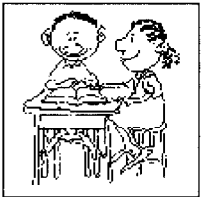
Most teachers, because of their training, position and responsibility, assume an important position in the local community. The multi-grade teacher is no different. The nature of many situations, where a multi-grade school exists, is such that the cooperation and assistance of the local community is needed, to improve the quality of the educational services provided by the multi-grade schools.

EXAMPLE

Because teachers are trained, they are frequently valuable resource persons. A teacher may complete forms for community members and become very active in religious, social and cultural activities, and visit homes to strengthen the home/school relationship.

As Social Worker/Counsellor

The multi-grade teacher is often the most well-educated person in the community (in a formal as distinct from a non-formal sense). As such, he/she plays an important role as an adviser to students and their families, in a wide range of social, and possibly psychological, matters.
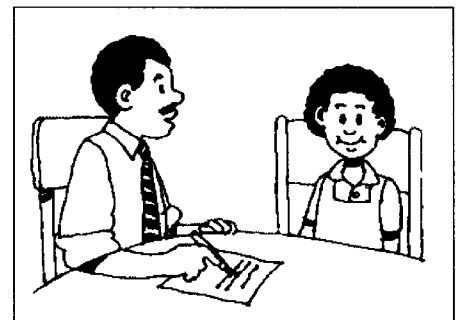
EXAMPLE

The teacher can easily determine from the responses of the students, whether they can see or hear normally. The teacher can possibly identify whether there are other problems, which may affect the learning abilities or development of the child.

As Evaluator

One of the roles which a multi-grade teacher must play, is to monitor the process of the pupil's learning, so as to ensure a good quality of education. This requires teachers to determine the educational levels of pupils when they first enter the class, during the school year, and at the end of it.

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EXAMPLE

The teacher keeps an ongoing record of the performance of each student. With this data, the teacher can determine whether the cognitive, affective and other developments in the child are taking place appropriately.

As Material Designer

Although various curriculum materials are usually prepared by central and/or provincial authorities of education, multi-grade teachers still need to develop their own support materials related to the pupil's environment.

EXAMPLE

If a teacher finds him, or herself, in an environment, where there is dairy farming, the materials which he/she prepares need to reflect this. Visual representations of the alphabet could include 'b' for beef, 'c' for cattle and 'e' for egg, etc.

As Para-Professional Trainer

Learning is a continuous process, and it happens both at home and at school. The teacher has a critical role in the training of parents, and other local community members, to act as facilitators for student's learning.

EXAMPLE

Many parents believe that children must be seen and not heard, yet when they become young adults, they are miraculously expected to participate in adult discussions. Teachers can expose parents to the various stages of development of their children, and how they should be treated at each stage.


As Government Extension Worker

Many multi-grade classes are situated in isolated and remote regions, and the schools often form centres in such communities. Many government policies, concerning family planning and health care, can be put into practice better with the help of teachers.

EXAMPLE

Teachers frequently have access to homes and parents, from whom they command much respect. As agents of the government, and as change agents in their own right, teachers are able to give advice on the nutrition of students, their hygiene, the need for establishing routines in the home, and the need for rest and relaxation.

As Quality Controller
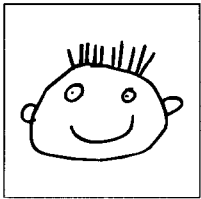
A major national concern has been to provide education for as many people as possible. The attainment of this objective has been difficult for many countries, particularly where, for example, some members of the population live in remote and isolated regions, minority groups use different languages, and people live nomadic lifestyles, etc. The teacher in a multi-grade class needs to monitor closely the performance of his/her pupils, and take steps to ensure that they achieve the competence needed for permanent literacy and numeracy.

EXAMPLE

Teachers can assist students who, perhaps, for health reasons, are unable to attend school regularly, by setting assignments and marking them. Teachers can also encourage parents to send their children to school every day. Teachers should also keep a close watch on the performance of each student over time, to monitor his/her progress, and pay special attention to students who do not show progress.

As Surrogate Parent
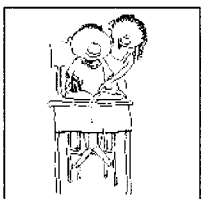
In remote and isolated communities, particularly where the teacher speaks the local language, and is well accepted by the local community, the multi-grade teacher often forms a closer relationship with his or her pupils than is found in city schools, and age-grade schools. The atmosphere in a multi-grade classroom is more like that of a home, since pupils are not separated by age or grade levels. In this context, the multi-grade teacher is often seen as a surrogate parent to the students.

EXAMPLE

The classroom environment is more like a family than a classroom, and teachers are more likely to give more attention to students in smaller classes. The teacher is more sensitive, and likely to recognize when there is a problem with a child, and pay more attention to that child's needs.

As Financial Manager

The multi-grade teacher is a manager of the finances of the school in situations where a financial allocation is made to the school.

EXAMPLE

The teacher must keep day-to-day records of all expenditure, and make sure that all receipts are kept to support that expenditure. This information will be needed to balance any finances received.

As Representative of Cultural, Moral and Political Values

The multi-grade teacher plays an important role in the life of the community in terms of cultural, moral and political values. He/she can utilize the positive values of the community to enhance the participation of the community in the life of the school, and the learning achievement of the pupils. The multi-grade teacher needs to avoid conflicts with the community. (Source: Ian Birch).

EXAMPLE

Each teacher should know about positive cultural practices, e.g. dyeing fabric, basket-making and taking care of the elderly, that are unique to the community. He/she can invite parents or other community members to talk about, or demonstrate, those practices to the students.

Activity 2.1
Advantages and Constraints
of Small Schools
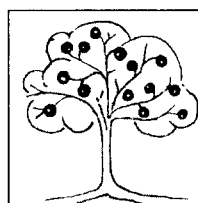
Purpose: This activity will help you to recognize the advantages of having small schools in providing education. It will also give you the opportunity to describe the difficulties and constraints faced by teachers in single-teacher schools and multi-grade classes, and find how they can be resolved.

Questions: 1. What are the advantages of small schools?

2. What are our difficulties concerning:
   - Physical Environment?
   - Social Environment?
   - Learning Environment?

3. Refer to Case 2.1 on Page 19, and discuss how your school can forge a partnership with the community to improve the functioning of the school.

Possible Responses

The Advantages

A Well-Organized School:

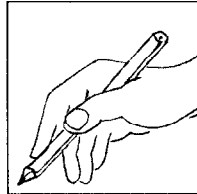- Enables the learning activities in the school to be relevant to the pupils' lives within the community (i.e. from the point of view of values and attitudes, cultural identity and community involvement), as teachers can adapt the national curriculum to the life of the village.
- Motivates parents to be more involved in the learning of their children (i.e. helping with regular attendance at school, home work, projects and materials needed at school).
- Encourages the active involvement of the community and community organizations in the school (i.e. helping with the building and maintenance of school buildings, helping with cooking school meals, assisting as school committee members, teacher's aides, sports masters and special resource people in arts and crafts, music, cultural practices and agriculture, etc.).
- Allows the school to support the community by providing an opportunity for adult education, and serving as a meeting place for village committees, etc.
- Encourages interaction and support between older and younger children.

The Challenges

Physical Environment

- *Teachers often resent being placed in distant schools, because:*
  - they fear it will affect their career by being far away from centres of decision making;

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- *they are far away from their family, friends and colleagues;*
- the remuneration is insufficient to offset the cost of living away from the main centres;

• Long distances from roads, transportation, shops, clinics, post offices, police stations, etc.

• Children are often less healthy than their counterparts in the big schools.

• Lack of communication with educational support systems and authorities.

Learning Environment

• Lack of supervision;
• Lack of learning materials;
• Lack of trained personnel;
• Lack of facilities, such as:

- telephone, photocopier, typewriter, paper, pencils, chalk, etc.;
- textbooks, school library;
- resource materials and outside resources such as city libraries, health centre, agricultural information centres;
- buildings, desks and storage spaces.
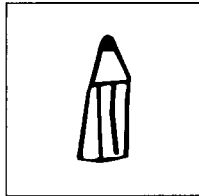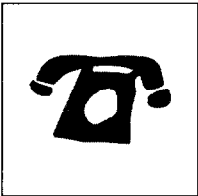
Social Environment

• Loneliness of the teacher, which can become critical in an unsympathetic setting, or if the teacher comes from a different community/background.

• Negative attitude towards multi-grade teaching by the authorities, as well as the general public.

• Lack of a government policy on multi-grade classes leading to:

- lack of appropriate pre- and in–service teacher education;
- inappropriate and irrelevant curriculum and materials;
- lack of appropriate textbooks (the existing ones only cater for single-grade classes); and no in-service assistance for specific pedagogical problems, such as teaching methodologies and classroom organization.

- Small schools and multi-grade classes are often in socio-economically disadvantaged areas, leading to:
    - deprived home environment;
    - low educational attainment of parents;
    - health and nutrition problems;
    - low aspirations of parents and the community;
    - interrupted school attendance because pupils have to look after animals, or work in the fields, or look after the home; and
    - lack of pre-schools.
- Inadequate out-of-school experiences for the pupils, e.g. sport, traditional dancing and music, and visits to places of interest, which can be used as starting points for learning.
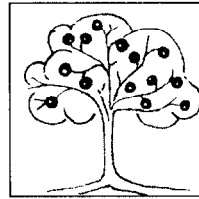
Activity 2.2
Discussion Points

Purpose: This activity promotes reflection, and discussion, on important points related to teaching in single-teacher schools and multi-grade classes.

Questions:

1. Which difficulties can be reduced by the teachers' action and which cannot be resolved by the teachers? For example, teachers can only make a petition for an appropriate government policy, but the lack of learning materials could be resolved by making teaching aids, or by seeking help from parents.

2. Identify the three most important constraints about which teachers can do something. With reference to the solution in Case 2.1 propose solutions to these constraints.

Summary

◆ *Small schools play a significant role in providing education.*
◆ *They enable access to education to be available to almost everyone.*
◆ *They are usually located in remote areas, and are faced with a number of constraints not usually faced by normal schools.*
◆ *These classes promote the greater participation of parents*
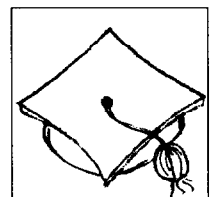
and the community in the life of the school, and the lives of the students.

◆ *Small schools in some developed countries have been used to provide exclusive education for physically challenged or exceptional students.*

The Next Unit
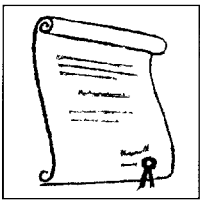
Multi-grade teachers tend to be in schools which are isolated and lonely, and there are not likely to be any other teachers or schools nearby. There are frequently no support staff or other helpers to relieve the teacher of his/her non-teaching responsibilities. On occasions, such schools tend to have poor reputations as educational institutions, and parents prefer to send their children to other schools farther away.

The involvement of community groups, organizations and individuals not only helps to provide a positive image of the school, but also helps to integrate the school within traditional community activities, and facilitates the participation of community resource persons in the teaching and information-giving areas of school life.

Unit Three: Partnerships
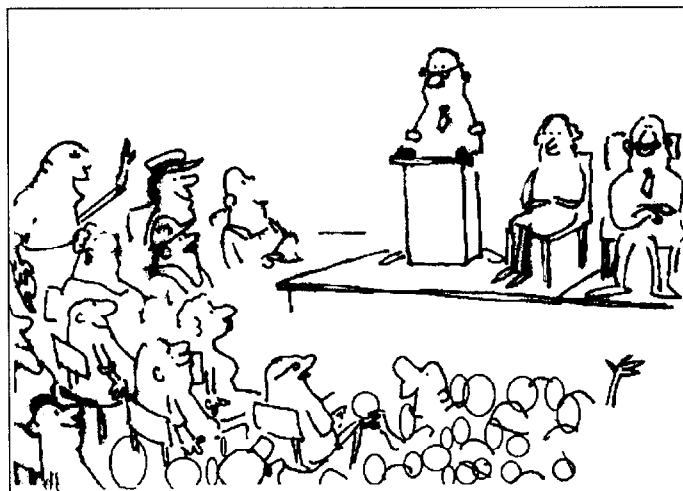
An inaugural Parent/Teachers' Association (PTA) Meeting.

Content
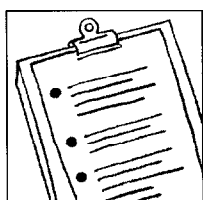
What is a Partnership?
Partners and Partnerships
Advantages of Community Involvement
Case 3.1: School/Community Participation
*Ideas for Fostering Partnerships between the School
    and the Community*
Parents' Involvement
Case 3.2: Strengthening Home Work
Activities 3.1: Assess and Improve Community Cooperation
Case 3.3: National Celebrations
Case 3.4: School/Community Partnership
Activity 3.2: Community Resources for Development

Partnerships and Participation

What is a Partnership?

The term 'partnership' connotes part-ownership or shared responsibility. A partnership in marriage, or within the family, would be the husband and wife; in sports, the coach and players; in education the teacher and learner, the teacher and the Ministry of Education; or the teacher and various representatives of the community. Each school is sited in a neighbourhood, district, town or community[1]. The purpose of the school, in essence, is to prepare the children to participate in the social, economic and cultural activities of the community it serves. A partnership has been defined as a

"...relationship characterized by roles, responsibilities, rights, obligations, and accountabilities. The relationship may be based on law, shared ethical standards, rules and/or conventions...[2]"

1. Partnerships
   for Capacity
   Building
   and Quality
   Improvements
   in Education;
   Papers
   from the
   ADEA Biennial
   Meeting
   (Dakar, Senegal,
   October 1997);
   Association
   for the
   Development
   of Education
   in Africa.

2. Op cit

Why Partnerships?

Education is a long-term investment; its rewards are only reaped later in life. The primary investor is the Government, but the ultimate beneficiaries are the individuals and their families, the private sector, the community and society at large. It would be advantageous for the beneficiaries to share in the investment, by becoming a partner in educating the child. Additionally, many schools with multi-grade classes tend to have inadequate resources and personnel. Partnerships, therefore, provide an avenue through which resources can be strengthened, and the community can participate in the education of the child, and the life of the school.

Partners and Partnership?

The *"business of education has two major actors: the State and Civil Society"*. Partnership with the civil society refers to general community participation, private sector involvement and parental cooperation. Community participation, in this sense, refers to the involvement of various groups and individuals in the life and activities of the school. This is a two-way relationship. Members of the community can be resource persons. They can raise funds, and assist in the planning of the future of the school. In many places the community shares in the ownership of the school, particularly the physical premises. This is especially so in communities where religious organizations have started schools.

Advantages of Community Participation

The community, which includes the parents of the students, is a valuable source of support. Representatives of the school should participate in the social and economic activities of the community. Cooperation and partnership with the community can be mutually beneficial to the community and the school. Some of the benefits are:

1. Parents and other members of the community may serve as teacher aides, or resource persons with various skills.

2. The school can also count on the help of the community in such activities as celebrations, fundraising and the building and maintenance of the school.
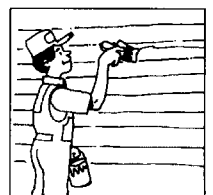
3. The learning environment will be enhanced by support from the community. For instance, if the school has a close relationship with parents and other community members, this can help to improve discipline, and there will be closer communication to assist the child in overcoming the challenges of schoolwork.

4. The school would become a central point for activities in the community. For example, it may be used for adult literacy classes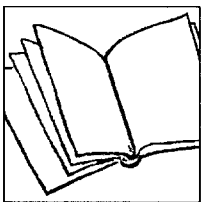, or as a community meeting place. In addition, the children may play an active part in village activities, such as the cleaning of roads, and beautification of the surroundings.

5. The transfer of skills such as weaving, dyeing, embroidery, carving, playing traditional instruments, traditional dance, storytelling, etc.

Case 3.1
School/Community Cooperation

Njeri Odumbe, the teacher at Thabo Limphe School, wished to develop an agricultural plot with her pupils as a means of teaching them the advantages of natural fertilization and weeding. She had no idea what seeds to use, so she wanted to get this information from the Agricultural Information Centre in town. To go to town, she would have to be absent from the school for two days, and this would be detrimental to the students' education.

Fortunately, the shopkeeper was going to town to buy his supplies. She knew him as a member of the school committee, and so she asked him if he could get the information for her from the Agricultural Information Centre. He agreed, and when he returned, he not only had all the information she needed, but had also bought sufficient seeds for all pupils to plant in their plots.

Building Partnerships

Building a partnership is a long term process. There must be trust, and an underlying rapport, prior to building a partnership. As in any form of cooperation, a partnership between the school and any area of the community, does not come automatically. It has to be developed, nurtured and fostered. To develop a two-way relationship, it

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is not only important for the community to become involved in the school, but the school has to be responsive to the needs of the community. For example, the school programme has to be flexible enough for adjustments to be made when students have to help out at harvest-time, or take on household responsibilities, or as in Case 3.1, community members share responsibilities when it is convenient.
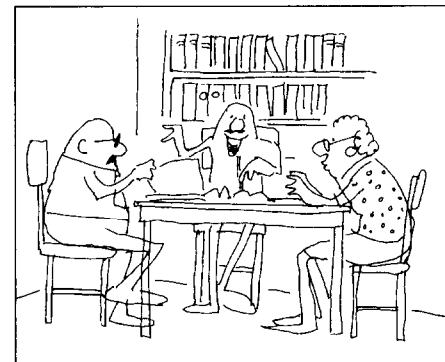
Below are some ideas for creating an environment for forming partnerships between the community and the school:

1. An open-day at the school at least once a term, for the pupils to show and discuss their work with the parents.

2. Regular communication between the School/Community members or Village Education Committee and the parents, through meetings, newsletters, and home visits.

3. Special workdays when teacher and students go into the community, and help with harvesting, and other community-based activities.

4. Fun-days involving students, teacher, school/community members or members of the Village Education Committee, parents, and other community members.

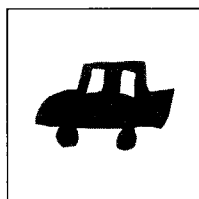5. Building a strong Parents/Teachers' Association (PTA), which can give a better structure to the partnership between the school and the community. For example, the PTA can:
   a. Help the teachers to make teaching aids;
   b. Encourage children to work with their teachers leading to improved achievement;
   c. Help teachers to organize field days for the children;
   d. Help to raise resources for the children.

Ways of Helping

Parents and other community members should be fully integrated in the running of the school. They can supplement the resources of the school in many ways. Among the areas in which partnerships can be developed are:

1. Student supervision while the teacher is teaching another group;

2. Coordinate small group work with students, in subject areas where they are strong, e.g. agriculture, to help students understand the subject matter, and complete assignments;

3. Homework supervision;

4. Facilitate practical activities, such as gardening, sports and dancing;

5. Assist training in handicrafts, agriculture and home crafts, or in the purchase, or making, of resources, as in the case;

6. Teach the children about the community's culture and customs;

7. Facilitate student' summer work programmes.

Parents and other community members can also play a vital role in the educational process by:

- Helping to develop and support the school curriculum to make it more relevant to community needs;
- Hiring a private teacher, if the need arises;
- Identifying teacher aides in the community;
- Providing information about the background of the pupils;
- Monitoring the behaviour and progress of pupils and the school;
- Organizing special projects (such as building and expansion) and fundraising activities;
- Helping to resolve disputes.

Activity 3.1
Assess and Improve Community Cooperation
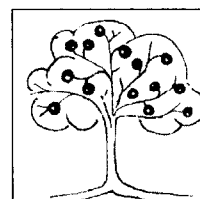
Purpose: The purpose of this activity is to assess the level of community cooperation and suggest ways of improving the situation.

Questions:
- Does the type of relationship, which is demonstrated in Case 3.1, exist in your community? Would the villagers volunteer to purchase materials for the teacher?
- Give some examples of cooperation, and/or partnerships, between the community and the school in your village.
- If there is none, can you identify the reasons behind this lack of cooperation?
- Give some ways in which cooperation can be improved.

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- Would it be useful to sit with community members and work out a plan of cooperation?
- In what other ways do you think the community can help you, and you can help the community?

Case 3.2
Strengthening Home Work
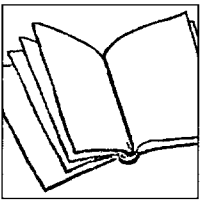
Mr. Taba, the headmaster of Taba Limphe Primary School, meets Mrs. Mobe, who is illiterate, and who has a child Puseletso who is in Grade 5.

Mrs. Mobe: *I am worried. My child failed this term, and I know she is clever.*

Mr. Taba: *You are right. Her reports show that she is not doing well in Mathematics and English. She had the same trouble last year.*

Mrs. Mobe: *But, Mr. Taba, she is good in the other subjects. Why?*

Mr. Taba: *I will call her teacher, Miss Lineo. Maybe she can explain what is happening.*

Miss Lineo comes and explains to Mrs Mobe that it is not unusual for a child to be good in some subjects and weaker in others. She said that there where other children who also have trouble with English.

Mrs Mobe: *I cannot help her very much, since I do not know much English.*

(Miss Lineo mentions that Puseletso often stays at home to help with her brothers and sisters, and goes to the market with her mother. She tells her mother that her work would improve if she came to school every day. She suggested that Mrs. Mobe can help by making sure that Puseletso comes to school every day.)

Miss Lineo: *Mrs. Mobe, I really need your support. Your child is a hardworking pupil, and, together, we can help her succeed.*

Mrs. Mobe: *I see your points. I promise to send Puseletso to school every day. I did not realize that not coming to school would affect her work so badly. I am glad we discussed this. Thank you.*
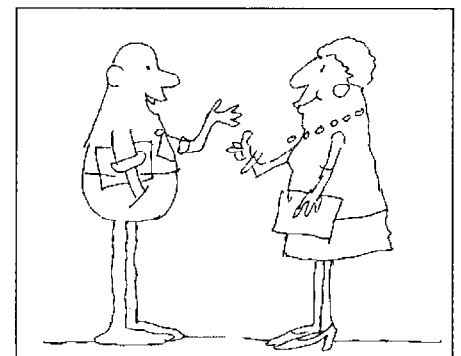
Miss Lineo discusses with other teachers, parents and farmers, the kinds of materials she can prepare for students who need help in Mathematics and English. With their help, she prepares them for the next class.
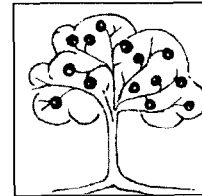
Activity 3.2
Community Resources
for Development

Purpose: This activity is a role-play of a panel discussion, which aims to increased awareness:

a. of the importance of students attending school;

b. in classroom teachers of the benefits of using outside-school resources for teaching;

c. in the local community of the role its members can play in education;

d. in the community of the role the school can play in the affairs of the community.

The panellists play the roles of those who will participate in the discussion:

- The school head;
- The director of the community library, or community centre;
- A school teacher;
- A representative of the farming community, local chamber of commerce, or industry;
- A community leader.

The purpose of the discussion is to examine ways in which the school can use the knowledge and experience of community leaders, and how the school could be integrated within the community, to develop the relevance of its education, and promote the philosophy of lifelong learning. For each role, there is a suggested reference point.

Roles:

School Head

Welcome the participants, and thank them for coming to the meeting. Explain why you believe that it is important to link the school more closely with the social, cultural and economic life of the local community. Invite those who have come to the meeting to share in a joint partnership to provide truly relevant education.

Director of Library or Community Centre

Welcome the idea, and say what the library/centre could do. Point out the implications for funding and staffing. For example, you could set up a special children's section, show videos, and have seminars or talks once a week, and hold poster, poetry and/or essay competitions for the children. The library could also prepare exhibitions for special occasions, e.g. International Women's Day, Child Month, No Smoking Day, or Environmental Protection Week. Special arrangements could be made for students to use the facilities after school, for research and homework.

Schoolteacher

Express support for the idea and recognize its potential to contribute to meaningful learning. Indicate that you are very happy, because you will be able to get help in designing teaching materials, which reflect the culture of the community. However, there are some concerns. What will it mean for timetabling, syllabus completion, examinations and pressure of the next level of education on primary education?

Farming/Business/Industry Representative

Special arrangements would have to be made for students to visit farms, factories, and other workplaces. Some students may be a safety risk. They may be too young to understand what is going on, and their presence will disrupt production. They would be happy to work with teachers in developing teaching materials that reflect what they are doing. Having been convinced by the school head and the teacher, you reluctantly agree to be a partner.

Community Leader

Applaud the move to integrate the school into the community. The move has been long overdue. Participation will enable the

community to provide an input into the cultural and civic education of children. The community would also like to see the school participate, through its education activities, in helping to solve community problems. Would teachers be prepared to assist illiterate parents to read and write? In return the community leaders would try to inform parents about the importance of sending their children to school every day, and to persuade them to do so.

Case 3.3
National Celebrations
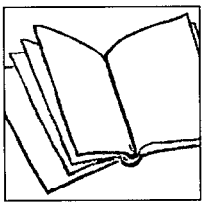
It is the normal practice in Jamaica and other countries that National Holidays, such as Heritage Day, Labour Day, and Independence Day, engender considerable collaboration between the school, the community and the private sector. This may take the form of plays, exhibitions, concerts, competing sports activities, fairs, a poster competition, and other activities.

For Independence Day celebrations, representatives of many schools participate by singing and dancing during the road march, and at the Grand Gala celebration. Students also prepare performances, such as drum corps presentations, dancing traditional/folk dances such as the Maypole, Kumina or Dinkie Minnie, reciting poetry, which they do during eliminations, for gold, silver or bronze medals, leading up to the main event.

There is a national organization, the Jamaica Cultural Development Commission, which helps teachers to prepare the performances.

Case 3.4
School/Community Partnership
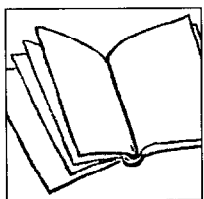
During the 1992/93 rainy season in Zimbabwe, there was an outbreak of cholera, that killed many people in both urban and rural areas. The Ministry of Health and Child Welfare launched a vigorous campaign to educate people in how to minimize the risk of contracting the disease.

One of the pieces of advice the ministry gave, was that people should desist from the traditional practice of washing hands in a communal dish before taking a meal, particularly at

gatherings such as weddings and funerals. People were advised to wash their hands from running water. Where piped water was not available, they were advised to use cups to pour the water as people washed their hands. A very laborious practice indeed! What could be done?

In such a situation, schools and their communities can join in the search for solutions. An inter-school competition can be organized so that schools, through their teaching of subjects such as craft and design or design and technology, can design a device that could provide a solution to the problem.

An appropriate design brief should be worked out in consultation with the community. One condition would be for the design to use low-cost materials, and another for it to be one which could be easily understood and made by rural craftspeople.

The solution would then be funded through UNDP for production, using the technological skills available in the community.

Activity 3.3
Planning for School Community Collaboration
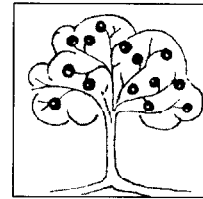
Purpose: The purpose of this activity is to:

1. Make sustainable plans for school/community collaboration in the event of a disaster;

2. Identify the roles which various personnel will play in implementing plans for collaboration.

Questions 1. Can there be an agreement about the ways in which the school and community can collaborate in the event of a disaster, such as floods, earthquakes, hurricanes and drought? Case 3.4 suggests one kind of collaboration. There could be a disaster preparedness committee, on which both school and the community are represented, which assumes responsibility for continuous planning.

2. Is there collaboration between the school and the community for national events and celebrations? Can there be planning for this kind of collaboration and can those plans be supported by an agreement? Some reference could be made to Case 3.3.

3. Agreement to implement the proposed measures should lead to the formulation of action to be taken. Would it, for example, be feasible and worthwhile, to:

   a. Invite speakers from the community, farms, businesses and industry to visit the school?
   b. Participate in special school afternoons at the library/community centre?
   c. Organize weeks during which there are visits to local farms, business and industrial enterprises?
   d. Schedule activities allowing for the preparation for participation in the national celebrations.

4. Are there other activities, which would be especially appropriate in your local situation?

Summary
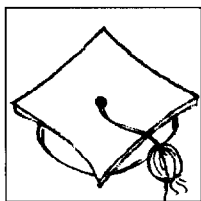
The school, and various representatives of the community, can enjoy mutually beneficial relationships. These can be based on partnerships, whereby different groups, associations, and/or individuals, assume responsibility for various activities. In return the school may allow young people and adults to use the playing fields, and/or school grounds for fairs, etc. The multi-grade teacher has a critical role to play in building these relationships.

The Next Unit
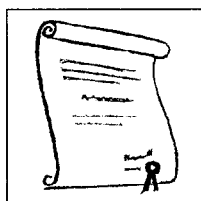
This unit covers the roles of Government and Peer Educators in improving the levels of delivery and status of multi-grade education, nationally and at the community level.

Unit Four:
Government and
Peer Support

Content
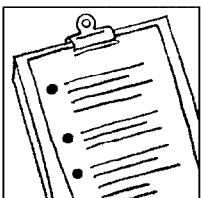
Case 4.1: Professional
  Development
Case 4.2: Competency Shelter
Concerns of Teachers
Government Support
The Nature of Government
  Support
Activity 4.1: Possible Support
Peer Collaboration
Activity 4.2: Establishing Peer Collaboration
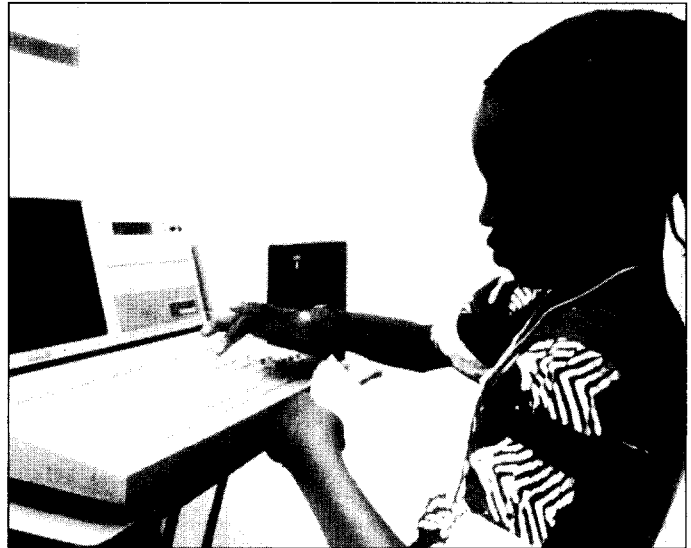
Using the computer to extend support.

Case 4.1
Professional Development
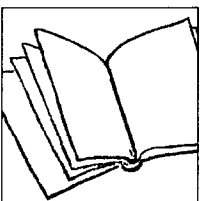
The teacher at Thabo Limphe was concerned that she was not able to keep abreast of developments in her profession, because she was so far away from the city. Inspectors did not visit the school very often. Sometimes they did not visit it for four or five years. It was very difficult to get to the village, and there was no opportunity for her to attend refresher courses.

One day she came up with a great idea!

She got in touch with the teachers from nearby communities who felt the same way. They agreed that they would attend quarterly seminars, if they could get lecturers from colleges in the city to come to the village. She asked the Village Education Committee or School Management Committee, the Parent/Teachers' Associations, and the communities of the various schools, to assist by raising funds. Members of her community would provide accommodation for the

lecturers. She wrote to the Ministry, and asked them to approve the programme, so that the teachers could also benefit by improving their qualifications.

Case 4.2
Competency Shelter
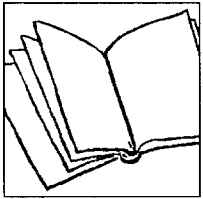
The principal at a rural school in Jamaica realized that one teacher was teaching two grade levels with about 8 or 9 levels of competence. Together with the community, the principal, the Past Students' Association and Friends of the School, raised funds to establish a Competency Shelter, where the children reading at the lowest level were placed.

The Principal requested a teacher, but the Ministry of Education did not have a budget for hiring an additional teacher for that school. With the help of the Parent Teachers' Association, the Past Students' Association and the community, adequate funds were raised to hire a teacher until the National Authority could take over the payments.

The Competency Shelter then became the area where low-level readers were able to strengthen their reading skills.

Concerns of Teachers

The concerns of teachers arise from the difficulties they experience in a variety of areas. These difficulties may be psychological, professional, social or physical. They may derive from the teacher, community, school/learning environment or the national authority. These difficulties were outlined in Unit Three and include the following:

◆ *Resentment of teachers at being placed in distant schools, because of the long distances from roads, transport, shops, clinics, post offices, police stations;*

◆ *Children are often less healthy than their counterparts in the big schools;*

◆ *Lack of communication with educational support systems and authorities;*

◆ *Absence of adequate teaching facilities and support materials;*

◆ *Loneliness of the teacher, which can even become critical in an unsympathetic setting, or if the teacher comes from a different community/background;*

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◆ *Negative attitude towards multi-grade teaching by authorities, as well as the general public;*

◆ *Lack of a government policy on multi-grade classes;*

◆ *Small schools are often located in socio-economically disadvantaged areas;*

◆ *Inadequate out-of-school experiences for the pupils, e.g. sport, traditional dancing and music, and visits to places of interest, which can be used by the teacher as starting points for learning.*

It is difficult for multi-grade teachers to enjoy regular communication with support systems and educational authorities, because of their remote location. In some countries, educational authorities visit small schools only once or twice a year, and only for short periods of time. In many cases the terrain is so difficult that officials may only visit them once annually. Thus, small school teachers seldom have the opportunity to discuss problems with educational specialists. They often feel left out, alone, and discouraged.

Public transportation frequently does not service those areas because of very poor road conditions; there is no electricity or telephone service, and no running water. The infrastructure is very poor and unsatisfactory.

Many teachers are not trained to cope with the additional responsibilities, and obligations, which accompany multi-grade teaching in small schools; and they may not have access to any professional development programmes, which tend to be held in the towns and cities.

Government Support

Government support is essential for giving multi-grade classes, greater recognition, and for the multi-grade teaching approach to be given its due status, equal to that of the normal schools. Government support will do much to prevent small schools from being marginalized.

One major way in which the government can provide support is to set up a special unit in the National Ministry of Education, which will assume responsibility for single-teacher schools and/or multi-grade classes. This
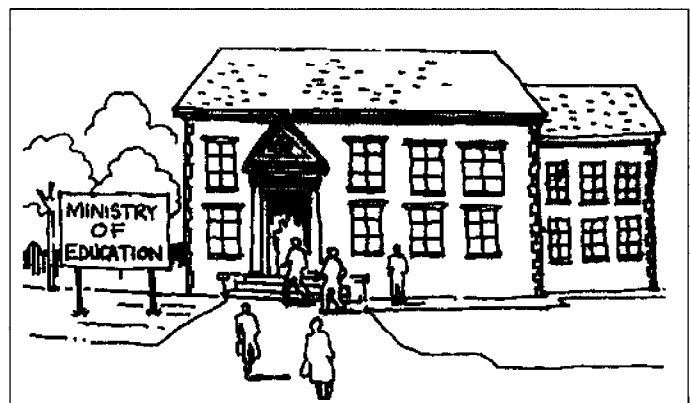
Unit should develop strong inter-relationships with those government agencies, which have responsibility for infra-structural development, e.g. roads, electricity and running water.

National education policy and planning should also reflect the government's attitude to, and planning for, such issues as:
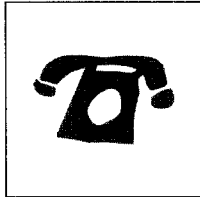
- Improving basic infra-structural arrangements/ facilities, such as roads, telephone services, electricity, water supply and transportation, with particular reference to these schools;
- Compulsory attendance and penalties for non-compliance;
- Physical and human resource provisions for the mentally and physically challenged students;
- Gender equity;
- Upgrading and supporting teachers through the use of Information Communication Technology (ICT), and extention programmes from post secundary institutions.

The Nature of Support

1. Develop a national policy for single-teacher schools and multi-grade classes.

2. Special consideration must be given to such schools in National Planning.

3. Facilitate adequate recognition and adequate separate financing.

4. Ensure effective communication with appropriate institutions, teachers in the field, teacher training colleges and other relevant bodies.

5. Provide control standards through the provision of properly trained personnel, and through the inclusion of appropriate methodologies in traditional teacher education programmes.

6. Ensure the staffing of them with people who have the necessary technical expertise, and are committed to working in a multi-grade situation.

7. Include issues and techniques for multi-grade teaching, as part of the regular pre-service teacher education programmes in the relevant training institutions.

8. Provide special attention for the professional development of multi-grade teachers, within appropriate in-service teacher education programmes.

9. Develop a curriculum, or modify the national curriculum, to make it appropriate for multi-grade teaching.

10. Develop teaching and learning materials.

11. Provide teacher support for multi-grade teachers through officials well versed in its issues and problems.

12. Make efforts to strengthen the support of the community near the school.

Peer Collaboration

Multi-grade teachers do not need to wait for support from the authorities; they can start by supporting each other. This is called PEER COLLABORATION. Through Peer Collaboration multi-grade teachers can:
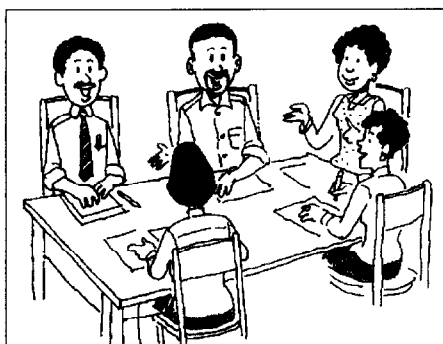
- Learn from each other's failures, each other's problems, solutions and successes;

- Identify the important areas, where support is needed;

- Develop and share relevant materials;

- Lobby for an improved image.

Organizing Peer Collaboration

1. Discuss peer support with the head teacher, and other teachers in the same school.

2. Discuss possibilities for peer support with the education supervisor, if he, or she, visits the school.

3. Visit nearby schools, and see how classes are organized, and discuss peer support among teachers.

4. Together with the leadership of the school, organize monthly meetings with groups of teachers, for example at the town where you all do your shopping.

5. At these meetings, one may select teachers who will meet at the regional and national levels. At the national level, one may be able to establish the Multi-grade Teachers' Peer Organization.

6. The Multi-grade Teachers' Peer Organization could be responsible for the following:
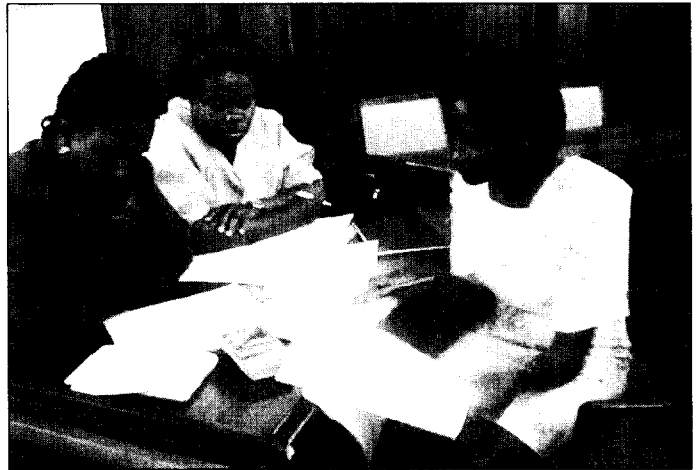
Three multi-grade school teachers in a workshop.

- Representing the multi-grade teachers at Ministry of Education institutions;

- Participating in National Work Groups, to develop materials for multi-grade teachers;

- Forming cluster groups with teachers in schools that are accessible, and arranging workshops, meetings, and other opportunities for skills development and exchanges;

- Organizing yearly seminars, where national issues regarding multi-grade teaching are discussed;

- Supporting in-service workshops with regional and grassroots peer groups;

- Promoting the case for single-teacher schools and multi-grade classes, and breaking the feeling of isolation of those teachers.
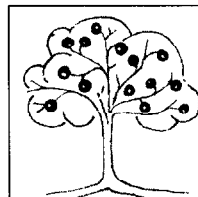
Activity 4.1
Possible Support

Purpose: Clarify and list the kinds of support that you need in your role as a multi-grade teacher on state in what ways you will be able to help yourself.

Questions: What support would you like to receive and how could you possibly help yourself.

1. To overcome the feeling of loneliness?

2. To get facilities and materials?

3. For professional improvement?   **47**
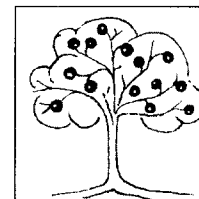
Activity 4.2
Establishing Peer
Collaboration

Purpose: This activity is the first step towards peer collaboration.

Questions:

1. What can you learn by visiting the class of a colleague (with his, or her, agreement) in your school?

2. Which multi-grade teachers do you know in nearby schools?

3. Would you allow another teacher to visit your class? Provide the reasons for your answer.

4. How can you form a cluster of single-teacher/multi-grade schools in your area?

5. Where would be a convenient place to meet once a month for teachers of that cluster?

6. How could the leader be identified to convene such a meeting?

7. Write an action plan to illustrate the objectives, strategies and steps towards obtaining peer group support.

Possible Response
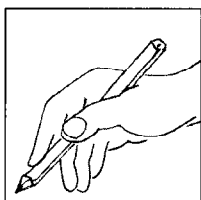
Teachers should keep records of their action and progress. A suggested table is shown:

Date	Action	Progress

Summary
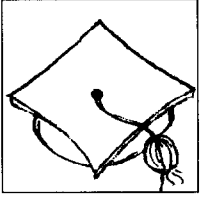
From the previous five topics, you have identified the advantages of having single-teacher schools and multi-grade classes, such as the one you are teaching in now. You have also specified your role as a multi-grade teacher, and the constraints that you face, especially from the logistic and social points of view.

You followed this up by describing the educational surroundings of your school, so that you may be able to identify the resources available which could lessen your constraints. You further elaborated this, with information on the critical and valuable sources of support for multi-grade teachers - the community, the government and your peers.

The Next Unit
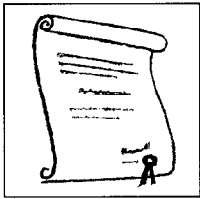
The final unit of Volume One covers the Educational Environment, within which teachers are required to operate. It looks at both the local and national environments, and how teachers can identify support and resource materials in both.

Unit Five:
The Educational Environment

Local Environment

Content
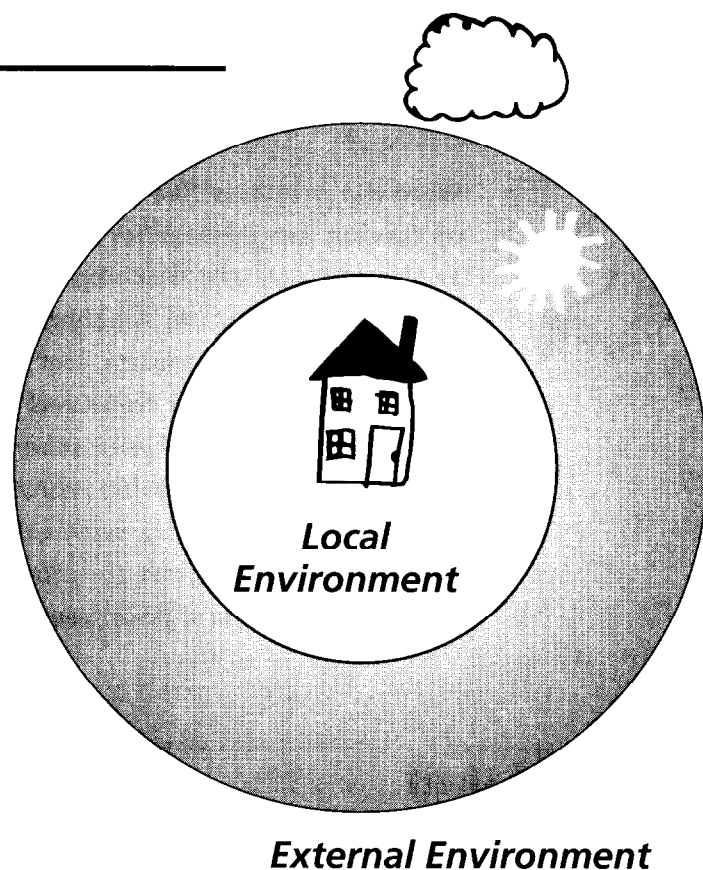
External Environment
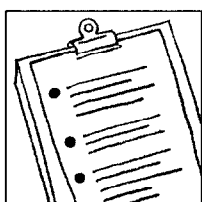
Case 5.1
The Organization of a Primary School
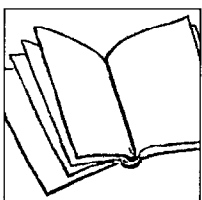
*This three-teacher school is one of the out-stations
of the St. Gerard Mission*

*The **Manager** of the parish schools lives at the mission, which is
about five hours away on horseback. It can also be reached by bus
after a two hour horse ride, but the bus passes only twice a day. The
manager collects the mail and salaries of the teachers, which
are delivered to the principal at the end of the month. The manager
visits Thaba Limphe only twice a year.*

*A **Village Education Committee**, with representa-
tives of the chief and the parents, assists the principal in the running
of the school. Their assistance includes making recommendations on
the hiring and firing of teachers, looking after the budget and use
of money, helping with the building and maintenance of the school,*

and assisting during celebrations. It also coordinates other uses of the school facilities, such as its use as a community meeting place.

*The **Head Teacher** teaches grades 6 and 7. She is also the secretary of the Village Education Committee, and is responsible for timetabling, the acquisition of teaching materials, and the supervision of the work of the teachers.*

*The **School** consists of one building with three classrooms: one room for grades 1 and 2 combined, one room for grades 3, 4 and 5, and one room for grades 6 and 7. All rooms have a chalkboard, a table and a chair for the teacher, and a trunk in which to keep teaching aids and books. Only grades 6 and 7 have benches for pupils. The pupils of grades 3, 4 and 5 sit on wooden planks supported by bricks, and those of grades 1 and 2 sit on the floor. The school has a kitchen and football field, but no office, storeroom, or latrines. It also has no telephone, electricity, or running water. A nearby spring is available.*

*The **pupils pay** school fees, book fees and maintenance fees. The money is collected by the principal, but is kept by the manager, who releases the money at the request of the school board.*

Records about daily attendance and quarterly tests are kept by each teacher during the year, and handed to the principal at the end of the year for safekeeping. A summary of enrolments is sent at the end of each year to the Ministry of Education.

The principal also has one record card for each pupil, indicating his/her address, parents or guardians, date of birth, sex, health record, social behaviour, positions of responsibility, and academic record over the years. The semi-annual report cards are prepared by each teacher and countersigned by the principal.

The school has Rules and Regulations for pupils. They cover school times and dates, wearing of uniforms, and behaviour in class, and extra-curricular activities.

Case 5.2:
Information About the Local Environment
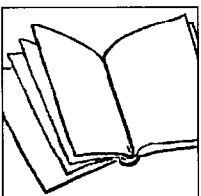
The parents of the pupils are mainly subsistence farmers, with a few fields and cattle. However, in most families, the father, or one of the sons works in the mines and comes home once a year. Many transfer, some money each month to their homes. The children come from homes where there is no male head, and often do not come to school because of a lack of funds.

Most parents have had a few years of primary schooling, but few have gone beyond that. In general, they see the importance of schooling and encourage their children, but they do not feel sufficiently confident to give an input to the running of the school. There is no Parent/Teachers' association, but if the Village Education Committee requests the parents to cooperate, they do so willingly.

The nearest clinic is on the main road, which is two hours away on horseback. At the clinic, information can be obtained about immunization campaigns, STD and HIV/AIDS programmes, as well as balanced nutrition.

The Hospital is in the Mission.

The nearest Agricultural Information Centre is in the District Headquarters, where the school inspector is also based. Information about seeds, fertilizer and correct planting procedures, can be found at this centre.

There is a small shop in the village, which sells exercise books, pencils and pens, but for charts, felt-pens, chalk and chalk-board paint, teachers have to go to a shop at the Mission. Other educational materials and books can be obtained from the Educational Resource Centre at the Inspector's office.

Tools and materials for maintenance can only be bought in shops at the District Headquarters.

Parents have been asked to collect cardboard boxes, which can be used as storage, or to make charts, and plastic bottles. Paints and glue can be made from local plants and soils. Children are asked to collect stones, bottle tops, plants and sticks, whenever required.

The village consists of many scattered clusters of homesteads. There is a headman for each cluster. The village is ruled by a chief, who is assisted by his elders. The chief is represented on the Village Education Committee by his younger brother, who is very supportive of the school.

There is also a Village Development Committee, which is elected by the people. It is responsible for projects such as roads, water supply and the building of a clinic. Sometimes there are differences of opinion between the chief and the village develop-ment committee, which negatively affects the school.

The poor financial and educational background of the parents has both negative and positive effects on the children: The parents wish a better life for their children, and see a way out by sending them to school, but they cannot help them in their school work. They also do not always understand that the students need time and space to do their homework. They expect them to look after the cattle and collect water.

Expectations of Education

The School's Internal Environment

As indicated before, the multi-grade school frequently has extremely limited resources. The classrooms tend to be poorly lit and are incapable of being divided. Often the teacher has no staff room or personal bathroom facilities. There tend to be no lunch or snack facilities. Often the school is located on a hill, or in a valley, and is only accessible on foot or on horseback.
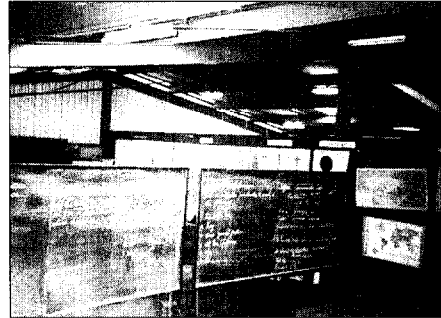
One multi-grade school showing classrooms separated by blackboards and light provided through skylights.

Suggestions for overcoming these difficulties are to divide the classroom with chalkboards and use skylights. It is important, therefore, that discipline is maintained in classrooms separated by chalkboards. Teachers should, speak as quietly as possible, so that students have to be quiet to hear them.

The Surrounding Environment

The quality of a school's environment has a significant impact on the learning in school. For the school to provide effective education, there must be close links between the school and its environment. You must know the environment surrounding your school, so that you can identify the resources you may use as means of learning, and the mechanisms which can support you as a multi-grade teacher.

Farming in the community.

The **external environment** comprises the National Education Environment, the opportunities for teacher development, and the structure of the National Authority. The **local environment** includes the school environment, which refers to the entire school system (including the Village Education Committee), and the community envi-

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ronment, (including the socio-economic and cultural systems and the Parent Teachers' Association/Home School Association).

National Education Environment

To study the national educational environment, several questions must be asked:

- What is the philosophy of education; what are the national vision and objectives of education?
- What are the targets, priorities, and major objectives?
- To what extent does the national curriculum reflect needs at the local and community levels?
- What is the basis for the budgetary provisions for each school?
- What ongoing training is provided for teachers?
- Are there provisions for gender differences and the physically challenged?
- Does the educational philosophy take into account the multi-cultural environment, the challenged student, and the socially dis-advantaged student?
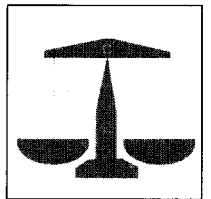
Aims of Education

This may relate to the status of students, when they graduate with a secondary level education; it may be the achievement of a certain degree of literacy and numeracy over a given period of time; or it may be the empowerment of students, so that they can function independently in the working world in a socially acceptable manner. For example, it might be the aim that all students should have access to data and information through the information super-highway, and that all classes are student-centred, rather than teacher-centred. The aims of education provides the broad guidelines for all teachers and schools, and creates the environment within which what is acceptable, and what is not, is determined. The aim that has been developed by one Ministry of Education is:

To provide a system which secures quality education for all persons in Jamaica, and achieves effective integration of educational and cultural resources, in order to optimize individual and national development.[3]

Targets and Priorities

Targets and priorities tend to be much more specific. The targets may be:

1. All schools have at least sufficient boards, benches, cupboards for books, and tables and chairs for teachers.
   The priority would be to identify the numbers needed, and the source of affordable school furniture

2. Seventy-five per cent of all schools will have computers by the year 2003 and seventy-five per cent of all students will be able to spend a minimum of two hours each school day on a computer.
   The priority would be the acquisition of computers and the training of teachers in their use.

Priorities must relate to the targets.

Curriculum and Needs

The extent to which the curriculum reflects the needs of the local and national communities will determine the level of adaptation required at the community level. The greater the adaptation, the more the risks are increased in ensuring that the national goals are met. This will be discussed in more detail in Volume Two.

Budgetary Provisions

The National Authority may be responsible for paying teachers and providing educational materials. Community groups may assume responsibility for a school-feeding programme, and for providing books for the library and their use in the schools. The Teachers may also be responsible for raising funds; for this he/she would have to mobilize community personnel, and work closely with the Parent/Teachers' Association/Home School Association.

Budgetary provisions may therefore assist in determining the extent of the teacher's, and school's, involvement in fund-raising activities.

Training

Training may be pre- or in-service. This training may be provided by the National Authority on an ongoing basis, during the summer

months when schools tend to be on vacation. There may be an agency within the National Authority, which is responsible for training, or training may be provided through scholarships or fellowships, through visits to other schools.

Some education systems may be arranged in such a way that teachers from school clusters can either share each other's experiences periodically, or can meet in training workshops on a regular basis. Other options are visits to designated demonstration schools, and (in cases where there are master-teachers) master and teacher exchanges.

Gender and other Differences

Gender differences frequently arise as a result of the socialization process, or the way in which boys and girls are raised. Traditionally girls are expected to assume responsibility for domestic chores at an earlier age, and, in addition, it has been shown that girls tend to develop psychologically, at a faster rate than boys. These experiences tend to lead to a need for gender differentiation in teaching strategies. Many societies are not homogeneous culturally, regardless of racial orientation. Finally in many schools, there are students who are physically and mentally challenged. In recent times national policies are designed to reflect these differences, to stress the need for balance and justice in the provision of education for all, and make allowances for these differences in training programmes.

Structure and Role of the National Authorities

Ministry of Education or National Authority

This may be the national or central organization with responsibility for developing the national educational philosophy, national policies, state examinations and the national curricula. This national organization may also have responsibility for paying teachers, siting schools, appointing Village Education Committees, distributing materials, providing in-service training for teachers, and the scheduling for the school year.

The national authority may also write the rules and regulations that govern the school system; and/or each school may be responsible for defining its own rules and regulations.

Inspectorate (Regional and/or District level)

The national organization may have regional or district offices, which provide the opportunity for visits to schools, and ensure the distribution of materials. These offices also maintain records relating to each school. Representatives of these offices may have responsibility for monitoring and evaluating all the schools within their region.

Modifying the National Curriculum

The national curriculum may be developed by the central organization, with inputs from teachers throughout the country. The curriculum may be designed to satisfy the needs of private sector groups, which will eventually hire the graduates, and the communities in which the graduates will ultimately work.

However the curriculum has to be made relevant to students in each community. In order to gain, and maintain, the attention of the students, teachers have to present concepts and ideas within the framework of the students' experiences.

For example in teaching Social Studies, the topic may be Transportation and Occupations. The curriculum may make reference to the business and financial sectors, under the caption of occupations and buses, and cars or trams for transportation.

Students in rural communities, where there is no access to television, and where there are no such occupations or modes of transportation, will not understand the concepts. For students to grasp the relevant concepts and ideas they should be taken from the point of view of what they know, and be guided towards what they do not yet know. The teacher would, therefore, have to modify the curriculum to include farming, which exists, and the use of oxen, or whatever means are available in their village. Students could then be allowed to describe what is around them, or within their own experience.

Although the content may be modified, the concepts remain unchanged.

National Examinations

The National Examinations may be designed to facilitate the movement of students from one stage of education to another. There may be a national examination to determine the degree of readiness, for example of literacy and numeracy.

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Professional Development for Multi-grade Teachers

Multi-grade teachers may be interested in obtaining information on the training which is available and most easily accessible. This knowledge would assist them to plan for the future, and facilitate their access to relevant programmes.

Teacher Training Institutes and their Programmes

Many countries have several teacher training colleges or universities, although there may be little, or no training available in multi-grade teaching. It is possible, however, that short-term training courses or seminars may be available.

In-service Courses

Many in-service courses may be available to teachers of schools in urban areas, or in areas near towns. Alternatively the National Authority may plan short-term training programmes, which could be held during the long holidays. These would enable teachers to be residential, and participate fully in the training exercise.

Individual or School Support

This relates to the opportunities provided by the school, to enable the teacher to meet other teachers, so that they can exchange experiences and any training they have received. Teachers need to develop a network, through which they can keep in touch with each other, and provide support for one another. This may be done through computers, on a one-to-one basis, through letter writing, or through attendance at cluster meetings.
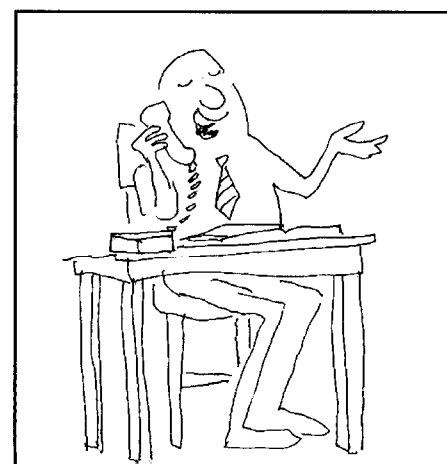
Provision of Training Materials

Materials may be provided for teachers to assist them in multi-grade teaching. This may be through the provision of notes, a manual, long distance media (radio or television), teleconferencing or activity sheets. This might even be done through the sharing of materials received at short term training sessions or seminars.

Local Educational Environment

The Local Educational Environment comprises your immediate environment, which includes that of the school and the community which the school serves. As stated before, knowing the Local Environment will enable teachers to plan effectively for a school environment that is appealing, not only to the students, but to their parents as well. Knowing this environment also facilitates the use of parents or other community personnel as resource persons, in teaching non-curricular, as well as curricular areas, such as social studies.

The School Community.

Activity 5.1
The Organization of a School
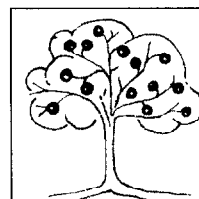
Purpose: This activity will familiarize you with the organization of your school and will help you determine how you may utilize the information to assist you in your work.

Questions:
1. How is your school managed?
2. What is the role of the principal?
3. What facilities are there in your school?
4. How are finances managed?
5. How are records kept?
6. What are the rules and regulations?
7. How does information about the organization of your school help you?

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Possible Response
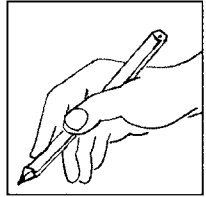
Information on the Environment

This information will vary depending upon the environment. The main source of income in the community is significant – it may be large-scale or subsistence level farming, mining, fishing. Are there any community organizations? These would include Citizens' Associations, Fishermen's, Farming or other cooperative, Parent Teachers' Association, Home/School Association, or religious groups. How active are these groups? Do Service Clubs operate in the community? What types of materials are available in the community?

Are there opportunities for such activities as nature walks, visits to environmentally important places, such as rivers, springs, or hills?

What is the major cultural activity? Are there any businesses or private sector groups operating in the community? Who are the main community leaders, and what socio-economic groups do the students represent? From which government organizations can this information be gained? This information can be gained by answering the questions below.

1. Are all parents part of the Parent Teachers' Association?

2. What are the sources of information (Health, Agriculture, etc.)?

3. Where can appropriate materials be obtained?

4. Are there shops, resource centres, etc.?

5. Can parents collect resource materials, such as cardboard boxes, stones, dyes, etc.?

6. Who are the Village Authorities and community leaders?

7. What are the students' social and educational backgrounds?

Activity 5.2
Information about
# the Local Environment
# of Your School
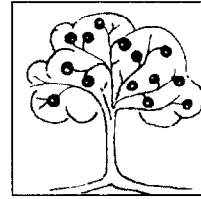
Purpose: This activity will familiarize you with the local environment of your school, and will help you determine how you may utilize the information to assist you in your work.

Questions: 1. Describe the parents and the parent/teachers' association.

2. What are the sources of additional information which would help you to prepare for your classes?

3. Where can you obtain materials to make teaching and learning aids?

4. Identify the shops and resource centres.

5. What materials can be found in your local environment?

6. Describe the village level authorities. Who are they? How can they participate in improving the school?

7. Describe the pupils' social and educational backgrounds.

8. How can information about the local environment of your school help you to improve the educational opportunities of your pupils?

Possible Responses

Constraints to, and strategies to enhance multi-grade practice[4]

Constraints	Strategies
Poverty and lack of integration between education and health programmes	Build partnerships at all levels especially between education, health and economic development. Train teachers to be multi-skilled persons with enhanced competencies in health promotion, agriculture and micro-finance. Ensure schools have facilities for the safe disposal of faeces, clean water for drinking, and water for handwashing.

| Constraints	Strategies
Training lacks relevance to real teaching situation. All theory, no practice.	Learn in real contexts. Bring the training to the teachers. Provide more practical training in real contexts. Encourage teachers to become active learners, problem solvers, experimenters and innovators.
Teachers are working in personal and professional isolation.	Reach and support the most isolated teachers. Provide continuous (ongoing) teacher development to enable teachers to reflect on their practice and make changes. Explore the possibility of providing distance education materials for developing areas of professional practice and/or for in-service upgrading of qualifications.
The absence of a literate environment to support learning.	Provide remote schools with resource boxes for making teaching aids and include children's games. Provide a small rotating library with picture books, comics and newspapers.
Lack of local relevance in the curriculum.	Help teachers to develop the 15 per cent 'window', and encourage them to involve parents.
Lack of resources including teaching aids and learning materials.	Provide teachers with scissors, paper, crayons and glue. Train and encourage teachers to produce and use local resources. Recognize that teaching aids can be made from materials such as sticks, stones, bottles and tins. Recognize that human resources are also available including children as well as adults.
The poor condition and small size of some classrooms.	Ensure that classrooms have a minimum of basic conditions such as waterproof roofs and walls.
The very poor conditions for children living in semi-boarding schools	Strengthen partnership with parents and provide additional support so that children are not cold and hungry and left without care and supervision. Provide funding for Village Education Commitees.

Summary
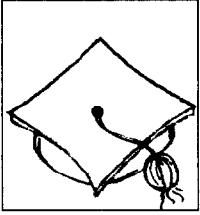
There are several external influences that have an impact upon the multi-grade school. In this unit the influences that have been examined relate to the national education environment, including the inputs of the National authorities, the local education environment, as well as the schools' non-education environment, including the community and the physical surroundings.

The Next Unit
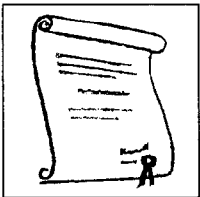
The influence of the National Curriculum is extremely important. However the multi-grade teacher will have responsibility for making the national curriculum relevant to the needs of the students, and meet the expectations of community members, including the parents.

The steps for designing and/or modifying the curriculum and for developing lesson plans will be discussed.

A Handbook for Teachers of Multi-Grade Classes

Volume Two

Improving Performance at the Primary Level

Prepared by G. B. Mathot
Edited by June Cezair Wallace, Hope Mc Nish and John Allen
Produced by June Cezair Wallace

UNESCO

Preface

A Handbook for Teachers
of Multi-Grade Classes

Every child has a right to an education. Multi-grade classes and single teacher schools have made it possible for many children in remote rural areas and communities to exercise this right. These classes exist in both developing and developed countries. In countries such as Norway and France, they have worked reasonably well. However, in many developing countries, these classes and schools often lack educational materials, appropriately trained teachers and effective supervision. The teachers rarely receive training in how to deal with them, and are ill-prepared for managing large numbers of pupils, of different ages and levels of learning, that they confront in the classes.

If progress is to be made towards Education for All, the challenges of multi-grade classes and single teacher schools must be urgently met. Children in small communities must have access to good quality education. This is very relevant to children in widely dispersed communities, girls, who for reasons of security, must attend school near their residences, ethnic groups that prefer their children to be educated in their location as well as children living in mountainous and hard to reach areas. To this end, in co-operation with various institutions, UNESCO conducted a series of case studies in fourteen countries namely: Australia, Bolivia, Burkina Faso, China, Korea, France, Greece, Lesotho, Mali, the Philippines, Portugal, Tanzania, Russia and Zaire. Following this experience, UNESCO, jointly with the Royal Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs in Norway, initiated a programme to enhance the effectiveness of multi-grade classes and single-teacher schools. On the basis of information gained through the case studies, an inter-regional workshop on "Single-Teacher Schools and Multi-grade classes" was held in Lillehammer, Norway 2 to 6 September 1996.

The participants were drawn from the countries in which the studies were undertaken. Norway was considered an apt partner because of its long history of offering education in small effective schools. The participants discussed the issues of multi-grade classes and single teacher schools and decided that it was necessary to prepare a handbook based on the experiences of the countries. The two volumes of this handbook reflect the shared experiences of the workshop. They are not intended to replace existing materials in use in formal teacher education courses, but for use in the in-service training of teachers working in multi-grade schools, and as a handy daily reference book for them.

The Handbook for Teachers of Multi-Grade Classes

The Handbook went through a process of development, with a view to ensure that it is interactive and user friendly. It comprises ten units, each one consisting of common experiences, cases to reviewed, activities to carry out, possible responses, and a summary of what has been learnt. The approach is essentially practical rather than theoretical, and is designed to help in dealing with the day-to-day problems that multi-grade teachers face. As these schools often serve defined communities and most times there is little support from the government, emphasis is given to the need to develop close partnerships between the school and the community. This relationship not only promotes self -reliance in the provision of additional manpower and material resources, but also ensures that local learning priorities are respected and met, and that the partnership is mutually beneficial.

The reasons for establishing multi-grade classes are elaborated, and their advantages and disadvantages described. Teachers are shown how they can acquire skills, strategies and the confidence they need to work in such schools, and build the necessary partnerships, not only with the local community (its leaders as well as the parents), but also with other teachers working in similar schools. They are also encouraged to exercise initiative and imagination in adapting their teaching to the more challenging situation in which they are required to work. Advice is also given on how to obtain more support from the government and various ministries.

Suggestions are provided in the Handbook on how to modify and adapt the national curriculum, in order to meet local priorities and needs, arrange the classroom to accommodate different learning levels, organize relevant learning experiences, identify and obtain any teaching aids available in the local environment, keep careful records and monitor and evaluate students' progress.

Using the Handbook for Teachers in Multi-Grade Classes

Areas Covered

A single unit deals with only one topic. The units cover such areas as "What are multi-grade classes", "Partnerships", "Government and Peer Support", The Educational Environment", "Curriculum adaptation", "Learning Experiences", "Teaching and Learning Materials" and Monitoring, Record-keeping and Evaluation".

Cases

Each unit presents one or more cases taken from a number of multi-grade schools. This enables the teacher to become familiar with the various types of problems and challenges that may be encountered and the possible ways of dealing with them. These may include such areas as the environment in which the school is located, the teacher's concern about his or her development, the need for funds to improve school facilities, relations with parents and school absenteeism, etc. The problems highlighted are intended to be those with which the teacher may readily identify, and to which solutions must be found. They also provide references, which enable the teacher to understand that the difficulties that he, or she meets are by no means unique or unusual.

Activities

The active involvement in the learning process is essential if the necessary skills are to be acquired. This is achieved by posing a series of questions on multi-grade teaching to which answers are to be given. These may be related to the experiences in the teacher's own school or may refer to the case presented or other items found in the text. The activities are meant to create a positive attitude in teachers towards the identification and solution of problems.

Possible Responses

These enable the user of the Handbook to check whether the responses given to the questions posed as Activities are appropriate or not, and to expand further on the information given.

Summary

Each unit ends with a summary of the main points dealt with, and introduces the following one.

This Handbook will be available in hard copies and on-line from the Primary Education website, http://www.unesco.org/education/educprog/primary_edu/CADindex.html. It is hoped that teachers of multi-grade classes and single teacher schools will benefit and will also take time out to keep UNESCO informed of some of the challenges that persist and ways in which they can be addressed.

UNESCO wishes to take this opportunity to thank all those who contributed to make this Handbook a reality. However, special mention should be made of the participating countries, the Royal Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs in Norway, the Norwegian National Commission to UNESCO, the Jamaican team led by June Wallace, and John Allen.

Contents

Welcome

Welcome to the second volume of the *Handbook for Teachers of Multi-Grade Classes!* As a teacher in these classes, you face more challenges and constraints than a teacher in a single grade class. Because of several factors, such as the larger number of students in a single class, the presence of several learning levels within a class, or the remote location of these types of schools, multi-grade teaching requires additional skills above those normally required by a school teacher.

This *Handbook* was prepared as supplementary training material to help you meet the challenges, and overcome the constraints. It will also help you to confirm, and strengthen, the significant role that you play in providing education and improving literacy.

**Read on, and continue your role
in providing Education for All!**

This *Handbook* was prepared for teachers who are, or who will be, teaching multi-grade classes. The goal is to suggest strategies, which will be helpful in managing and teaching such classes. It does not replace teacher training, but is intended to supplement formal training.

Although this handbook is designed for use in the group training, of multi-grade teachers, it can also be a useful resource for individual teachers. It should be kept handy for daily reference.

Objectives

After going through both Volumes of the *Handbook*, you should be able to:
- List the advantages and constraints of having small schools;

- Explain the inter-relationships between the school and the national and local environment;
- Foster partnerships between your school and the community, and use these partnerships to benefit both;
- Establish peer collaboration to improve pedagogy and morale;
- Adapt the curriculum to reflect the needs of the community, and prepare lesson plans and a timetable;
- Compare and contrast the different strategies for teaching and organizing learning experiences;
- Create various learning environments for your pupils;
- Identify the different sources of teaching and learning materials in the environment; and
- Keep records of your pupils' progress and evaluate their performance.

Content

This Handbook is divided into two Volumes. Volume One covers your role as a teacher, and Volume Two covers the more technical aspects of multi-grade teaching. Volume One comprises Units One to Five, while Volume Two comprises Units Six to Ten. Below is a brief description of the topics covered.

Introduction – This introduces you to the nature and objectives of this *Handbook*.

1. **What Are Multi-Grade Classes?** – This section attempts to provide a broad introduction to the term 'multi-grade classes'.

2. **The Challenge of Multi-grade Classes** – explains the existence of multi-grade classes, and describes the roles and the constraints faced by the teachers in those classes.

3. **Partnerships** – discusses the options available for utilizing available resources through partnerships with the surrounding community, and shows how the partnership between the school and the community can benefit both parties.

4. **Government and Peer Support** – covers such areas as professional development, and ways in which teachers can support each other, and facilitate short term training in multi-grade

applications, and describes how government and peer support can help alleviate the isolation, and lack of support, felt by multi-grade teachers.

5. **Educational Environment** – adresses the impact of the educational environment, both national and local, on single-teacher schools and multi-grade classes.

6. **Curriculum Development** – provides suggestions on how to modify the curriculum, and develop lesson plans and timetables.

7. **Learning Experiences** – discusses different strategies for teaching and organizing learning experiences, and offers information on their advantages and disadvantages.

8. **Management of Classes** – provides suggestions on two main aspects of the management of your classes, namely: how to arrange the actual physical environment (the classroom), and how to organize your pupils' learning environment.

9. **Teaching and Learning Sources** – identifies the different sources of teaching and learning materials in the environment, and gives some suggestions on how teachers can produce their own materials and use them.

10. **Monitoring, Record-Keeping and Evaluation** – covers essential aspects of monitoring, the record-keeping of students' progress, and evaluation.

11. **Management of Large Classes** – covers some suggestions on how teachers can manage large classes, and small groups within those classes.

Structure of the Handbook

Each Unit opens with a list of *Areas to be Covered*, to provide a broad overview.
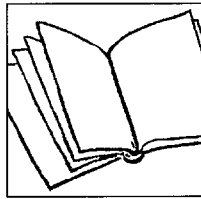
There is a *Case* which illustrates, in a real-life situation, the concepts which will be discussed in the topic. The case study is introduced with an open book logo.

The content comprises sub-topics, which are introduced in big, bold, italicized print for easy reference, and specific headings within the sub-topics are highlighted in bold print.

To enhance your experience, *Activities* are provided for each topic, and even for sub-topics. These activities allow you to apply immediately the concepts that you have just learned, and help you to build the needed skills. Activities are introduced with a fruit-bearing tree logo.

Activities are followed by *Possible Responses* to provide a stimulus for your thoughts. Responses are identified with the logo on the left.

Each unit ends with a *Summary* of the main points.

A transition to the next topic is then provided, to ensure a smooth flow from topic to topic: *The Next Unit*.

Unit Six:
Curriculum Adaptation

Areas to be Covered

Case 6.1:
  Modifying the National Curriculum
National Curriculum Requirement
Multi-Grade Teaching Curriculum Development
Activity 6.1:
  Developing Your Curriculum
  Organizing Lesson Plans
Activity 6.2:
  Developing Your Own Lesson Plan
  Organizing Schemes of Work and Timetables
Activity 6.3:
  Developing a Working Timetable

For holistic development of the child
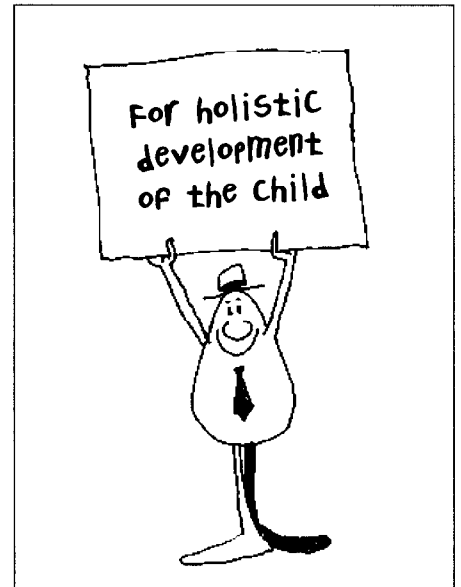
Case 6.1
Modifying the National Curriculum
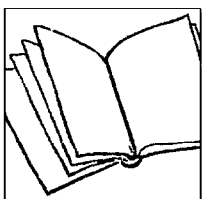
Zinga Mobeki reviewed the new National Curriculum for Social Studies. He then outlined his plan for the new term. Having identified distinctly different levels of students in the class, he formulated different objectives according to the needs of each group. He also substituted the prescribed lessons with material that would be more relevant to the students' experiences, and allowed the teaching of the same principles and concepts.

For example, in the lesson dealing with economic activities, he deals with farming, small retail shops and other activities, which the students see around them. He uses discussions of what the parents of the students do, and uses pictures to teach the content included in the curriculum, which refers to more urban activities involved in banking, import/export, restaurants, shopping, theatre, etc.

Curriculum Requirements

The Official Curriculum

In most countries there is a national curriculum or curriculum outline. Each teacher should obtain a copy of the Official Curriculum from the Ministry of Education, or the National Authority. It is the required guide for developing lesson plans, to ensure consistency in the level and quality of education that students receive. The national curriculum is also designed to meet the national goals of the Education Authority. Below is a sample extracted from a curriculum. The headings vary according to the relevant national needs.
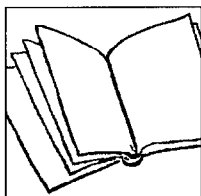
Sample curriculum -
Health and Family Life Education.

Themes	Concepts	Skills	Recommended Strategy	Integration and Infusion Links
1. **Self-development** **A Goal in Life**	Parish Institution Location Expectation Behaviour Career Career Path	Giving directions and location Meeting expectations Behaving appropriately Research careers	Read and discuss appropriate section of the text. Do the exercises and activities which follow: Use appropriate activities for reinforcement. Ask students to debate on the values that exist in their own community, by comparing them with those practised outside.	Reading and Comprehension
2. **Values for Growth and Development**	Values Being industrious National holidays Special days	Living by positive values Doing assigned tasks Celebrating holidays and special days	Students can examine their own career goals, and make suggestions on how they can be achieved. (This may require the acquistion of skills from outside the community).	Reading and Comprehension
3. **Interaction for Social Development**	Interaction Higher Being Principles Communication Conflict resolution	Getting along with others Worshipping a Higher Being Communication Conflict resolution	By brainstorming, teachers can learn of the problems which exist within the community. These problems can then be discussed and the process of problem-solving applied.	Reading and Comprehension Maths

Themes	Concepts	Skills	Recommended Strategy	Integration and Infusion Links
4. Positive Choices for Growth and Development	Problems	Analyzing problems Resolving problems		Reading and Comprehension Maths
5. Healthy Lifestyles for Growth and Development	Health Growth Hormones Sexual organs Puberty Development First Aid Environment	Adjusting to changes in their bodies Taking care of their bodies Administering First Aid Protecting the environment	In discussions with the teachers students can identify what "healthy lifestyles" mean for them. Some headings to guide the discussion may include: food and nutrition, exercise, drug abuse, family support and interaction, early sexually activity, hygiene, coping skills.	Reading and Comprehension Maths

Source: Ministry of Education, Jamaica

Modifying the Curriculum

It is, therefore, the responsibility of the local teacher to modify the curriculum to meet the goals of the particular school and its community. This modification must be based on the knowledge the teacher has of the students, their parents, and their behaviour within the community, as well as the specific needs of the community. It is also important to start with what the students already know, or with which they are familiar, and then work gradually to what they do not know. Interpretation of the concepts and content by the students must be facilitated by the teacher. The recommended strategies indicated in the chart above, and as outlined in the case study, allow this.

In multi-grade teaching, it is necessary to adapt the national curriculum to the needs of the various learning groups within your class. How do you do this? How do you arrange the given curriculum, so that all the pupils under your care reach the required level of attainment?

An official curriculum is provided as part of the normal teacher training process. For the official curriculum to be effective within a multi-grade setting, the official curriculum should permit adaptation to local situations.

To do this, certain themes, units or topics, can be selected to enable the planning of common activities for a cluster of grades, or groups of pupils. Based on these selected items, you

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can then plan the graded activities or assignments to suit different levels. You can also plan learning sequences at different depths. For example, a theme from the environmental studies syllabus, such as "Protecting the Ozone Layer", can be planned with a common core of reading lessons and activities, designed to meet the conceptual and experimental levels of children in two or three grades.

Below are important suggestions on multi-grade curriculum development, and/or modification. The following steps should be undertaken for each grade level.

1. Clarify the overall goal, bearing in mind the teacher's strengths and weaknesses, the needs of the community, the desires of the parents, and the requirements of the national curriculum.

2. State the learning objectives, i.e. what the students will be able to do upon completion of each stage.

3. List the topics and sub-topics.

4. Outline the overall strategy, and methods of teaching that will be used.

5. Identify the resources such as textbooks, instruments, etc.

6. Describe the methods that will be used to measure achievement.

7. Develop materials such as exercises, tests, etc.

How to Arrange the Given Curriculum

A local level working group would have to be organized. This group may be a group of practising educators and education officials working with curriculum development specialists, community members or any other group that is thought to have the expertise, and be able to cotribute to an effective curriculum. The working group will have to study the National Educational Policy, to decide whether the adaptation of the curriculum will be based on:

- Annual objectives and guidelines for all subjects;
- Annual objectives and guidelines for some subjects only, such as mathematics;
- Objectives attainable after a number of years, for example for sets of two consecutive years (grades 1 and 2, grades 3 and 4, etc.) or for lower primary and higher primary only (e.g. grades 1 to 4, and grades 5 to 7);

- Objectives to be achieved at the end of the primary school course only.

Then it can be decided how far the work of pupils in one grade can be combined with that of pupils in other grades.

In the first case, the pupils of different grades have to learn different topics at the same time. In other cases, it is possible to take several grades together and deal with the same topic, taught in rotation, so that all pupils are exposed to all required topics by the end of the school year.

This combination of grades is easier in subjects such as Social Studies and Religious Education than it is in Mathematics and Language, which are more sequentially organized. Project Work, which will be described later, can be used to deal with the same topic at different levels at the same time. For example, in a science lesson on plants, groups might be divided as suggested in the table below.

Level 1 Students	*Level 2 Students*	*Level 3 Students*	*Parents/Community members*
Drawing and labelling a seed	Conducting a germinating experiment	Drawing an illustration of the various stages of a plant from seed to maturity	Parents and community members maybe supervising groups, as the teacher moves from one grade to another; they may supply the seed or plant

If the work is to be combined, the teachers need to be supported in their planning, because the national textbooks are often geared towards single-grade schools.
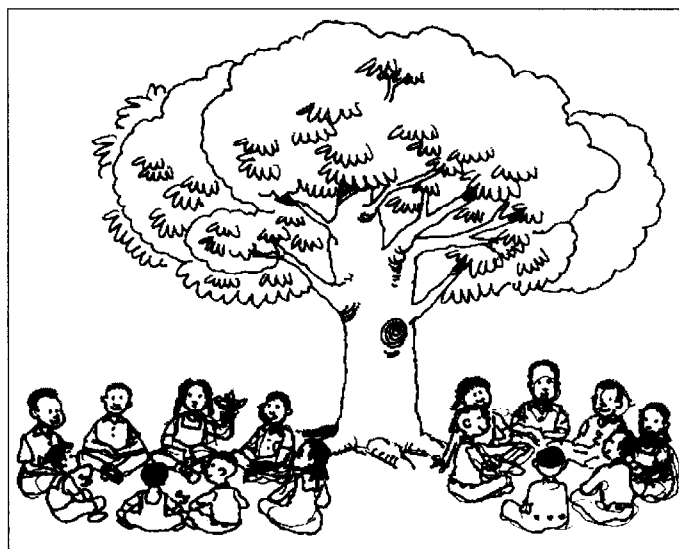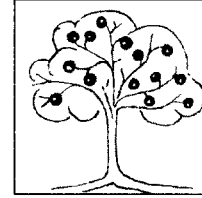
Activity 6.1
Adapting the Official Curriculum
to the Needs of Your Class

Purpose: This activity will allow you to apply the suggestions given on curriculum development, and will give you practice in adapting it to the needs of your class.

Instructions:
1. Select topics in the official curriculum, and make changes which will reflect the needs and cultural environment of your multi-grade class.

2. Discuss with a peer the appropriateness of your adaptations. Ensure that the concepts of the official curriculum remain intact.

Question:
3. How will you evaluate the effectiveness of your curriculum?

Developing Lesson Plans for Multi-Grade Classes

Lesson plans are essential for the effective management of learning. The following are suggestions on the development of lesson plans.

1. Identify the theme.
2. State the objectives – academic and non-academic.
3. List the concepts and principles to be covered, according to the different grades present in the class.
4. Select the appropriate sections of the textbook.
5. Outline the activities according to the grades in the class.

One Format of a Lesson Plan:

Author: Melissa Brown

Grade Level: Grades 2 and 3.

Topic: African Clothing.

Objective: Children will correctly identify examples of every-day clothing, and special occasion clothing, worn in Africa (or their country).
Children will learn flexibility and the need to adjust to different situations.

Materials needed:

- Traditional African clothing to be worn by the teacher
- Pictures depicting life in Africa - both traditional, showy clothing for special occasions, and western-style clothing for every day use
- One card per student with the word "special occasion" on one side and "every day life" on the other
- One 4-page book (or 4-frame story board) for each student (for the extension activity)

Procedures:

1. The teacher comes to class dressed in an unusual outfit. It could be one that is used for special occasions, or in unusual circumstances (pilgrim, dancer, Halloween costume, band uniform, graduation cap and gown, cowboy, Amish, scuba gear, baker, etc). Ask children for what occasion you are dressed up, if you have a cowboy outfit. Stimulate a discussion about what people, who do not know much about the United States, might think if they saw a picture of you dressed like that. Would they be likely to think that all Americans dress like that on a normal day? (Yes, because they wouldn't know any better.) Show examples in books, calendars, magazines and photographs, of Africans dressed in traditional or showy clothes. Ask children if they think all African people dress like that every day.

2. Explain that some Africans, particularly men, wear western-style clothing on a daily basis. Brainstorm reasons why. Then discuss the reasons the children gave (making sure to dispel any stereotypes such as: "They wanted to be like Americans." or "They were a backward people.") Add some reasons of your own to the list, and discuss them.

3. Ask students on what special occasions they may "dress up". Encourage all types of responses (picture day at school, a wedding, to go to church, to play sports, etc.). Explain that Africans "dress up" in more traditional attire for particular occasions, certain ceremonies, and other special events. Describe, and show, picture examples of times when different African[1] people do this.

4. Show picture examples of African people in various types of clothing, and ask children whether that picture illustrates every day life, or a special occasion. This would be a great time to integrate some children's literature depicting life in Africa, both traditionally and more recently. Each student has a card with "special occasion" on one side, and "every day life" on the other. Students, facing the teacher, hold up their cards with the words that they believe describe the particular picture.

1. The topic and the questions may be designed so that they relate to the country in which the class is.

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Evaluation: Check to make sure that each student holds up the appropriate card for each picture. If a student has questions, or concerns, regarding a particular picture, discuss with the class reasons why that particular picture would be considered "every day" or "special occasion."

Extension Activity: Each student makes a 4-page book (or a 4-frame story board) and creates an African "Fashion Show", depicting different clothing Africans may wear, and when they would wear them (special occasion or every day life). Watch for at least two illustrations dealing with "every day life"; men in western-style clothing, women in dresses, etc. The students may depict clothing used for special occasions, and be sure that they label it as such.

Resources: *Understanding Africa,* E. Jefferson Murphy, Thomas Y. Crowell: New York, 1978.

The First Book of Africa, Langston Hughes, Franklin Watts, Inc.: New York, 1964. (pictures)

Rick Van DeGraff, director of the "Ouelessebougou; Utah Alliance".

1998 Calendar from the "Ouelessebougou – Utah Alliance". (pictures)

Material World, Peter Menzel, Sierra Club Books: San Francisco, 1994. (good resource for pictures)

When creating a multi-grade lesson plan, the teacher would outline different activities for different cognitive levels.

Persons dressed in African clothing.

A sample multi-grade lesson plan is provided below:

Topic: Slavery

Grade Level: Grades 3, 4 and 5.

Objectives: The students will be able to:

• Identify points on the map from which Africans were taken into slavery to work on West Indian plantations;
• Show territories in the West Indies on a map to which Africans were taken as slaves;

- Trace the route along which the Africans were transported to the West Indies to work as slaves;
- Memorize, and give their reactions to, important historical facts about slavery;
- To promote respect for all persons.

Materials Needed:
- Book on the history of slavery;
- Book on the history of the West Indies (at the appropriate level);
- Map of the world;
- Map of Africa;
- Map of the West Indies;
- Thread and pins.

Methodology:

1. Read to the class that section of the text which covers slavery in the West Indies. (Teachers' reading in a manner that permit the younger students to understand.

2. Show them on the maps available: places in Africa from where people were taken; the route through which they travelled to the West Indies; and the places in the West Indies to which they were taken.

Each grade level will undertake activites as follows:

3. Grade 3 students will gather closely around the maps of Africa and the West Indies, or a globe of the world, where the teacher's aide (who may be a parent or community member) will take them through the exercise of identifying points on the map, and saying what happened at each of those points. Let them use thread and pins to trace the route.

4. Grade 4 children will draw a map of the world, and mark on it the key points. They will also describe things that happened while transporting the Africans to the West Indies, and their conditions of life as slaves in the West Indies. They will be supervised by a teacher's aide.

5. Grade 5 students will make up a short skit, showing how a group of children were captured in Africa and taken to the West Indies, and how they lived as slaves.

6. Bring all students back together and let Grade 5 do their skit. The teacher must be sure that he/she processes whatever happens in the skit, so that it is a teaching/learning experience.

7. Give the children opportunity to express their feelings about slavery.

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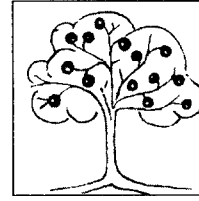
Activity 6.2
Developing Your Own
Lesson Plan

Purpose: This activity will permit you to apply the suggestions given on developing lesson plans, and will give you practice in developing your own.

Instructions: 1. Given the curriculum, which you have designed for your class, develop a working lesson plan.

2. Compare and exchange ideas regarding your lesson plan with your peers if, or when, this is possible.

Question: 3 How will you evaluate the effectiveness of your lesson plan?

Organizing Schemes of Work and Timetables

Timetables help the teacher to develop a structured approach to the management of a class. With a well-planned timetable, it is easier to incorporate the assistance of volunteer teacher aides. They help to ensure organization. Some guidelines to follow in preparing timetables are:

1. Allot sufficient time for adequate coverage of the topic. Take into consideration that some topics or activities will require more time at different grade levels. For example, on one topic the Grade 3 activity may be completed in one class period, whereas Grades 4 and 5 may require double periods, or two consecutive sessions.

2. Take into consideration community activities, which occur at the same time, and the ways in which they would have an impact on the students, e.g. the harvest.

3. Make sure to include hands-on activities and field trips.

4. Indicate whether each grade will be supervised in their activity by a volunteer teacher aide, or by the teacher. Colour coding could be used to highlight this.

Sample Format for Timetable for Multi-Grade Classes

Time	Subject	Topic/Activities by Grade		
		Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
08:45 am				
09:15 am				
09:45 am				
10.15 am				
10:45 am				
11:15 am				
11:45 am				
12:45 pm				
01:15 pm				
01:45 pm				
02:15 pm				
02:45 pm				
03:15 pm				

Activity 6.3
Developing
a Working Timetable
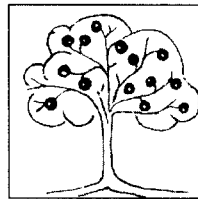
Purpose: This activity will allow you to apply the suggestions given on organizing schemes of work and timetables, and will give you practice in developing your own working timetable.

Instruction:

1. Given the lesson plan which you have just developed, prepare a corresponding timetable. A sample format is provided. However, duration of the class may variy depending on the topic.

2. Compare and exchange ideas regarding your timetable with your peers.

Question:

3. How do you evaluate the efficiency of your timetable?

Summary
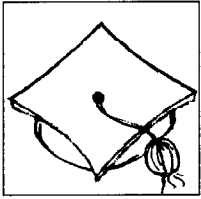
The importance of effective curriculum modification cannot be over emphasized. The curriculum forms the basis of what you will teach to your students, and will determine how you will meet their learning needs. Thorough planning will ensure that your pupils reach the required level of attainment. Now that you have finished developing your lessons, you should teach them, and assess your own achievements. After teaching the lessons, make a list of your successes and failures. Indicate how you are going to overcome the aspects that did not go well, and how you are going to maintain, or even improve, the good ones.

The Next Unit
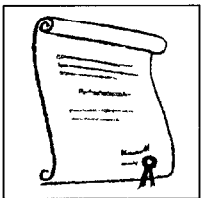
As a multi-grade teacher, your main concern is not only to adapt the given curriculum, so that it reflects the experiences of your students, but also to use techniques with which your students can easily identify. Learning experiences should also be appropriate to the level of competence and the life experiences of the students. In doing this, you need to take into account how students of different grades can help each other by working together.

Unit Seven: Learning Experiences

Areas to be Covered
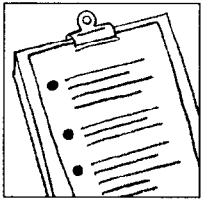
Effective Teaching
Teaching Strategies
Activity 7.1:
   Giving Instructions
Activity 7.2:
   Utilizing Group Work
Case 7.1: Teaching Combination Classes
Activity 7.3:
   Peer Tutoring etc.
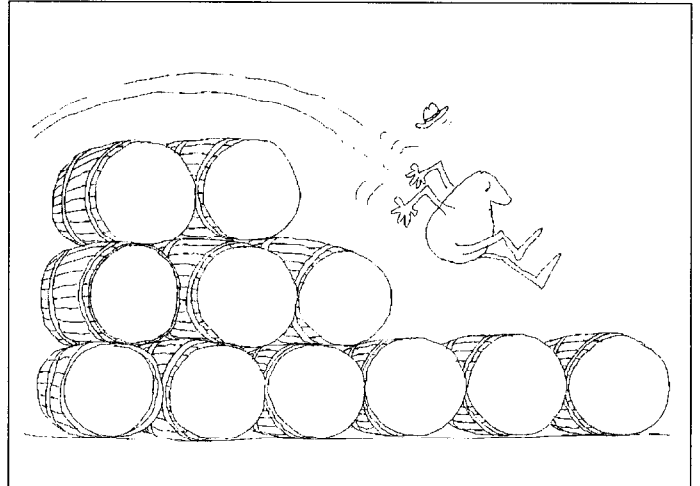
Effective Teaching

Multi-grade teaching offers several challenges, in terms of teaching and organizing learning experiences for students. Because of the number of students, and the differences in their attainment levels, a variety of teaching/learning strategies is needed to be effective. Teaching and organizing learning experiences in single-teacher schools and multi-grade classes calls for ingenuity and organizational skills. Effective teaching involves many variables. These include:

- Students' learning styles;
- Teacher's training, and his/her teaching styles;
- The classroom environment;
- Availability, and types of resources, for the teaching/learning process;
- School administration;
- Community and its scope and the nature of its involvement in the teaching/learning process.

Teaching Strategies

There is a wide variety of teaching strategies:
- Teacher-Centred Instruction;
- Group Work;
- Peer Tutoring;
- Self-directed Learning;
- Activity Centres Approach;
- Expository/Guided Discovery approach.

None of these strategies is the best, or perfect. The approach which is used must be the most appropriate for the particular circumstances. Invariably teachers will find that a combination of approaches needs to be applied simultaneously.

Teacher-Centred Approach

This approach is one in which the teacher is central to all activities. It may include such methods as:

- Recitation, which is applicable to multi-grade teaching if the teacher:

  - Waits after a question to ensure the participation of all students;
  - Makes sure that all students are allowed to respond;
  - Allows students to confer with each other before responding;
  - Makes students write down answers, and use them when responding.

- Discussion, where the teacher is still prominent, but is responsible for stimulating and maintaining the discussion.
- Individualized instruction.

One example of this is direct teaching or lecturing, in which the teacher commands the attention of the entire class, and directs the class discussion through the presentation of certain concepts, ideas or information, and controls the responses of students through questions and answers. Following is an example of a teacher-centred learning class.

AN EXAMPLE:

The teacher would start the Grade 5 class by introducing the main topic, which may be 'Nutrition'. While introducing and discussing the topic, the teacher would write the following words on the chalkboard.

Nutrition

Food nutrients

Food Groups

The teacher may draw a chart, or use a poster, showing the various nutrients and the different food groups in which they are found. Students may be encouraged to learn them by reciting them. During the entire time the teacher is at the centre of the learning process.

Students may be required to do individual activities, but the teacher goes from desk to desk, looking at what the students have done.

In reviewing what has been learned, the teacher may require that the students respond to questions simultaneously in the form of a recitation.

The recitation approach is considered as least interesting for students.
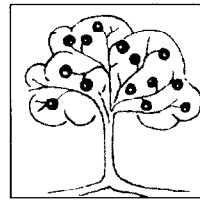
Activity 7.1
Giving Instructions

Purpose: This activity will focus your attention on the points to consider in utilizing teacher-centred activities.

Questions:
1. How can you get the attention of all pupils?
2. How do you hold their attention?
3. How do you give instructions so that pupils know what to do?
4. How do you help pupils who work on their own?
5. How do you help pupils who work in groups?

Possible Responses
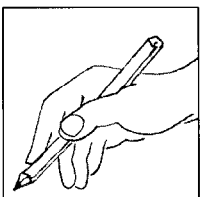
1. **How do you get the attention of all pupils?**
   Music, poetry, cultural activities, playing a game, or telling a story, may be very effective. Alternatively it can be sufficient to do something unexpected. For example, suddenly speaking softly is frequently more effective than shouting all the time. Students recognize that they have to be quiet to hear.

2. How do you hold their attention?

The pupils must want to listen to you, the teacher. Therefore, make sure that:

a. you are not interrupting an interesting student activity;

b. they know that it is interesting or relevant to listen to you.

c. The students become involved in what you are doing. One way of doing this is by asking questions, asking students to do frequent recitations, and by having students make up songs about the topic you are dealing with.

3. How do you give instructions to do something?

a. Wait until everybody is quiet and listening.

b. Prepare your instructions beforehand. It may be best to write them on the board, and ask students to write them in their books.

c. Speak softly and precisely, so that students have to be quiet in order to hear.

d. Give instructions in clear, simple words, and in a logical order

e. To encourage reading, write them on the chalkboard as you are saying them.

f. Ask specific questions to find out if students know what they are to do. For example, it is not sufficient just to ask: Do you all know what to do? The answer is then always "Yes!"

4. How do you help students who work on their own?

a. Do not interfere, unless they ask for help. This helps them to develop their independence.

b. If students are making mistakes, or are on the wrong track, help them to discover it for themselves.

c. Ensure that they have enough challenging work.

d. Provide ways in which students can make their own corrections.

5. How do you help those who work in groups?

a. Ensure that the group understands what needs to be done.

b. Each member of the group should have a specific responsibility.

c. Get them to play a game together, so that they learn to work together as a team.

Grouping

Grouping entails physically placing groups of students in different areas of the classroom for particular purposes. Grouping strategies tend to be very useful for managing students, who vary in their
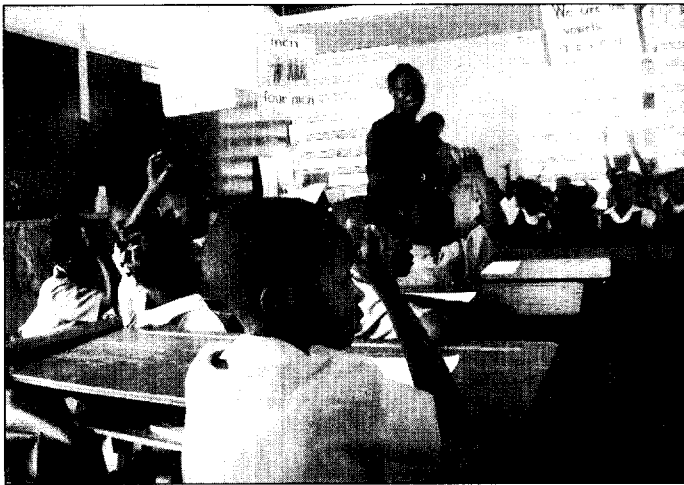
Two grade levels within one class. They are placed to the left and the right of the teacher.

One very small group placed on its own.

ability range. Groups may represent mixed ability in the whole class, or smaller groups according to their ability.

Many teachers prefer two main groups, usually facing each other, so that it is relatively easy for the teacher to communicate with both groups.

Alternatively there may be one or two small groups separated from the larger group, as is shown in the photograph on the right.

Groups can be taught by using one of three approaches:
* Maintaining separate discrete classes as in the two group approach.
* Teaching the whole class the same concepts.
* Mixed approach, whereby there is a combination of having discrete groups, for some subject or content areas, and using the whole group approach for less difficult concepts.

The determination of the approach depends on several factors, such as:
* The subject being taught: e.g. some subjects, like mathematics and reading, require much individual guidance.
* The concepts and content of the subject area: e.g. everyone would be able to understand the concept 'transportation'.
* Competence levels of the students in the particular areas; e.g. not all students in the same grade would be able to do long division.
* The nature of the skills being taught.

Whole class mixed ability is usually most effective when there are activities that the entire group can enjoy, or relate to; e.g. problem solving games, dramatic presentations or stories; use of audio-visual or multi-media presentations; or the sharing of classroom rules and regulations.

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Case 7.1
Teaching Combination Classes

Teachers sharing their experiences
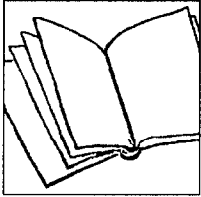
Two Group approach: *I group the students according to their grade level. They are very high first graders and very low second graders, though. I teach each group according to their ability, so there are two distinct classes every day in everything.*

Whole Class Approach: *I personally don't do traditional grouping in my class. I teach thematically to all my kids, regardless of what grade level they are in.*

Mixed Approach: *I have used a lot of grouping strategies, especially when I have Grades 1 and 2 in combination, because of the big differences in their abilities. For example, while the second graders are doing some reading, the first graders are not reading at all. There was a big difference between those grades, and so I taught each grade level separately from the other in language arts and maths. In social studies and science I grouped them together, by formulating my own units of study that could be used with both groups. I tried to make sure that I was meeting all their needs as effectively as possible, through large-group instruction.*

Desks, tables, benches and chairs arranged in a multi-grade classroom to facilitate at least three groups.

Group Work

In the multi-grade situation, students may be divided into groups, depending on the subject areas being taught. The decision whether to divide the class into groups, depends on the knowledge the teacher has about the ability of the students, with specific reference to the subject areas. In a multi-grade class with grades one and two, students may be divided into groups, as indicated in the Case 7.1, according to their grade level for subjects, such as Language Arts and Mathematics, where the concepts relate specifically to their developmental levels.

After you have explained a new concept to one group of students, and you have to spend time with students of another grade, it is necessary to give the first group a specific task. These tasks can be done individually, or in groups.

Group work is very useful when you want the rest of the class to do their own work, while you are attending to the others. You may divide students into groups, and then go from one group to another, guiding each group and helping out, when necessary.

Types of Groups

There are four major approaches to grouping: **(a)** between-class ability grouping; **(b)** within-class ability grouping; **(c)** cooperative learning and **(d)** individualized instruction. In the multi-grade situation, we are primarily interested in the last three approaches. Groups can be combined in different ways, depending on the nature of the work assigned. In multi-grade classes, there are two obvious choices:

1. By grade, so that all students can cover the same content for a specific grade, e.g. the curriculum requirements for that grade level.

2. Mixed grade groups, within which the tasks of different levels are assigned.

The opportunity is also provided for cooperative learning groups. In this situation students are required to display individual accountability, and responsibility for working with others to accomplish a shared goal.

In each group, a leader must be appointed, or elected, on the basis of the following qualities:

1. The leader must be energetic, and encourage members to work;

2. The leader must be open, friendly and cooperative, to create a cooperative atmosphere;

3. The leader must be responsible, so that the work is done as planned; and

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4. The leader must be fluent, so that the work can be explained clearly to the other pupils.

Students must be aware of these qualities, so that they can be guided into making the most appropriate choices, and they can learn to be good leaders.

Gaining Control over Small Groups
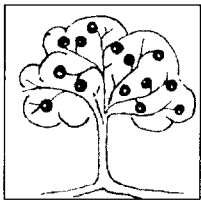
There is usually little resistance when students are asked to break into small groups. Students will respect the teacher's authority to break them into small groups. The time spent on each task, or each level of the task, must be strictly managed. Announce an agenda for the session, and indicate how much time will be spent discussing issues. Ensure that students know what to expect from their time together. Tell them the purpose behind the small group format, and what you hope to accomplish. You might want them to define concepts, integrate issues from the text, apply principles and concepts, or simply have someone else listen to their ideas.

Each participant must have a clear role to play. Students interact better in any setting when their roles are clearly defined. In a small group discussion, several roles are possible. There must be a **recorder** of the group's deliberations, a **time keeper**, and a **discussion monitor** who checks to ensure that everyone gets a chance to speak. Finally, hold participants accountable for acquiring the information. The outcomes of the small group discussions should be shared with the whole class. You may comment on, or ask members of the class to clarify, certain points. The remarks of the teacher and participants can be used to develop examination questions about the issues discussed.

To have better control over large classes, it is best to make a list of the students, and the groups which they will join. It is usually easiest to have those students in a group normally to sit together. This will reduce, or eliminate, the confusion that may arise when moving from a large group to a small one.

Examples of Group Activities

There are several types of group activities, which you may utilize in your class. Some examples are games, Activity Centres or project work. Let us go through each one, and see how you may use them in your multi-grade class.

1. Games

Games are useful methods of teaching because they make learning fun, and reinforce things you have already taught. They can be played either indoors or outdoors. Normally, they are fairer if they are played by pupils of the same grade. Some examples of games are:
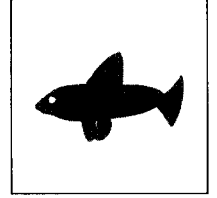
- For mathematics, you can find many number games, such as bingo. Monopoly would also help to teach mathematics.
- For language, you have games to make up sentences, or words; there is also a wide variety of crossword, and other word puzzles, commercially available. There is also a game called Scrabble.
- For science, the pupils can sing songs, indicating the parts of the body, or play miming games, where students point to various parts, or exaggerate various functions, and the students have to guess what they are.
- For Social Studies, games can often take the form of role playing.

Some games, such as "Snake and Ladder" and "Checkers" can be adapted for educational purposes.

2. Activity Centres

There are two types of learning processes derived from Activity Centres. One is through the process of creating the centre or experiential learning, assuming that the teacher does not do this entirely on his/her own. The second means is through exposure to the centre. These are areas of the classroom where pupils are encouraged to learn a certain topic. To create an Activity Centre teachers and students must first identify the subject and content areas. Examples of subject areas are road safety, anti-pollution or environmental preservation.

Together they would have to decide on what they wish specifically to address, and then identify the types of materials needed in support of a particular topic. These materials can either be collected by the students or the teachers, or made by the students and/or the teachers. There may be several Activity Centres dealing with different topics or, where space is limited, the focus of one Activity Centre can be changed according to the topic which is being taught.

In each activity area, students expect to find the materials needed to support the learning of one topic. Activity Centres can be a fixed feature in your classroom, changing the materials as needed from time to time. One way of getting the students involved, is to give the group of students a work card, with
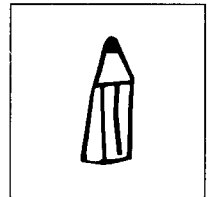
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instructions on what materials to get, and how to set them up. The following is an example of a work card:

Drawing, cutting and colouring of shapes.

This activity can be in support of science or mathematics.
The group will need:

A set of shapes.
Scissors.
Paper.
Crayons and glue.
A piece of cardboard.
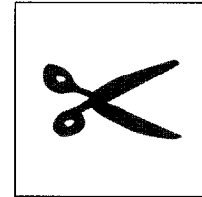
Instructions:

EXAMPLE ONE

1. Trace the shapes on to paper.
2. Cut them out..
3. Stick them on to the cardboard.
4. Sort the shapes into families.
5. Colour the shapes using one colour for each family.
6. Show your work to the teacher.

EXAMPLE TWO

1. Students collect old plastic containers; these may be bottles, boxes, etc.
2. With the help of teachers, students cut off the tops of these containers.
3. The new containers are covered with pretty paper, and labelled for different objects, such as chalk, pencils, etc.

Activity Centres can be made for Language, Science, Social Studies and Mathematics, and these can be managed by different groups of students. These groups could be rotated and asked to maintain, or improve, these centres. Each group consists of students of the same grade, but you could make different work cards for different grades, so that each group has something relevant to do when it reaches the specific Activity Centre.

3. Project Work

Cooperative learning is best suited to project work. Project work revolves around a series of activities related to a particular idea, theme or concept. Each project is a separate entity, and it must have a beginning, a middle, and an end. Students and teachers may select a theme. The teacher would then examine the curricula of different subjects, to find topics related to this theme. A possible example is

a "mango tree". All students can go outside and investigate the tree together. However the focus of each group of students will vary according to their competence or grade level. In addition each student could be given his/her own responsibility with regard to the overall project. One student, for example, may be responsible for collecting all the dried leaves, while another collects young leaves in order to identify differences between them.

A tree in the school compound is a teaching aid.

On the next page is an example of project work using one theme, (the tree) but working on different tasks corresponding to different levels. From the same theme, each pupil will work on a project corresponding to his level, i.e. lower, middle or higher grade.

4. Role Playing

Students role playing to reinforce what they have learnt.

Based on the lesson which has been taught, students can develop a role playing scenario to reflect what they have learnt. The teacher is advised to select the persons who will be involved in the role playing. Usually these are students who have talent and outgoing personalities, although some students, who appear to be introverts, perform very well. Each student is assigned with the name of a character she/he will play, and a description of the role he/she will perform. The students should then be left on their own in a small group, for about 20 to 25 minutes, depending on the complexity of the roles. While they are preparing their role playing the other groups in the class must be advised of the roles that they may play. One group may be asked to identify the concepts that they have learnt, another may be asked to examine whether or not the roles reflect the characters that they have learnt about.

At the end of the role playing it is important that the teacher analyzes the performance, to make sure that students learn the intended

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concepts and content, rather than view the experience as an entertaining one. Pointed questions must be asked, evaluating the concepts learnt in the session.
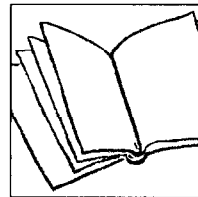
Box 7.2
Variations for Grade Levels

A Tree

Subject	Lower Grade	Middle Grade	Higher Grade
Mathematics	Shapes of leaves	Measuring circumference	Estimating height
Science	Find insects around the tree	Study structure of leaves	Photosynthesis
Social Studies	Identify tree and draw	Uses of wood	Transport of wood
Languages	Songs about trees	Names of parts of the tree	Write a song or poem about a tree

Each student can then write a report about his/her activity. Students who can draw well, or write poetry, can give their report in one of those ways. Then the students can compile collectively a full report about their investigations in class, and present the results. This method is very useful for multi-grade teaching, because it integrates different subjects, which can be studied at different levels.

Cooperative learning helps the students to work best in their areas of strength. For example, if a child can draw, then he/she assumes responsibility for the drawing. If one student is good at mathematics, then he/she does the calculation. Cooperative learning also facilitates peer teaching. Frequently the stronger students will help the others to improve those skills in which they are weak.
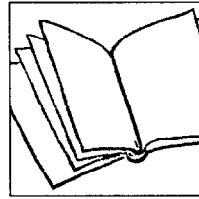
Advantages of Project Activities

The following are the specific advantages of project work:
1. It saves time, because the subjects and grades are integrated. There is little repetition.
2. It is child centred. Students learn at their own pace, and find things out for themselves.

3. It promotes self-reliance in students.
4. It helps motivate students, especially if there is an element of healthy competition between the groups.
5. It develops leadership skills in students.
6. It helps students see how things are connected with each other.

Other useful themes are: Water, Transport, the Village, Food, the Weather, the Sun's Energy, Historic Buildings or Sites, and Load Carrying.

Box 7.3
Plan for Three-Hour Session

Time	Grade 2	Grade 3
5 mns.	Common activity (singing and clapping)	
45 mns.	Reading out loud	Diction
5 mns.	Common activity - singing and clapping	
5 mns.	Break (Teacher writes handwriting exercise on blackboard)	
45 mns.	Maths: Class monitor copies yesterday's maths homework on to the blackboard for the other children to check their answers. Teacher sets individual task from maths textbook.	Hand writing Each child copies from blackboard on to his/her slate. Class monitor asks children to hold up their slates to display their handwriting. Teacher asks children to hold up their slates, and corrects their work. Children copy writing from their slate in their notebook.
20 mns.	Break	
45 mns.	Common activity - physical education	
2 mns.	Common Activity - singing and clapping. End of school day	
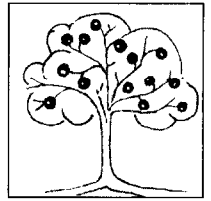
Activity 7.4
Utilizing Group Work

Purpose: This activity will allow you to apply the different types of group work, which we have just discussed, namely, games, Activity Centres and project work.

Instructions: Carefully prepare your own set of learning activities for pupils. Organize the activities by themes. As far as possible, you should include pupils' traditional games, such as ring games, etc.

Games

1. Develop a game for pupils at Grade 3 level to develop the multiplication skill.
2. Give a clear description of the rules of the game. Provide the instructions and explain them to the students.
3. Test out, and play, the game with your peer teachers.

Activity Centres

1. Give a list of materials you could include in a Social Studies Activity Centre.
2. Which ones can you find in your immediate environment?
3. Which ones would you have to make yourself?
4. Which ones would you have to buy?
5. Make work cards for group activities at this Activity Centre, at three different levels.

Direct Work

1. Make a list of topics from the prescribed curriculum for the theme WATER, in four different subjects at three different levels.
2. What materials would you need for the different pupil activities?
3. How would you create interest in this theme in your pupils?

Peer Tutoring

Peer tutoring is when pupils teach other pupils. It can take three forms:

1. Older pupils (in higher grades) teach younger pupils.
2. Faster pupils help slower pupils (in the same grade).
3. Two friends study a topic together, and through discussion help each other to understand it.
4. Slower students may also tutor faster pupils in areas in which they are strong, e.g. agriculture, drawing or singing.

Advantages

1. It gives the teacher time to deal with other problems.
2. It is a way of multiplying skills, and encouraging brighter pupils to exercise their gifts.
3. Pupils benefit by teaching something, i.e. they understand it better themselves.
4. Pupils develop maturity as a result of the responsibility placed upon them.
5. Slower learners feel freer to express their feelings than when a teacher is present.

Peer tutoring is not restricted to information lessons. It can also include practical skills, such as ploughing, tending the vegetable garden, and social behaviour, such as road safety, or first aid.

Short Guide to Peer Tutoring

- Teachers must be careful in their selection of tutors.
- Teachers must be aware of the relationship between the student and the prospective tutor.
- Teachers must prepare the students who are tutoring.
- Peer tutoring should not take too long, so that their own work does not suffer, or students do not become bored.
- Some tutors may feel superior. They must help others humbly and with respect.
- Parents need to understand what is happening, and must be informed of peer tutoring.

Self-Directed Learning

In the multi-grade situation, more than one class is active simultaneously. It is therefore advantageous for the teacher to have at least one group actively involved in some self-directed learning activity. Self-Directed Learning has been described as:

"a process in which individuals take the initiative with, or without, the help of others. In diagnosing their learning needs, formulating learning goals, identifying human and material resources for learning, choosing and implementing appropriate learning strategies, and evaluating learning outcomes".

Self-directed learning is an outcome as well as a process. Keeping a learning journal or diary is helpful in the early stages of being oriented to self-directed learning.

Advantages

- Students gain control over their own learning, and may become more highly motivated.
- The commitment and responsibility of students may increase.
- Students learn to set their own goals, and evaluate their level of achievement.
- Students gain more autonomy.
- There is an increase in decision-making skills on the part of the students.
- Students gradually learn the skills of self-evaluation.

Disadvantages

- Students may feel confused and neglected.
- A change of roles, attitudes and beliefs is required, hence there may be uncertainly in the initial stages, and there may be a period of time in which students may be uncooperative.

More about self direcred learning

Students also have to be able to work on their own because:

- Certain skills have to be developed. For example, doing arithmetic quickly and correctly, or reading, writing and spelling correctly.
- Self-reliance and self-confidence have to be developed by discovering things for themselves.
- Students have to prepare themselves for the final examinations, which will test their individual attainments.

Self-directed learning can be done by giving pupils the following:

- Assignments, either classwork or homework to do, which help them to practise what they have learned;
- Work cards on which there are words, the meanings of which they have to find out; this will help them to discover certain items of knowledge.
- Projects the whole class can do, e.g. finding out the history of their school, church or community.

Teaching Aids

Teaching aids include a wide variety of electronic, printed, visual and audio-visual materials, as well as computers, to present the concepts graphically to assist the teaching/learning process. The term instructional technology is also applicable. People in the community, especially parents, can help when teachers are overloaded. Interviewing
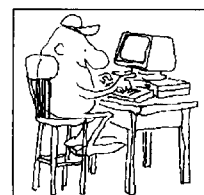
the elderly can be very helpful in researching any historic site or building. You may look for resource people in the village who are 'experts' in certain fields, and who enjoy being with children. They will be valuable sources of help in the following:

Some posters made, or acquired, by the teacher.

- During reading lessons or story telling.
- As resource persons in subjects like science, cake making, tailoring, agriculture, craft work and knitting.
- As volunteers to show traditional activities. unknown to the teacher, like traditional dances, songs and crafts.
- Helping with the preparation of educational illustrations for displays.

Suggestions When Using Parents to Develop Teaching Aides

- Meetings should be held between parents and teachers, to discuss how parents can be oriented to their work, when they can come to help, with what, and how, they can help.
- Be flexible in your expectations. Gently help parents along, and give them encouragement.
- Always show parents appreciation. The school could hold a Parents' Appreciation Day, on which students can demonstrate what they have done during the year.

Activity 7.5
Peer Tutoring, Self-Directed Work and Teacher Aides

Purpose: This activity will allow you to apply the concepts you have just learned on peer-tutoring, self-directed learning and teaching aids, and will help you to develop skills in these teaching strategies.

Peer Tutoring

1. Reflect on the students in your class:
     - who could be good tutors?
     - who would benefit from peer tutoring?

2. How would you prepare a tutor for his/her work?

3. How would you prepare a pupil to be tutored?

4. What topics would be useful for peer tutoring?

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5. How would you monitor the peer tutoring?

6. Should students be involved in the selection process?

Self-Directed Learning

1. Make a list of skills which need to be exercised by the individual student in
   Mathematics
   Science
   Social Studies
   Languages

Student involved in self-directed activity.

2. Design a project for an individual student who will:
- be involved in some individual research;
- give instructions on how it has to be reported; and
- give instructions on how it has to be presented to the whole class.

Teacher Aides or Assistants

1. Think about your village: Which people have special skills which can be used in your class? Which people would have the time and love of children to help?

2. Think about your class: When did you feel the need for some assistance? Would the presence of outsiders interfere with your organization of your class? If yes, how? If no, how would you integrate them?

3. How would you approach the parents to help as teacher aides?
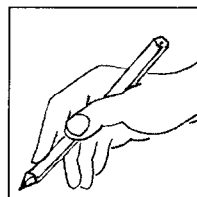
Possible Responses

1. Peer Tutoring

The peer tutor must command the respect of the students, who he/she will tutor. He/she should be able to communicate easily and clearly to his/her peers. The peers should be able to understand what the peer tutor is saying.

Select students, who will tutor in their own strong areas. Students who are good at drawing can teach others to draw; students who are good at mathematics will be able to tutor weaker students.

2. *Planning Guidelines for Group Activity*

Below is a sample chart[2], which can be used for planning group activities:

|	
Grade and Subject:	
Content	
Group Task: What must the group accomplish?	
Estimated time for entire activity: How much time will I need for the activity, including grouping, giving instructions, carrying out the task, reflecting/processing and evaluating?	
Resource/materials: What resources and materials are needed for the activity?	
Grouping: How many students will I assign to each group? What student characteristics will I consider in assigning them to groups? Will there be heterogeneous or homogenous groups? What techniques will I use to group the students? How long will students work in the same groups?	**Positive interdependence:** How will I structure the activity to ensure the active participation of all students? What activity will I use to stimulate group rapport and motivate students to work together? Will I divide the task or assign roles? On what basis will I allocate responsibility? Will I have students share materials?
Individual Accountability How will I deal with the problem of those who will not pull their weight? How will I make sure that each student assumes responsibility for his/her learning, and completing his/her share of the task, and helping others to learn and complete his/her share of the task?	**Interpersonal and Cognitive Skills** How will I select the interpersonal and cognitive skills to be developed? How will I develop students' awareness of their use of these skills? What techniques can I use to help students develop these skills? What attitudes and behaviour should students adopt during group work?
Evaluation and Processing What will be evaluated – interpersonal and academic learning? Who will evaluate the performance – self, peer or teacher? Will any part of individual grades be based on group performance? If yes, what part? How will I monitor and assist the group to achieve the stated objectives? How will students process their interpersonal and academic learning?	**Related Activities**

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Summary
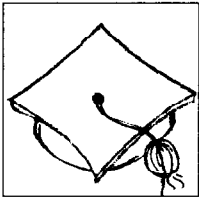
This topic covered the different strategies which may be used in multi-grade teaching. Based on this knowledge, you will be able to teach and organize the learning experiences of your pupils in the most effective manner, and which fits the curriculum you have just adapted.

The strategies may vary according to the subject you are teaching, the ability of your pupils, available resources, space, and other factors. How you use the strategies is up to you. Give way to your creativity!

The Next Unit
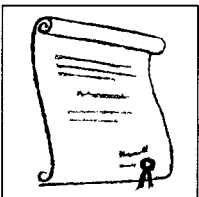
You have prepared an effective curriculum for your multi-grade class, and you have finished the task of organizing learning experiences, which will allow you to provide the best learning opportunities for your pupils. You are on your way!

But wait. You are not quite finished yet. To enhance the learning experiences of your pupils, you also have to take into account the actual physical and learning environment that you provide. The next topic will cover these two areas, and will give you suggestions on how you can manage them.

Unit Eight:
Management of Classes

Ensuring that all children learn.

Areas to be Covered
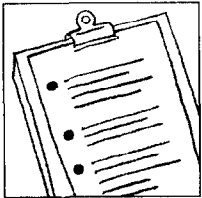
Introduction
Physical Environment
Activity 8.1:
   Arranging Your Classroom
Learning Environment
Activity 8.2: Preparing for Your Class

Introduction

Setting up the right physical and learning environment for your students will have a significant impact on their learning experiences. Considering the large number of students in your classroom, and the diversity of their learning levels, it is important that you manage your class as effectively as you can, and provide the best possible learning environment, within the constraints that may exist.

Physical Environment

For students to participate in, and be receptive towards, the learning process, they must be comfortable, and they must be able to recognize clearly delineated areas of activity within the classroom.

Arranging the classroom

The actual arrangements will depend very much on what is available in the country, or in the area. The items following must be adjusted by the teacher and/or the community group.

We will look at some areas to take into account when you arrange your classroom. They are: Physical confort, Chalk boards and Bulletin boards, Activity Centres, and Storage.

Physical comfort

Students can sit, and work, inside the classroom as well as outside it. But in all cases you have to consider the comfort of the pupils:

*   Is there enough light to work by?
*   Is it too warm or too cold?
*   What about draughts or wind or rain?

Care must be taken so that students do not disturb other groups in the same class, or in other classes.

The seating must be arranged so that it is suitable for group work. Yet you must also be able to change it quickly, for instruction to the class as a whole. In situations where there are no tables available, benches or chairs can face each other for group work.

Students may sit:

*   on the ground, preferably using a mat (good for games and discussions).
*   on bricks or blocks (they can be easily arranged for group work).
*   on long benches (they can be put facing each other for group work).
*   on chairs at tables (a number of chairs around one or two tables).

Chalk boards and Bulletin boards

There should be a number of chalk boards for use by the different groups. A portable chalk board is useful since it can also be used when work takes place outside. Fixed chalk boards can either be bought, or made, by using chalk board paint on a piece of masonite, or applied directly on a smooth wall.
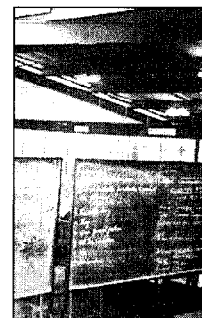
Portable chalkboards used also as classroom dividers.

Bulletin boards are needed to display messages, like the timetable, and more importantly, to display students' work.

They can be made from spongy board, and also from thick cardboard boxes.

Activity Centres

These centres are areas set aside in the classroom, where materials linked to, or associated with, a particular topic or theme, are displayed. These materials are designed to assist or enhance the learning process, and provide a concrete display of the topic. These materials may be posters made by teachers and students, scrapbooks made by students, or articles such as recycled plastic bottles to make lampstands. Activity Centres are best placed in the corners of the classroom, so that they are not in the way during other activities. But the area must not be too confined, because there must be sufficient space around them for the pupils to work. The materials can be placed on tables, in cardboard boxes, or on shelves and can include pictures on the wall.

An Activity Centre with picture for story writing.

Storage

It is important that textbooks, reference books, teaching aids and pupils' work, can be safely stored. The best would be to have a special storage room. If there is no extra room, a storage cabinet, or even a large trunk, can be used. Care has to be taken against damage due to termites, rats, water, and dust.

Activity 8.1
Arranging Your Classroom
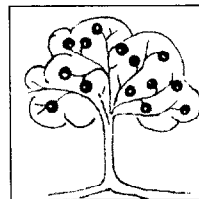
Purpose: This activity will give you practice in arranging your classroom in such a way that learning is enhanced.

Instructions: 1. Look at the arrangements of the classrooms in the photographs above, and compare it with yours.

2. Discuss the advantages, and disadvantages, of the different arrangements.
3. Make a sketch of the present arrangements of your classroom.
4. Make a list of the furniture available to you.
5. Make a list of the furniture you would like to get to improve your classroom further.
6. Design an improved arrangement of your classroom.

Learning Environment

How to Organize the Pupils' Learning Experiences
This must be divided into three parts:
      1. Preparation.
      2. Managing the work.
      3. Setting behavioural rules.

Preparation

It is essential that the organization of pupils' work is done well in advance. At the beginning of the year, or school session, you must draw up a scheme of work, indicating the topics in all subjects to be dealt with at each grade level.

For each topic, you must decide on the methods to be used, and the materials to be collected or prepared. Start collecting them as soon as you can, because last minute work will nearly always be too late. Then fit the activities within your timetable.

Managing the work

Your work as a teacher involves many skills such as: direct teaching, giving instructions, supervising group and individual work, evaluating and monitoring the work of students, and facilitating and motivating their participation.

Before using any of these skills, you should reflect on what is required to do them well.

Behavioural rules

Students feel more comfortable, and will respond more easily, when there are clear behavioural rules. Use the following guidelines in setting up behavioural rules in your classroom:

- Pupils must know what behaviour is acceptable.
- Design with pupils a set of rules that they can understand.
- Focus more on pupils who behave well rather than on those who break the rules.
- Never punish pupils for not understanding their work. It is your job to help them.

Rules may include the following:
- Raise your hand when you wish to speak, or ask a question.
- Everyone else is quiet when one student or the teacher is speaking.
- Speak softly without shouting.
- If you wish to borrow a pencil, rubber, or ruler, for use during the class, raise your hand and ask politely.
- If there is a problem, raise your hand and speak to the teacher, do not try to solve it yourself.

Other rules or regulations will relate to the issues experienced, or that you are likely to experience, in your class.
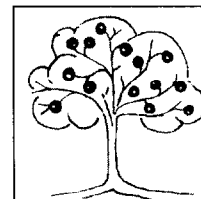
Activity 8.2
Preparing for Your Class

Purpose: This activity will provide you with an exercise in preparing for your one week of work.

Instructions:
1. For each grade in your class, make a list of topics you wish to deal with.
2. For each topic, decide on the methods to be used.
3. For each topic, decide on the materials to be collected or prepared.
4. Determine where can you collect these materials.
5. Then copy and complete the table below.
6. How would you timetable these activities?
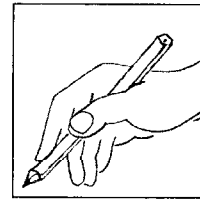
A Possible Response

|	*Mathematics*	*Language*	*Science*	*Social Studies*
Grade -	Five	Five	Five	Five
Topic	Measurement (Time Line)	Food we eat	Energy Forms	My Place in the Caribbean
Method	Research/drawing	Talk about, and listen to	Research various sources of heat	Debate, Role Playing
Materials	Ruler; History of Jamaica	Labels of food products, recipes, books, newspapers	Samples of heat sources, thermometer	Stories, Videos
From where	School Cupboard; History Text	Teachers/ parents	Teachers/students	National Information Service
Grade	Three	Three	Three	Three
Topic	Counting	Talk about, listen to, and ask questions	Functions of body parts	Disaster prevention
Method	Foods and portions in a daily menu	Planning balanced meals	Dance, music and song	Writing plans
Materials	Speakers/ foodstuff	Recipes, etc.	Posters, Song	Video - road safety; photographs; Speakers
From where	Health educators, etc.	Newspapers	Health educators	Police; Kiwanis, National Library/ JIS
Grade	One	One	One	One
Topic	Measurement	Comprehension	My Body	Patriotism
Method	Comparing heights of different students	Reading and discussion	Action songs	Discussion and role playing
Materials	Metres	Stories on National Heroes and symbols	Posters	Stories on National Heroes and symbols
From where	School Cupboard	National Information Service	Teacher will make	National Information Service
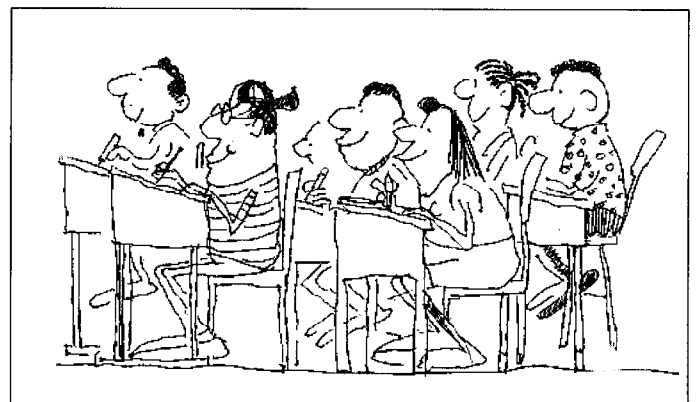
Summary
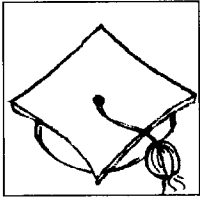
With a proper physical and learning environment, you are setting the climate for learning. By providing a proper learning environment, you minimize the distraction caused by the large number of pupils you have in your classroom, and maximize their learning opportunities.
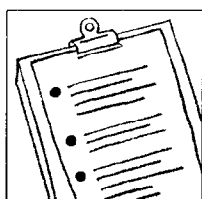
The Next Unit
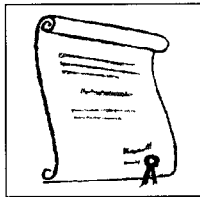
Teaching and learning materials such as textbooks, or workbooks with teachers' guides, also contribute to the effectiveness of the learning environment. The next topic will help you identify teaching and learning materials resources.

Unit Nine:
Teaching and Learning Materials

Areas to be Covered

Introduction
Where to Find Materials
How to Make Materials
Some Materials
Activity 9.1:
 *Teaching/Learning Materials*

The village craft is a source of learning.

Introduction

Teaching and learning materials are key ingredients in the learning process. For example, it is in the textbooks and workbooks that your pupils are motivated to apply what they have learned. Teachers' guides provide you with valuable support in your instruction, and they are effective when they are well-integrated with the textbook or other instructional materials.

However, it often happens that textbooks and other instructional materials are scarce. This is especially so in multi-grade schools, which are usually situated in very remote areas, where no textbooks or workbooks are available for the pupils. This topic will provide you with information on where to find your needed materials, or how to make them.
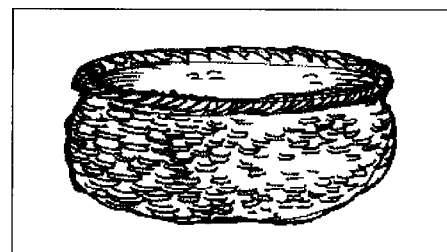
Where to Find Materials

Multi-grade teachers need to be aware of the resources that are available in the surrounding community. This is an issue which can be addressed jointly, by the Parent/Teachers'Association and the

private sector. The availability will be influenced by the local situation, what is available, the nature of the curriculum and its adaptations, and how well teachers are prepared for their work. In many locations there will be available: natural dyes, gum, seeds, leaves, the bark of trees, local stories/folklore, story-tellers and traditional dancers.

Traditional dancers – a source of learning.

It is true that for multi-grade teaching more learning materials may be needed, due to the need for pupils to work independently of the teacher. Cooperation between the National Work Group, the Ministry of Education, Curriculum Development Centres, and the teacher, are required to obtain these materials.

Where can I obtain ready-made materials? Teachers could compile, with the help of the Parent/Teachers'Association, a list of possible resources and where they are available. Among the possible suppliers are the Ministry of Education; Resource Centres (Educational, Health, Agricultural, etc.); Educational Suppliers, Government Information Centres, National Libraries and Local Shops.

What raw materials can be found locally?
*   By the resourcefulness of the teachers (for example it is incredible what you can do with oil bottles).
*   By pupils
*   By the community, such as parents.

How to Make Materials

In several instances teachers may be required to make their own materials, or work with parents or students to make them.

## *Guidelines for Developing Your Own 'Teacher-Made'Instructional Materials*

1. Identify the abilities of your learners.

2. Find out and analyze their specific knowledge, skills, and attitudes to the topic.

3. Consider the objectives.

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4. Find out what kind of instructional materials will best achieve the objectives.

5. Use low-cost indigenous materials.

6. A survey, and an inventory of the raw materials available in the locality, can provide a challenge to ingenuity in arriving at different forms and types of teaching devices. For example, it may be possible to use a flower or vegetable to provide colouring material, if commercially produced chalks or paints are not available.

7. When producing teaching aids, identify instructional materials which the teacher can produce on his/her own, or together with pupils, using local resources.

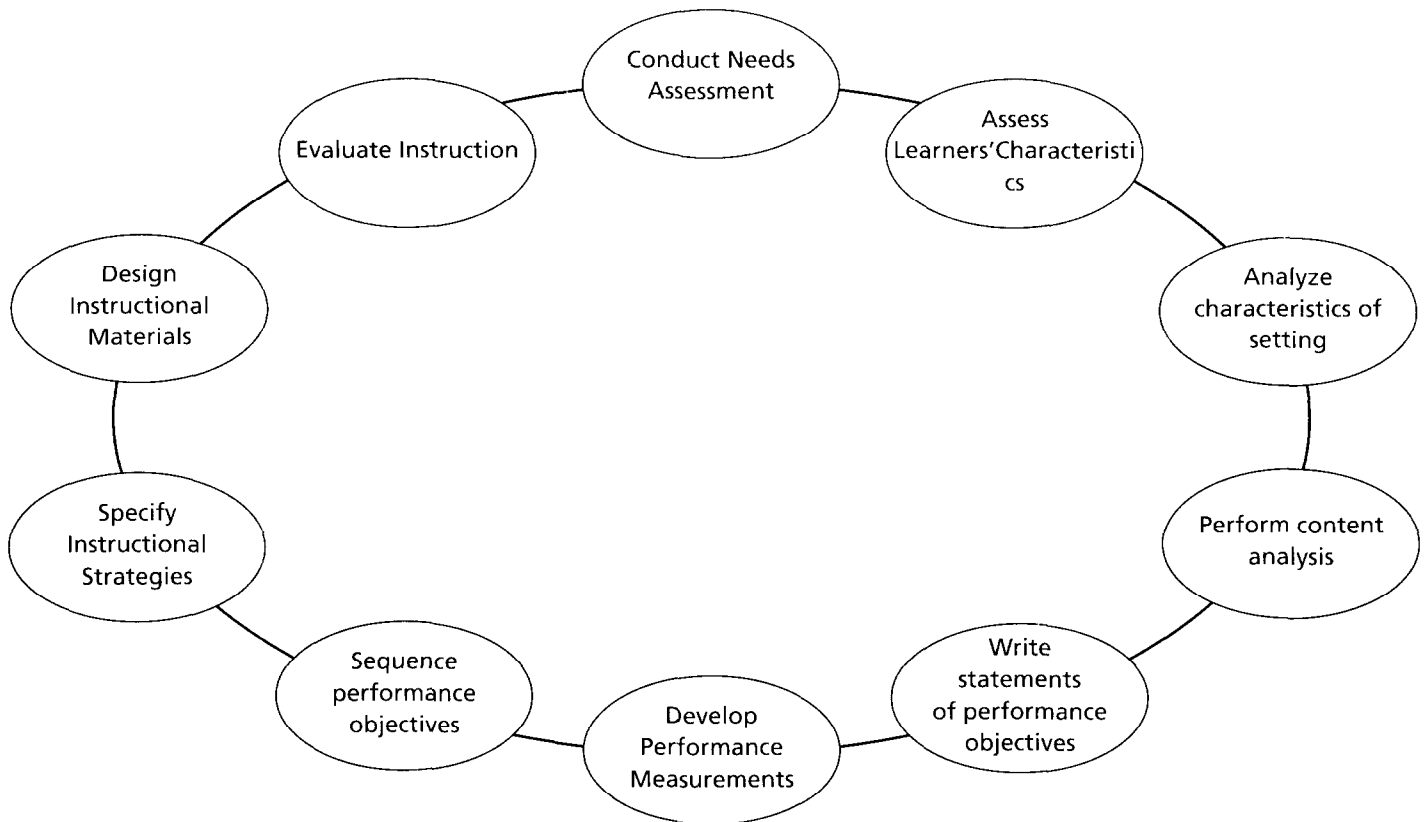Teacher using colored eggs as teaching aid.

8. These are often not available commercially, because they do not lend themselves to production on a commercially viable scale.

9. Consider cost-effectiveness.

10. Materials must be produced as economically as possible in terms of time, effort and money. The production of inexpensive instructional materials frees the school, and teachers, from over-dependence on commercial and profit-oriented suppliers and producers. Careful planning, and the use of inexpensive visual materials, will contribute to economy in production.

11. A great deal of research, reading, observation, listening and purposeful exposure to new ideas, information and types of instructional materials, will generate creative ideas for the production of new materials for instruction.

12. Imaginative thinking and resourcefulness can also provide a use for discarded materials, and offer opportunities to improvise replacements, or substitutes, for equipment not readily available.

13. Consider your own ability to design instructional materials. Start with simple and easy production techniques or procedures. Such simple skills are fundamental in the more difficult production of other materials.
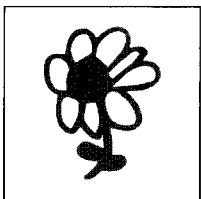
14. Be versatile.

15. Instructional materials can be used in several teaching/learning situations, and can cut across subject areas.

16. Strive for durability

17. Materials must be constructed to withstand long usage and repeated handling.

18. Materials development should be a part of the learning cycle.

Source: The Education for All Teacher-Training Package, Topic 5 page 8, UNESCO, 1995.

```
                    Conduct Needs
                      Assessment
    Evaluate Instruction              Assess
                                 Learners'Characteristi
                                          cs

 Design                                        Analyze
 Instructional                              characteristics of
 Materials                                      setting

 Specify                                      Perform content
 Instructional                                   analysis
 Strategies
                                        Write
        Sequence                      statements
       performance                  of performance
        objectives      Develop       objectives
                      Performance
                      Measurements
```

Some Examples of Materials

- Chalk board.
- Flannel board.
- Bulletin board.
- Pocket board.
- Shop table.
- Supplementary readers.
- Mathematical aids-counters, abacus, two and three-dimensional shapes, blocks and scales, graph board.
- Puppets.
- Musical instruments.
- Collections (of leaves, insects, etc.).

Teaching Materials, most of which were made by the teacher.

- Assignment or work cards, for longer use.
- Worksheets, for once-only use.
- Plastic bottles (all shapes and sizes), shavings, drink boxes.
- Cartridge paper, Bristol board.

Chalk Board

This is the most common teaching aid, and one of the most useful. If you do not have a fixed black board:

- Find a smooth part of the wall.
- Use the green leaves of a datura plant to prepare the wall.
- Mix the black carbon inside used torch-batteries with some water.
- Smear this on the wall.

Portable Chalk Board

This is a movable board painted with green or black paint. You can buy special chalk-board paint, or use the method above. You can also make it from stiff cardboard, or a piece of masonite. It is particularly useful for group activities.

For use as a chalk-board, the wall around the class can be blackened at a level where children can write or draw. This should be done all around the classroom.

Flannel Board

You can make this from cardboard covered with soft materials, such as a flannel cloth, or a cotton blanket. The cloth can be glued to the cardboard with commercial glue, or the sticky juice from the leaves of some plants. It is useful in telling stories in sequence, labelling in science, or counting in mathematics.

Cow   *eats*   *grass*
*Lion*   *eats*   *meat*
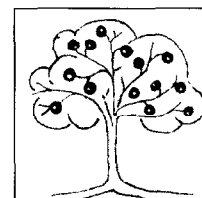
Activity 9.1
Teaching
and Learning Materials

Purpose: This activity will assist in identifying alternative resources which can be used as teaching materials.

Questions:
1. What can be done to overcome the lack of textbooks, and other teaching and learning materials?

2. What measures should be taken to use local resources more effectively in the production of teaching and learning materials?

3. How can teachers play a part in the production of teaching and learning materials?

Possible Responses
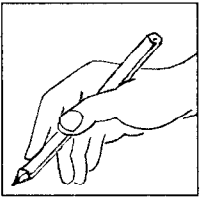
1. Close collaboration and partnership with community members and, in particular, private sector representatives.

2. Students can be encouraged to collect plastic containers, or other receptacles, which would probably pollute the environment. Teachers need to be constantly on the look-out for resources which can be used to assist the teaching/learning process

3. Teachers could hold one day workshops with parents, or include the design and production of teaching materials within their normal teaching situations; for example students could bring a portable radio to school, and record role playing or a story.

The Use of Computers

In several schools there are computers. Their uses are many. The computer can be used to store and calculate students'marks, keep attendance and enrolment records, set assignments, and in some cases even correct assignments. The computer can even be used to provide access to training, and/or the upgrading of teaching personnel, and as a means of exchanging experiences. However trained personnel, appropriate equipment, and resources are required for proper maintenance. Teachers require training to use the computer in the most effective manner.

There are several internet sites, which offer self-directed tasks to students and information for teachers. However, teachers would have to be trained in their use, and in their various applications.

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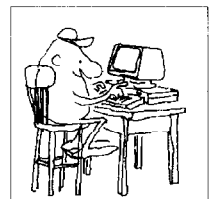
Use of Projected Audio-Visual Materials

Audio-visual projected materials include overhead transparencies, slides, computer multi-media presentations, all of which require expertise, an electricity supply, and electronic equipment. The overhead transparencies require an overhead projector and, if available, a screen. They are easily made by hand, with write-on pens for the transparency, or with computers, and printed.
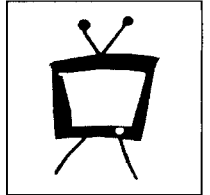
Slides require the use of a 35 mm camera, and appropriate processing. For projection a slide projector is required. For multi-media projection a computer with the appropriate software, such as Microsoft Powerpoint, or Corel Presentation, and a multi-media projector, are required.
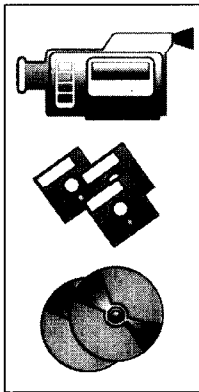
A very useful tool in the classroom, particularly for language and grammar, is the audio-cassette recorder. Students can read stories, which are recorded, and then listen critically to their own pronunciation. This will help to improve their listening and reading skills. These can be re-used several times, and to involve parents, they may be taken home, so that parents will know how the student is progressing.

Summary
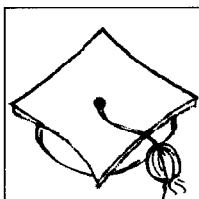
Teaching and learning materials are key ingredients for learning. They contribute significantly to learning effectiveness. Teachers, students and parents can participate in the production, or collection, of teaching materials. Teachers should also be sufficiently resourceful to use normal household, or other items, as teaching materials.

The Next Unit
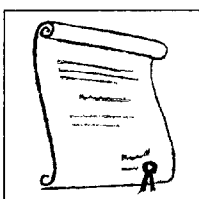
In the second part of this Handbook, we have covered the major technical skills, which will aid you in your numerous tasks as a multi-grade teacher. In the next unit we will discuss the very important task of monitoring, record-keeping, and evaluation. This topic is especially important for you because as a multi-grade teacher, or as a teacher in a single-teacher school, record-keeping is essential for the good management of your class.

Unit Ten: Monitoring, Record-Keeping and Evaluation

Monitoring, keeping records of pupils'progress, and evaluation, are very important, especially in multi-grade teaching, because of the different levels of work going on at the same time. They are what make your tasks manageable.

This topic covers essential aspects in monitoring, record-keeping and evaluation of your multi-grade class.
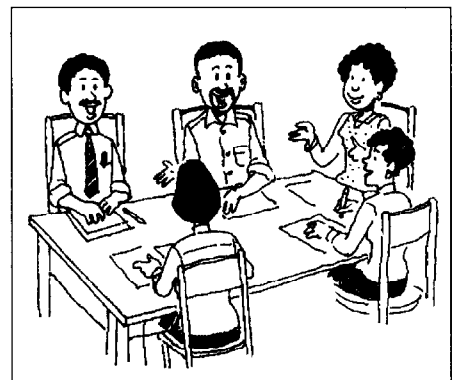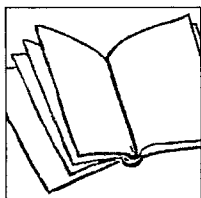
Areas to be Covered
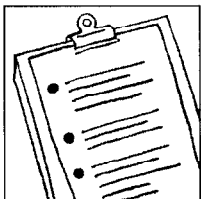
Case 10.1: A Teacher's Tiredness
How to Monitor Pupil Behaviour
Record-Keeping
Activity 10.1: Designing Record-Keeping Forms
Evaluation
Activity 10.2: Developing EvaluationTools
Summary

Case 10.1
A Teacher's Tiredness

Mary, a teacher at Thaba-Limphe Primary School, comes home and complains to her husband, Neo, that she is very tired.

Neo: *My dear, why are you so tired?*

Mary: *I had so many disruptions during my teaching today.*

Neo: *How did that happen?*

Mary: Firstly, the mother of a grade 3 pupil, Thabo, came. She complained that Thabo was doing no homework. So I promised that I would talk to Thabo. It was only later that I remembered that

Thabo is always fast in class, and that he completes his home-work at school. Then the Headmaster came in. He had to write a recommendation for Mpho, a pupil of last year, and he needed to know how Mpho had performed, both in his tests, and in his behaviour. I looked everywhere, but I could not find the paper on which his marks were written. But I thought I remembered Mpho was well behaved. Yet I am not sure. It is too long ago.

Neo: *I am sorry that you had all those troubles. What can you do about it?*

Mary: *I think that I must be better organized. I will ask the other teachers how they keep their records.*

A few days later:

Mary: *Aren't we going to that party tonight?*

Neo: *I thought you would be too tired.*

Mary: *No! No! I spoke to the other teachers and I learned things.I will now keep my papers better organized. I keep them in a file in a locked drawer at school, and I learned that it is so much easier when students exchange papers so that others in the class mark them, or they mark them themselves. It really takes a lot of strain off me.*

How to Monitor Pupil Behaviour

When so many different activities are going on at the same time in your class, you still have to be able to keep an eye on all the children. This is made easier if you can create a conducive atmosphere in your class. Then the pupils will be motivated to work well, and you will not have to deal often with disruptive behaviour.

## *What is a Good Working Atmosphere?*

A good working atmosphere is when the whole environment of the school encourages pupils to learn. Your students are motivated to work well, in groups, or on their own.

If there is a good working atmosphere the students develop orderly habits, they cooperate better, and are happy. In addition, you will become a better teacher.

How to Establish a Good Working Atmosphere

Because the whole environment must be conducive, it involves many things:

- **Planning:** think about variation, visual aids, individual differences, motivation.

- **The Classroom:** make it well organized, clean and pleasant to be in. Display pupils' work on the walls. Make the Activity Centres attractive.

- **Respect for Individuals:** encourage the pupils to work peacefully. You should make them aware that people's views are not always the same. Pupils should not laugh at others who have different opinions, or who make a mistake. Pupils need to learn patience. Above all, teachers must respect their students

- **Expression of the Teacher:** your expression motivates the children. Remember that a bored teacher means bored children. You must praise those getting the work right, but never discourage slow learners. Never call a child 'stupid'.
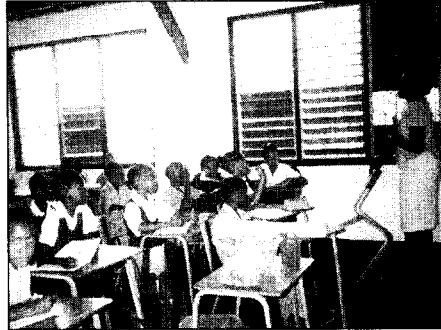
Dealing with Disruptive Behaviour

First find out WHY a pupil misbehaves. Here are some possible reasons:

- **Surplus energy:** which may lead to moving about, teasing, or even fighting.

- **Physical discomfort:** due to outside distraction, or the heat or cold.

- **Desire to be noticed:** which can lead to playing the joker, or frightening others.

- **Uninteresting lesson:** which can lead to general misbehaviour.
- Hidden causes: unhappiness at home, sickness or hunger.

Sometimes parents also disrupt classes, because they may want to discuss their child's performance, or get information about the classes, or the school.

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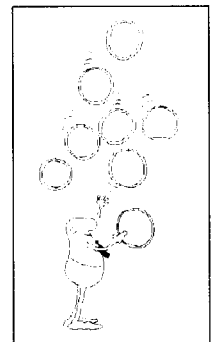
Methods to Tackle the Root Causes In Order to Maintain Discipline:

- Establish clear class-rules: discuss them with the pupils as soon as possible.
- Use group leaders.
- Prepare interesting work, so that pupils do not become bored.
- Provide an example for the pupils: a noisy teacher makes a noisy class.
- Know your pupils'background, many behavioural problems can be solved by talking with, not to, the pupil and by counselling.
- Observe the situation constantly: prevention is better than cure.
- Be consistent: no favouritism, try to maintain the same standard every day.
- Give pupils a chance to earn approval: this works better than punishment.
- If you decide to punish, make the punishment relevant to the offence. Pupils must know WHY they are punished.
- Set aside a special time each day, or each week, to see parents. This provides the opportunity for parents to have discussions with teachers, without disrupting the classes.

Record-Keeping

All students need transcripts or reports later in life, whether it is for a job or continuing education. Record-keeping is an important aspect of the multi-grade teacher's role. It provides documentary support for decisions, actions, and assessments. Records that a multi-grade teacher keeps may include:

- Financial transactions.
- Registration.
- Reports of meetings.
- Student attendance and punctuality.
- Student academic performance.
- Student behaviour.
- Participation of parents and community leaders.

Records may be kept either in hard-cover notebooks or on a computer. The teacher may design the appropriate format for record-keeping. The records should be kept in order, and available for inspection by the education authorities. It is best to keep all records in a locked filing cabinet, to which only the teacher, or appropriate administrative staff, have the keys. This will reduce the opportunity for tampering.

Activity 10.1
Designing Report Forms
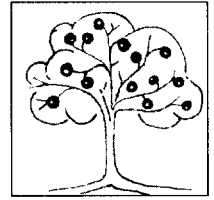
Purpose: This activity will allow you to design report forms, for recording information pertaining to the administration of the school, and the development of the students.

a. Make a list of the areas in which you need to keep track of information.

b. Identify systems and forms which already exist to collect some of the information.

c. Examine the possibility of amending existing systems, and forms, to accommodate other information that is not being gathered systematically.

d. Design systems and forms to track the remaining information.

Evaluation

Evaluation is the process of reviewing progress against the background of stated objectives. In the school system it is an ongoing process, in which the teacher uses various teaching and testing methods, to determine the progress of students. There are two types of evaluation: formative and summative.

Formative evaluation is used on a day-to-day basis during a course, to get the students'reactions to the methods used in teaching, and the information delivered. This feedback can be used to improve delivery in future classes. This form of evaluation may be written or oral. Administer a brief oral or written questionnaire at the end of the class. Examples of questions include:

• Did you understand the lesson?
• Were questions answered clearly?
• What is the main thing that stands out in your mind from the lesson?
• What part of today's lesson are you confused about?
• Which activity did you enjoy the most?

Another type of evaluation is marking the activity on the basis of a marking scheme. It is relatively easy to mark mathematics: the

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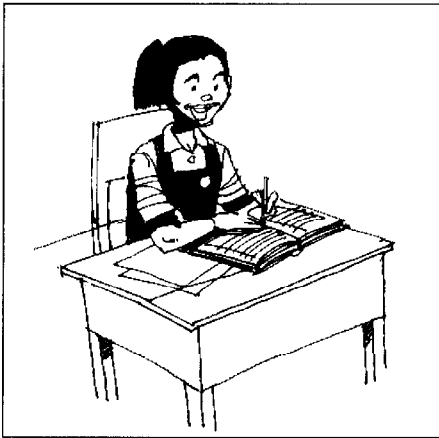
answer is either right or wrong; the method is either right or wrong. But for such cases as project work or social studies assignments, particularly research assignments, a mark scheme has to be worked out.

For assignments that are written, students may receive a certain per cent of the marks based on presentation, neatness, handwriting, grammar, etc. For oral assignments some marks may be allocated to the presentation style, pronunciation, expression, etc. If it is a project report, some marks can be allocated to the attractiveness of the cover, the content list, the bibliography, and the resources/sources, which were used.

For assignments that are easy to mark, such as Mathematics or Language, and which are either right or wrong, teachers could ask students to exchange books with their neighbours, and let them mark them.

A part of the process of formative evaluation is the maintenance of a checklist of observations on the student's progress. It will help you to determine, at any moment, the stage of learning in the different subjects for each pupil. A check list for each subject, showing the skills which you wish them to have, would be useful. Below is an example of a check list, which you may use as a model for developing your own.

The summative evaluation assesses the overall impact of the course on the students. This takes into account the overall progress of the students, and their performance in examinations. The results are recorded on the student's report card.

When reporting on the report card, some teachers used the combined marks of the day-to-day tests, along with the overall examination marks. Alternatively they might give a grade for the term work, but an examination mark for the final evaluation.

Sample Checklist for Language Skills Pupils Grade 1
(Key: / = half done X = complete)

| Development of Skills	Names of Students											
	Thabo	Neo	Mpho	Mary	John	Rose	Lympho	Lineo	Victor	Lucy	Peter	Flower
Can correctly respond to simple command: Points to the window	/	X	X	X		X	X		/	/	X	X
Can answer simple questions: What is your name?	X	/		/	/	/	X		/	/	X	/
Understands the difference between alike and different	X	/					/			X	X	/
Can understand reading from left to right: give a book and ask to point to the first word.	/	X	X	X				/		X	X	X
Can use the correct words to describe daily experiences											X	
Can pronounce words correctly: Say after me the, this, think, etc.												
Can complete a simple jigsaw puzzle of not more than 12 pieces.												
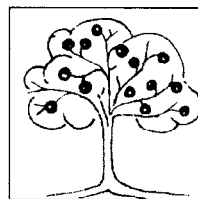
Activity 10.2
Develop Evaluation Tools

Purpose: Through this activity you will be able to develop evaluation tools for conducting formative and summative evaluation.

1. Identify factors which you would want to assess during, and at the end of, the term.
2. Identify methods of formative and summative evaluation which you now use to assess these factors.
3. Outline methods which you may use to evaluate those factors which are not now being assessed.

Summary
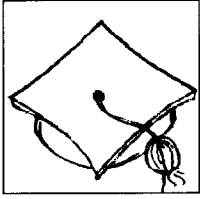
Without proper monitoring of student behaviour in class, it is very easy for you to lose control of your class, thereby jeopardizing your integrity as a teacher, and more importantly, hampering the learning of your pupils. Keeping records is invaluable, and of great help to you, and to people in need of information, about your class. It also makes your life a lot simpler. And finally, doing evaluation allows you to keep track of your pupils' progress.

Monitoring, keeping records of pupils' progress and evaluation are very important, especially in multi-grade teaching, because of the different levels of work going on at the same time. They are what make your tasks manageable.

This topic covers essential aspects in monitoring, record-keeping and evaluation, for your multi-grade class.