

2008

The Gambia's Teachers' Handbook on Multi-Grade Teaching

Ministry of Basic & Secondary Education in Collaboration with the Learning Initiatives for Rural Education

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THE GAMBIA'S TEACHERS' HANDBOOK ON MULTI- GRADE TEACHING



**Ministry of Basic & Secondary Education in
Collaboration with the Learning Initiatives for Rural
Education**

World Bank Contract #7145279



**LIRE
ABBREVIATIONS**



Abbreviation	Significance
LIRE	Learning Initiatives for Rural Education
CIE	Center for International Education
UMass	University of Massachusetts
SQUAD	Standards and Quality Assurance Directorate
CREDD	Curriculum Research Evaluation and Development Directorate
EFA	Education for All
NCNW	National Council for Negro Women
DOSBE	Department of State for Basic Education
TWG	Technical Working Group
MG	Multi-Grade

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The development of this handbook was supported through a contract from the World Bank-administered Bank-Netherlands Partnership Program (BNPP). World Bank Contract # 7145279. This handbook is the result of a collaborative ongoing effort between Gambian educators and the Learning Initiatives for Rural Education (LIRE) team both in The Gambia and at the Center for International Education (CIE), University of Massachusetts, Amherst (UMass). An accolade of gratitude goes out to the following writers/members of the technical committee and persons who made useful contributions to this manual who helped bring it to a final stage.

To the technical working group and writers from The Gambia, led by LIRE In-Country Coordinator, Emily Sarr and team members Mr Momodou Bamba Jeng, Director Standards and Quality Assurance Directorate (SQUAD); Mr Burama L.J. Jammeh, Director of Curriculum Research Evaluation and Development Directorate (CREDD); Mrs Isatou Nyang, Principal Curriculum Development Officer; Mr Muhammed Touray, Principal Education Officer Region 6; Mr Nakulang Ceesay, Senior Lecturer Gambia College; Mr Omar Baldeh, Senior Principal Education Officer CREDD; Mr Ousman Bah, Principal Education Officer CREDD; Mrs Isatou Ndow, Head of School of Education, Gambia College; Mr Matarr Baldeh, Project Manager Education For All project (EFA); Mrs Haddijatou Baldeh, Gender and Education Officer, Action Aid International; and Mr Omar Ndure, President Gambia Teachers Union.

The LIRE team from the CIE, University of Massachusetts namely; Rebecca Paulson, M.Ed, Paul St John Frisoli, M.Ed, Sarah Kahando, M.Ed, Alicia Fitzpatrick, MAT, M.S., and Karla Sarr under the supervision of Professor Jacqueline Mosselson, Ph.D., Professor Gretchen B. Rossman, Ph.D, and Dr. Mbarou Gassama Mbaye, Ed.D with the National Council for Negro Women (NCNW).

During the process of writing, the handbook benefited from multi-grade teachers' inputs in region 5 and 6, teacher trainers, senior education officers and cluster monitors namely, from Region 5: Bakary B Dumbuya, Yafaye S Badjan, Lamin Jatta, Kajali Janneh, Mamadi Touray, Ismaila Sidibeh, Teeda M Touray, Jainaba Wan, Omar S Touray, Alhaji M Touray, Kebba Bah, Teacher Trainer; Demba Ceesay, Teacher Trainer; Alhaji. K. Bittaye Teacher Trainer, Haddy Janneh Teacher Trainer, Amat S Bah, Cluster Monitor; and Ibrahim J Sannah, Senior Education Officer. From Region 6: Wassa Camara, Mariama Tarewally, Nasata B Cham, Momodou H Sowe, Bakary Kanuteh, Karamo BJ Jabang, Sorrie M Jallow, Kimintang Sowe, Malick Jammeh, Mariama Jawo,

Khaddy S Jammeh, Teacher Trainer; Alieu Camara, Momodou Corr, Malick Jammeh, Alpha Camara, Senior Education Officer; and Alhaji Sanneh, Focal Point ANFEU.

PREFACE

Guided by the principles of quality assurance, equity and equality in education, the Department of State for Basic and Secondary Education (DOSBSE) is committed to ensuring these salient policy principles are followed and adhered to within the context of Education For All goals. Thus, the current focus on multi-grade schools falls squarely within the societal obligation to grant every child his or her right to education. Multi-grade classes have made it possible for many children in rural communities in The Gambia to exercise this right.

This Handbook went through a process of development that was uniquely participatory and highly interactive. It is developed under the leadership of project LIRE and the Technical Working Group in The Gambia (TWG). This handbook was further enriched with inputs and contributions from education officials and teachers involved in the LIRE multi-grade program. TWG members were drawn from key stakeholders from within and outside the Ministry of Education. Members are seasoned curriculum developers and planners with years of experience in curriculum and materials development.

The Technical Working Group brainstormed and discussed thoroughly the contents of the Handbook prior to agreeing on an outline. The document went through three stages of writing and editing between The Gambian and the UMass teams before its final version. The handbook also contains multi-grade teachers' inputs. The approach adopted is practical rather than theoretical, thereby making lessons lively and stimulating for children. It is user-friendly and pitched at the level of the users. It comprises of ten units, each one consisting of common experiences, cases to be reviewed, activities to carry out, possible responses, and a summary of what has been learned.

There is no doubt that the Handbook has come at a time of great need for the multi-grade teacher in The Gambia who had had to struggle for a significant number of years without self instructional guides. It is anticipated that it will therefore be of great use to teachers and others in the education system involved with multi-grade everywhere and would essentially contribute to strengthening multi-grade teaching and learning in The Gambia.

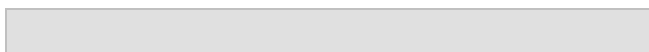
INTRODUCTION

Multi-grade classes are in our schools in The Gambia and have been found to be an effective means of maintaining internal efficiency and effectiveness in the education system. The government policy on education recommends multi-grade classes for class sizes that fall below the approved pupil teacher ration of 1:45. As we strive to attain quality education we realize we must also have quality teachers. This is usually attainable through continuous teacher training and upgrading of skills. Even where there are scarce resources as there tend to be in schools in the rural areas, a well trained teacher can still ensure the successes of his/her pupils.

This handbook is designed to be used as a continual resource for the multi-grade teacher. The multi-grade teacher can refer to it at any specific point in time to learn ways and methods of applying certain skills or techniques and to gain knowledge on a particular topic. For example, a teacher planning a lesson could refer to it for specific guidance on how to do so using the samples in this guide. It gives information on how to adapt the syllabus, organize schemes of work, among others. The handbook also provides examples that the teacher can use and reflection points at the end of each unit. Some units in this guide have examples created by multi-grade teachers who were traomed at the time the handbook was created.

An essential requirement is for multi grade teachers to be able to improvise on teaching aids and to endeavor to use them in teaching a class. The handbook offers some suggestions on how this can be done and as well as using the community as a resource. Multi-grade teachers need to stay in contact with their communities and ensure their participation in teaching and learning. The handbook also highlights other important aspects that multi-grade teachers need to be conversant with. These include classroom organization, and management and use of classroom space. The final pages present questions frequently asked by multi-grade teachers and clarify doubts that teachers may have.

Finally multi-grade teachers are encouraged to maintain partnerships, share and support each other and work with one another to improve upon trouble areas. In addition, they must communicate clearly with their pupils at all times and to ensure the objectives of each lesson are well understood. Children always need to understand what they are taught and why.



SECTION 1

INTRODUCTION TO MULTI-GRADE

Key Points:

In this chapter, we shall look at:

- Multi-grade definitions with reference to The Gambia
- The advantages and challenges of multi-grade schools
- Teachers various roles in multi-grade schools

INTRODUCTION

Education systems in many places are structured in such a way that pupils usually of the same age progress from grade to grade as peers. The entry age for these monograde classes are in most cases determined by the respective government system and have one teacher. This is not always the case in all areas where there are few teachers or not enough students.

In this section, we will begin to look at multi-grade classes, the benefits, the challenges and the roles that multi-grade teachers play. We shall refer to examples from Gambian multi-grade schools.

1.1 DEFINITION OF MULTI-GRADE

Multi-grade teaching refers to the teaching of pupils of different grades in the same classroom. It is practiced in both developed and developing countries. It can be compared to teaching that exists in the Quranic schools, “*Darras*”¹ where one teacher is responsible for instructing children at different grade levels and combines them in

¹ These are local Islamic schools that provide literacy in Arabic and teach children how to worship

one class to teach them. Other terms to describe this setting include combined classroom teaching, split class teaching or multiple class teaching. It is important that the grades combined are grade levels next to each other. For example, grades one and two, or three and four. In some cases, we have the one school system where all the children are in one grade.

Multi-grade schools are generally located in areas where population density is low. In The Gambia multi-grade classes can be found mostly in Central River Region (region 5) and Upper River Region (region 6) and a few in North Bank and Lower River Region (region 3 and 4 respectively). Multi-grade schooling is not just found in developing countries but in developed countries as well and many children all over the world are educated through multi-grade systems.

Like in the monograde class, children in multi-grade classes have different range of abilities all of which need attention. The multi-grade teacher is skilled in teaching multi-grade, is versatile and aware of various techniques to teach a multi-grade class effectively that are also used in mono-grade classes.



Why do we need multi-grade in The Gambia? Why do we need multi-grade schools at all?

1.2 MULTI-GRADE IN THE GAMBIA

In The Gambia the following are reasons for multi-grade teaching:

- It is a policy directive (2004-2015) to meet the teacher-pupil ratio of 1:45;
- The classes are sometimes too small and need to be combined ;
- The inadequate number of teachers makes it impossible to provide one teacher for each class;
- Reduces/ cuts down on both the human and the financial costs;
- Helps governments to meet their International commitments such as the Millennium Development Goals and Education For All among other conventions; and
- Brings schooling closer to homes especially in the rural areas.

1.3 BENEFITS OF MULTI-GRADE

Advantages of multi-grade classes for pupils

- Provides more continuity for children especially low achievers, than is possible in a monograde setting where pupils progress into another class with a new teacher each year;
- The small classes make it easier to detect learning difficulties and to provide the kind of help that is necessary for pupils to improve;
- Younger children learn quicker as they are able to gain knowledge as the older pupils are taught;
- Older children gain more confidence when asked to help the younger ones. It also encourages the older pupils to work harder than the younger ones; and
- Encourages independent learning and help pupils develop study and investigative skills.

Advantages of Multi-grade Teaching for Teachers

- It creates a family atmosphere in that teachers get to know the families of their pupils very well as they remain in the same class for several years; and
- Teachers gain expertise and professional skills using a wider range of skills to teaching approaches and classroom organization skills to effectively monitor the progress of the class because there are fewer pupils.

1.4 CHALLENGES OF MULTI-GRADE TEACHING

Experienced teachers who have taught multi-grade for many years know about the challenges of multi-grade teaching. But these challenges are not insurmountable and apply equally in monograde teaching. They can be met by proper training and employing the right attitude towards work. It has been observed that the biggest challenge to multi-grade teaching is the expectation that it can be easily handled by inexperienced and unqualified teachers with little or no resources. This is a wrong assumption. The best people to handle multi-grade are experienced and well trained teachers.

The following are some other challenges:

- **Lack of self instructional guides to help the teacher**

In multi-grade settings, self instructional guides are some of the resources that are used by teachers to encourage individual learning. Sometimes teachers lack these guides to upgrade their skills. We hope that this challenge will be met with the production of this handbook.

- **Multi-grade teaching requires more time for planning**

Many teachers complain that they never have enough time to teach the different grades. Part of the problem lies in teachers not having the skill to plan schemes of work and lesson plans for different grades. As we will later learn in this handbook, it is possible to teach the same topic to all grades, or teach two or more grades together. It is important to also note that there will always be some topics that need to be taught separately. Some teachers feel that due to the lack of time some topics cannot be adequately covered in a multi-grade setting.

- **Lack of motivation by teachers to teach in far schools**

Many of the multi-grade schools are often far and isolated and sometimes teachers posted in these schools can feel isolated from other teachers in other areas and from other professional activities or visits. This affects the motivation of teachers who would want to benefit both professionally and socially from opportunities that arise through teacher to teacher interactions or trainings.

- **The attitude of parents and the community**

Some people perceive multi-grade teaching as inferior to monograde and do not believe that effective learning could take place in a multi-grade class. To dispel this myth, schools need to organize programs that will involve communities in the affairs of the school and demonstrate to parents that learning is actually taking place in a multi-grade class.

1.5 MULTIPLE ROLES OF THE TEACHER

Teacher/Facilitator of learning

The primary functional role of a multi-grade teacher is that of a facilitator of the teaching/learning process. S/he should be active, committed and motivated. The teacher should be able to recognize and cater to individual differences which exist among the pupils. A facilitator helps the learner to gain knowledge or skills by guiding them through the learning process, not dictating it. A good facilitator of learning is able to plan activities and lessons which engage pupils in the learning process and enable them to actively participate in their own knowledge creation.

Field /Action Researcher

If parents think that what the school teaches is irrelevant to their lives, there will be no motivation for sending their children to school. To adequately meet the needs of the pupils and the community, the teacher must know the needs of the community. Multi-grade teachers can also conduct research in the classroom by studying methods and techniques which improve participation and student learning and/or achievement.

Community liaison/Resource person

Most teachers because of their status and responsibility assume an important role in the local community. The multi-grade teacher is no different. The nature of many situations where multi-grade schools exist is such that the cooperation and assistance of the local community is needed to improve the quality of teaching and learning provided by the multi-grade schools. The community can and should serve as an important resource for the multi-grade teacher.

Evaluator

One of the roles which a multi-grade teacher must play is to monitor the process of pupils' learning so as to ensure good quality education. This requires teachers to determine the educational level of pupils when they first enter the class, during the school year and at the end of it. Teachers of multi-grade classes must rely on varied methods of evaluation to properly keep track of their pupils' learning and progress. Please refer to the assessment and evaluation unit of this handbook for examples of such methods.

Material Designer

Although various curriculum materials are usually prepared by central authorities of education, multi-grade teachers still need to develop their own support materials related to pupils' needs. In the process of ensuring the provision of such resources, both children and the community members can be of great help.

Curriculum Adapter

Furthermore, multi-grade teachers should demonstrate sound understanding of the national curriculum in order to be able to integrate themes and topics for different grade levels. Teachers have to select, modify and adapt materials from the national curriculum to suit the learning outcomes of the different grade levels taught. Please refer to strategies in teaching multi-grade classes in other units of this handbook in detail.

CONCLUSION

- ✓ Multi-grade teaching is where one teacher combines pupils of different grades in the same classroom and it is not an inferior way of teaching;
- ✓ Monograde classrooms also have children with mixed abilities, hence, teachers' roles in multi-grade classrooms and the techniques used can also be used in a monograde classroom; and
- ✓ When planned and taught well, both the learners and teachers benefit from multi-grade teaching as it provides access to all learners, promotes and allows independent learning as well as cooperative learning thus building up cognitive achievement among learners as well as builds professional skills for teachers.

TEACHERS' REFLECTION CORNER

What characteristics exist in monograde classes that are also available in a multi-grade class? How unique is my multi-grade class?

Think back on what you have learned. What are the similarities and

SECTION 2
CURRICULUM ADAPTATION AND PLANNING



Key Points:

In this chapter, we shall look at:

- How we define curriculum
- Adapting the curriculum in the multi-grade classrooms
- Curriculum organization and planning tools in multi-grade classes such as lesson plans

INTRODUCTION

The concept of multi-grade teaching is not a new approach in Gambian schools. Teachers have been using some of the teaching strategies suitable for multi-grade knowingly or unknowingly. This literature will give you extra information on multi-grade methodologies, curriculum adaptation and planning

In many cases, curricula are usually structured for a monograde system. This means that the curriculum needs to be adapted to suit the multi-grade classes. This section will focus on some strategies for curriculum adaptation and planning for multi-grade teachers in The Gambia.



When you hear the words curriculum, syllabus and lesson plan what comes to your mind? How would you define these terms in simple words?

2.1 DEFINITION OF TERMS

Curriculum: This is all the learning opportunities provided by the school. This includes what has been officially planned and approved by the ministry, normally called the official or national curricula, that has all the intended or ideal learning opportunities. It also includes extra-curricular and out-of-school activities such as projects, field trips, and the relationships, attitudes and behaviours that contribute to the quality of life in schools.

The curriculum is then further organized into syllabi and lesson plans to make the learning process easier. The syllabus organizes all topics that are taught from grades 1-6. Each subject has a separate syllabus.

2.2 HARMONIZATION OF TOPICS

In curriculum adaptation and planning, the teachers may use the following strategies to be more effective.

A thorough review of the curriculum is the **first thing** a multi-grade teacher should do. This simply means that you will have to look through the national curriculum to see what is relevant to the grades you teach and become familiar with what is required for each grade. Some examples have been provided as an appendix on page 77.

Secondly look for common themes or topics that are depicted from one grade to the next in each subject and develop a chart identifying the main themes or topics (see page 78 of the appendix). What topics or themes can be used to introduce or develop your program? What topics or themes can be taught together? What topics or themes need to be taught separately?

The purpose of doing this is to look for common activities or themes that can be used for certain grades or groups of pupils. This also helps you in planning how to sequence activities, which assignments and assessments may be needed.



What do I need to keep in mind when adapting the curriculum?

When planning and adapting a curriculum for your class, try to take the following into consideration:

- The pupil's different learning abilities across age and grades. How much can a grade 1 pupil comfortably be able to learn? What background knowledge is needed?
- The various levels of difficulties for the different grades. If work is too difficult or too easy, pupils may be distracted or discouraged.

Below is a curriculum extract which will serve as a sample of similar units and topics from the "Integrated Studies" syllabus for grades 1 and 2. Teachers are advised to develop a chart like this for all subject areas. You will then be able to identify the topics that can be integrated across subjects and those that cannot be matched.

Grade 1	Grade 2
My village Describing ourselves Keeping ourselves clean Likes and dislikes My compound Helping at home	Where do I live? Important people Keeping clean Festivals ² Buildings Things that help us work
Knowing animals Looking after animals Animals and their food Animals and their homes Animals sounds	Livestock and fish Livestock farming and fishing Food that we need Ethnic groups and their settlements Languages
Looking at plants The different parts of plants Importance of plant parts	Crops Uses of plants parts Uses of plants
Sources of water Uses of water Mixing with water Floating and sinking	Air Uses of air Mixing with air Things that move in air

² In festivals, what are the things that you like or dislike? I like Tabaski festival but I don't like killing the sheep

Kind of food we eat	Plants growing in the soil that we eat
Where does our food come from?	Things in the soil
Our senses and food	The five common senses
	Keeping healthy
	Some common diseases and how to protect ourselves
	Occupation and Services
	Market

More Samples of Integrating Themes/Units

The following samples were created by Multi-grade teachers with guidance from their instructors' at a multi-grade training in The Gambia.

Sample1: Integrated Studies Grade 1 & 2

Grade 1	Grade 2
Theme 1 – Unit 1 My family	Theme 1 – Unit 1 Where do I live?
Unit 2 Describing ourselves	Theme 3 – Unit 2 Ethnic group
Unit 3 Keeping ourselves clean	Theme 2 – Unit 2 Keeping clean
Unit 4 Likes and dislikes	Theme 4 – Unit 3 Markets
Unit 5 My compound	Theme 1 – Unit 2 Buildings
Unit 6 Helping at home	Theme 3 – Unit 3 Occupations and services

Sample 2: SES Grade 1 & 2

Grade 1	Grade 2
Theme 2 – Unit 1-4 Animals	Theme 4 – Unit 2 Livestock farming and fishing
Unit 5 Animal sounds	Animal sounds
Theme 3 – Unit 1 Looking at plants	Theme 4 – Unit 1 Crops
Unit 2 & 3 Different parts and the importance of plants	Theme 5 – Unit 4 Growing plants in the soil
Theme 4 – Unit 1 Sources of water	Theme 5 – Unit 2 Things in the soil
Unit 2 Uses of water	Theme 2 – Unit 1 Keeping healthy
Theme 4 - Unit 3 Mixing with water	Theme 5 – Unit 1 Types of soil
Unit 4 Floating and sinking	Theme 6 – Unit 1 Observation of air
Theme 5 - Unit 1 The kind of food we eat	Theme 2 – Unit 3 Food that we need
Unit 2 Where does our food come from?	Theme 5 – Unit 3 Uses of soil & Unit 4 – Growing plants in the soil
Unit 3 Our senses and food	Theme 5 – Unit 4 Things that help us work

2.3 TIMETABLE IN MULTI-GRADE SCHOOL

The timetable is a planning tool for the teacher that shows what subject lessons are to be covered when throughout the week. For a multi-grade teacher, the timetable is important as it helps to plan for time and organize resources ahead of time. Teachers of multi-grade schools are advised to adopt a unified multi-grade time table (i.e. the two multi-grade classes should be having the same subject at all time).

When planning a timetable consider:

- The subject that has to be taught and the competency needed for each subject and grade as stated in the Ministry's policies and directives;
- The daily and weekly total amount of time available for actual teaching. Take into consideration the holidays as well. How many periods are required for each subject per week? How long should one class be and will it be enough?; and
- Available resources and teaching strategies needed for the subjects. Does the activity require a lot of movement, other people being involved such as the community, etc. 87

See appendix page 87 for an example of a timetable.

Some suggested tips for timetabling:

1. Program subjects that requires attention in the mornings when students are fresh such as Maths;
2. Try to alternate periods of concentrated attention to those that have activities both in and out of class;
3. Allow enough time to teach and monitor all your groups and grades at some time during the week;
4. Younger pupils may not have the same attention span as older pupils and may need to change activities more often than older pupils; and
5. Clearly display the timetable so that pupils are aware of what lesson they should come prepared to learn for that day and week.

Can you think of other tips?

2.4 SCHEME OF WORK

A scheme is a plan of action for a given period/duration in order to help you plan ahead. In the teaching, teachers set themselves a task to be accomplished within a specific period of time, for example weekly, monthly or timely schedules. The scheme of works is developed from the corresponding syllabus. Below is a sample of a weekly scheme of work.

Sample schemes of work from multi-grade teachers

Sample 1: Scheme of Work

15th – 19th December 2008	Grade 1	Grade 2	Proposed method or teaching strategy/work plan	Remarks
Integrated Studies	My family Describing ourselves	Where do I live? Important people in our community		
English	Hello Good Morning	Welcome Meet the family		
Maths	1. Counting up to 20 2. Comparing and ordering sets	1. Place value 2. Ordering numbers and number sequences		

Sample 2: Scheme of Work

Scheme of Work Grade 5 & 6							
Date	Subject	Topics	Materials	Objectives	Planned Activities	Reference	Remarks
15-19 Sept.	Science	G5-Internal parts of the body G6 – Skeletal & muscular system	Pictures Diagrams Bones Chalk Blackboard	By the end of the week pupils should be able to: G5- 1) Name the main internal organs 2) Identify the position of the organs in the body G6 – 1) State the names of the body system and their functions 2) State the function of the skeleton 3) Name some important bones and muscles	Introduction Brainstorm Discussion Demonstration Presentation of pictures, diagrams and bones	Gambia pupils book 5/6 G5 - Theme 1 Unit 1 Page 7 G6- Theme 4 Unit 12 Page 56 Teacher's Guide 5/6	

2.5 LESSON PLAN

This is a written work that includes procedures, materials and statement of objectives that guide and remind the teacher when teaching a lesson. In the context of the teaching and learning, differentiation in the objectives means the provision of content or activities that are appropriate for the grade or level of ability.

Teachers often, unconsciously, provide content or materials aimed at the average level of ability in a class. Occasionally this approach can be of disadvantage to both pupils with low levels of ability and brighter pupils who need more challenging material.

Good lesson plans

- Gives the teacher confidence and control of the class;
- Makes the learning process effective as lessons content and activities are appropriate for the different grades;
- Helps to avoid time wastage as pupils and teachers know what to do when and resources needed;
- Gives teachers time to prepare for the class ahead of time including resources; and
- Helps to define the goals and objectives and how to achieve these goals and objectives for the different grades in the class.

When planning lessons teachers should allow room for flexibility to take into account that pupils may know more or less than planned for, may not have understood previous lessons, or other interruptions during the lesson.



Can you suggest other ways that lesson planning helps to make the lessons effective for students?

Below is an example of a lesson plan:

Subject: Integrated Studies	Date: 15th December 2008						
Grades: 1 & 2	Duration: 45 min						
Topics: Grade 1: My family Grade 2: Where do I live?							
Objectives: By the end of the lesson, the pupils should be able to: Grade 1: Name family members for example, father, mother, brother, sister: Match names with pictures of family members Grade 2: Name places where people live for example Village, Town : State some of the things that can be found in a village and town							
Materials: Picture of a family, Integrated Studies Book 1 & 2, board, Chalk, Duster, Pictures of houses.							
Methodology: Here state the different methods that you plan to use for this lesson such as brainstorming, questioning, and discussions							
Introduction: General introduction of materials to all grade levels. The teacher gives direction to all							
<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Grade 1 Activities</th> <th>Grade 2 Activities</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td> </td> <td> </td> </tr> <tr> <td> </td> <td> </td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Grade 1 Activities	Grade 2 Activities					
Grade 1 Activities	Grade 2 Activities						
Assessment: Teacher asks relevant questions to test the level of the students understanding throughout the lesson.							
Conclusion: The teacher wraps up the lesson by stressing and summarizing the salient points of the lesson							
Remarks: Teacher evaluates the lesson strengths and weaknesses. Please note any							

difficulties that you noted during the lesson, or pupils or grades that need further help.

Sample lesson plans prepared by teachers:

Sample Lesson Plan 1:

Subject: Integrated Studies and SES Grades: 4 & 5	Date: Sept 20 th Duration: 45 min
Topics: G4 – Links with other countries G5 – Earliest people of The Gambia	
Objectives: By the end of the lesson, the pupils should be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Describe the ways of living of the earliest settlers of The Gambia.	
Materials: Map of The Gambia and Africa, trading goods (salt, beads), pictures, teachers guide and pupils books	
Introduction: Teacher brainstorms with the class using the map, goods and pictures	
Examples of Activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teacher asks pupils to name some countries in Africa and to name and locate old trading centers on the map• Children discuss The Gambia's trading partners and main items of trade• Class demonstrates the barter system of trade using local goods	
Conclusion: The teacher recaps the lesson by questioning pupils	
Assessment: Teacher goes around checking seat work and assessing for understanding	

Sample Lesson Plan 2:

Subject: Math Grades: 3 & 4	Date: Sept 20 th Duration: 45 min						
Topic: Fractions Sub-Topics: G3– Folding fraction G4 – Common fraction and mixed numbers							
Objectives: By the end of the lesson, the pupils should be able to: G3 – Identify and recognize the different types of fraction G4 – Find fractions of whole numbers							
Materials: Sheet of papers, oranges and limes, fraction boards							
Introduction: Teacher introduces the lesson by linking the previous lesson to the present one							
Examples of Activities: <table border="1" data-bbox="232 1108 1409 1570"> <thead> <tr> <th><i>Teacher Activities</i></th><th><i>Pupil Activities</i></th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>G3 - Distribute squares of paper to pupils & ask them to fold them into two. Ask pupils to compare fraction and fraction board.</td><td>Pupils fold their papers into two and then compare them on the fraction board.</td></tr> <tr> <td>G4 – Guide the pupils on how to change improper fractions to mixed numbers. Assign a task to the pupils to practice what they’ve learned.</td><td>Pupils try to change improper fractions to mixed numbers and then work in their exercise books on the assigned task.</td></tr> </tbody> </table>		<i>Teacher Activities</i>	<i>Pupil Activities</i>	G3 - Distribute squares of paper to pupils & ask them to fold them into two. Ask pupils to compare fraction and fraction board.	Pupils fold their papers into two and then compare them on the fraction board.	G4 – Guide the pupils on how to change improper fractions to mixed numbers. Assign a task to the pupils to practice what they’ve learned.	Pupils try to change improper fractions to mixed numbers and then work in their exercise books on the assigned task.
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Conclusion: Teacher concludes the lesson by recapping the main points.							
Assessment: Teacher evaluates the lesson by collecting and marking pupils’ books.							

CONCLUSION

- ✓ The national curriculum is usually structured for monograde classes therefore, teachers and curriculum writers need to work together to adapt for multi-grade classes;
- ✓ When adapting the curriculum, educators need to identify the common themes or units that can be taught together and those that need to be taught separately and plan accordingly;
- ✓ Planning is very important for multi-grade teachers. Lesson plans, syllabi, and timetables are planning tools that help teachers prepare ahead of time to ensure that the required competencies are covered; and
- ✓ Teachers should be flexible and creative in planning classes.

TEACHERS' REFLECTION CORNER

Planning for a multi-grade class is important. Think of several benefits and positive impacts that can result in well planned lessons.

What are some of the things that happen in class that disorganize even the well planned lessons? What are some of the strategies of dealing with such instances?

SECTION 3

TEACHING APPROACHES AND STRATEGIES

Key Points:

In this chapter, we shall look at:

- Expository and direct teaching approaches
- Different teaching strategies that multi-grade teachers can use

INTRODUCTION

Teaching strategies or methods can be defined as the different approaches used to facilitate the development of pupils' knowledge, skills and attitudes. It includes all the different techniques used to facilitate learning in class. In this section, we shall look at the different strategies that are used in teaching multi-grade classes. This will include methods that are more teacher-directed in which the teacher has more autonomy. The following are examples of teaching strategies.

3.1 TEACHING APPROACHES

a. Expository Approach

The method most commonly used in The Gambia is the expository approach, in which the teacher talks and the pupils listen. After the lecture, the pupils complete individual work. This is an example of a teacher-directed approach in which the teacher has more autonomy to what is being learned. The learner's role in expository teaching is usually passive unless when responding to the teacher's cues and questions. Expository approach is used to explain, describe, or demonstrate a practical skill, deliver information, and clarify concepts.

When teaching multi-grade, the expository approach is possible if the subject is the same and if the teacher spends a short time outlining the topic. It is advised that teachers spend a few minutes to explain the task to one grade, then allow for independent work. The teacher can then work with the other group. Teachers should have the resources ready to enable the pupils to work independently. For example, a teacher could distribute work cards to one group then she could concentrate on the other group of students.

However, a short-coming of this approach is that it might not be self-motivating because it does not encourage pupils to be creative in learning.

b. Investigative Approach

Another strategy is called the investigative approach. To investigate means to find out more about something. In this method, the pupils are given the opportunity to find out more about a certain concept with the direction by the teacher. The pupils learn by doing. They can learn to observe, analyze, and apply knowledge to solve problems. Some examples of investigative methods include projects, creative writing, field trips and experiments.

While the pupils do most of the work, the investigative approach requires careful planning and preparation by the teacher. The table below summarizes the teacher and learners' roles when using the two approaches.



Take time to study the table and consider what other roles the teachers and pupils play in the two approaches. When would it be best to implement the different approaches? Why would you choose one approach over the other?

Summary table of teaching approaches

Approach	Teacher's role	Learner's role	Examples of teaching strategies
<i>Expository Approach</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has more autonomy throughout the lesson Selects lesson based on learners ability Teacher is the <i>pilot</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Passive Listens and tries to construct knowledge based on what is presented by the teacher and books 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrations in classroom Lectures Group discussions
<i>Investigative Approach</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Less directed control of the learning process Assists the learning process by probing learners Uses questions to probe the learners' interests Guides learners through discovery-based learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learners have more control of the learning process Learners investigate by asking questions and discovering the answers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Projects Experiments Field trips Observations Research projects

3.2 TEACHING STRATEGIES

Different approaches require different strategies to organize teaching. When considering and planning the strategies to use, it is important to ask the following questions:

- What do I want the pupils to be able to do by the end of the lesson? (objectives)

- What learning experiences will help the learners be able to achieve this? (learning activities, plans etc)
- How do I monitor the processes?
- How much time do I need to allow the pupils to be able to learn and achieve the objectives?
- How will I know when the pupils have achieved the learning objectives?

a. Whole Class Teaching

This is where the teacher works with the whole class. In a multi-grade class, this can be used to:

- Introduce a lesson or new topic;
- Generate discussion or facilitate brainstorming session;
- Practice learning; and
- Summarize a lesson or bring a discussion to a close.



As a multi-grade teacher, can you think of other situations in which whole class teaching would be appropriate?

Whole class teaching may be difficult in classes that are large, have different grade levels in the same class, and with pupils learning at a different pace.

Consider this example:

A teacher has a class of 23 grade 3, and 30 grade 4 pupils. She is teaching a lesson on “simple compound sentence construction,” The teacher starts with the whole group for five minutes as an introduction to the topic. The teacher then asks the pupils to write sentences in their books. Many pupils’ hands go up for spelling help and the teacher writes the individual words on the board. The teacher then goes around assisting and marking work. The pupils come together again as a whole group at the end of the lesson to read some of their sentences aloud.

This sound like a good lesson but remember, the teacher has 53 pupils in the class. Do you think the teacher will be able to give them all individual attention in a 35 minute class period? She also has to consider two different grades at the same time and within those grades there will be different levels of ability.



Can you think of another way the teacher can organize the class for the same lesson?

Some suggestions:

How about making work cards for the lower grade with pictures and their missing words?

For example, the small boy has a _____ and the _____ boy has a bicycle.

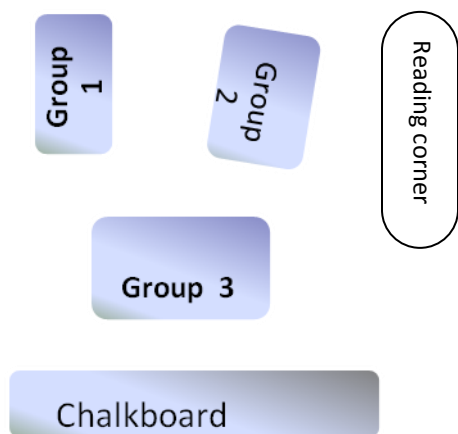
This will enable the lower grade to work independently while the teacher concentrates on grade 4.

If they worked in groups they could help each other and they will not need as many resources.

b. Group Work

Working in groups and discussing things together is very important for children, especially those that are quiet and those that find school work difficult. They can be reassured and helped by other pupils. Teachers know their pupils best and should define the task so that the groups know what is expected so that they can work towards achieving it. However, if the class is not properly managed, working in groups can become too noisy.

Example: Group Work Spaces



This is one example of group work. As the teacher, be creative in how you position the groups.

When forming groups, think about the size of the group, available resources, number of students, your position and the ability to move around and monitor students, level of noise and so on...



Think about your group learning experiences. What are some of the advantages and limitations of learning in a group? What are some of the feelings that students might experience when working in groups? How can you, as a teacher, facilitate a positive group learning experience?

When working in groups consider some of the following questions:

- What is the task to be done in each group?
 - Clarity of instructions: Is the task clear to the group members?
 - Clarity of objective: What is the group expected to achieve?
- Does each member of the group have an assigned task? How will you communicate their specific tasks? How will you ensure each person fulfills their assigned role?
- Who should be in each group?
 - Will you group by ability level? (either same or differentiated)
 - How many will be in one group?
 - How many groups?
- How much time is needed to complete the task(s)?
- How will you monitor the process?
- How will you know when they achieved the objectives?

- What will they do if they finish before other groups?
- What will they do if they need to ask you a question, but you are working with the another class or group?

Tips in Preparing Group Work

- Plan ahead. Which lessons will be most effective for group work?
- Decide on what basis you will form the group. Will you mix all the grades together, same grade, abilitie, etc.?
- Prepare the resources that will be needed including the instructions to be given to pupils
- Display the directions or make sure that each group has their directions and know what is expected of them
- Be clear about the roles including your role as a teacher

c. Working in Pairs

This is when the teacher directs two pupils to work together on a specific task. Just like in group work, the task should be well defined and understood by the pairs. Pair work can be done with the same grades or with different grades depending on the level of ability and the task to be accomplished.

One problem of this method is that the pairs need to be well organized to maximize learning. Unless the lesson is to help two students learn to work together despite their differences, this approach may not work if the pupils do not like each other.

d. Independent Study

This is where the pupils work alone and direct their own learning. For pupils to work independently, they need to know exactly what is required and the objectives. Some examples of when independent study can be done includes asking the pupils to do the following

- Write a story and clearly state what you expect to see in the story;
- Illustrate ideas or concepts based on a certain topic;

- Use work cards; and
- Summarize a topic.

One of the best activities for independent learning is an assignment which they can work on over a period of time (a week, for example). The instructions should be clearly communicated and the daily tasks should be clearly defined. These are also called self-instructional worksheets. For example, you can ask the pupils to choose a topic from something they have been working on and find out as much as they can about the topic and report back.

To facilitate independent learning, teachers need to be organized and plan ahead of the lessons. The teachers also need to train their pupils to find other activities when they are done with the work, and most importantly to manage on their own. Therefore, it is critical that teachers create systems and procedures in the classroom to facilitate extension work.

Teaching pupils to work on their own is not only relevant for the MG class, it is a skill that can help pupils for the rest of their lives. It means more work for you as the teacher before the lesson, but with a greater reward as this gives the pupils a better chance of understanding and remembering what you are teaching. It also saves time in class.

See below samples of self-instructional/independent sheets produced by multi-grade teachers.

Sample 1: Independent Worksheet

Grade 6 – SES: Independence to the Present

Instructions: Turn to unit 2, page 33 in your grade 6 SES textbook and answer the following questions:

1. Who ruled before independence?
2. When did The Gambia become independent?
3. Which month do we observe independence?
4. On which date does it fall?
5. Who was the first prime minister?
6. When did Jawara's rule end?
7. When did The Gambia become a republic?

Sample 2: Independent Worksheets *(Please note that there would be animal and food pictures/drawings on the student table).*

Grade 3 - Plants and animals in our environment

1. Study the pictures of animals and match them with the correct name of the animal and the food that the animal eats.
2. Paste each picture on the worksheet in the appropriate column.
3. Paste the name card beside the appropriate animal.
4. Paste the food they eat next to the name of the animal.

Picture of Animals	Names of Animals	Foods they Eat



How could you use instructional worksheets in your class? What other ways can the independent worksheet be used? What preparation do you need as a teacher to monitor the learning process? *See attached appendix at the back for more on independent worksheets pg. 82-84*

e. Peer Learning and Support

Peer learning can be organized in groups or in pairs. Capable pupils from higher grades—and sometimes peers of the same grade—can work with a group from the lower or same grade. It is evidenced that some pupils learn best when asked to work with their peers. This being the case, multi-grade teachers should explore this strategy to facilitate teaching and learning.

Keep in mind that even in peer learning, the teacher is in control. Tasks should be defined and clearly explained to all pupils. You also need to be sensitive to other teacher and parent reactions to children helping the lower grades.

CONCLUSION

Given the diversity of pupils in a multi-grade classroom, teachers need to employ different approaches and strategies in teaching the planned lessons.

- ✓ Activities need to be planned with objectives in mind.
- ✓ Strategies and approaches need to be appropriate for the learners and the activity.
- ✓ Space, organization, and management of the classroom resources need to be conducive of the teaching strategy that is being used. We shall consider these in the next section

TEACHERS' REFLECTION CORNER

Why should teachers implement several different teaching strategies/approaches?

Explain a situation in which you would plan an expository teaching approach and when you would facilitate group work.

SECTION 4

CLASSROOM ORGANISATION AND MANAGEMENT

Key Points:

In this chapter, we shall look at:

- Organising the multi-grade classroom to maximize learning.
- Different aspect of a classroom that need management and the teacher's role in classroom management, both human and physical.

INTRODUCTION

Classroom organisation and management for multi-grade teaching can be challenging because there are many varied aspects of the classroom that need to be organised and managed all at once. Effective learning and teaching is a combination of good planning as we have seen and good organization and management of the classroom and resources.

In this section, we will try to explain what classroom management is and identify the key aspects of the classroom that need to be organized and managed. We will then look at each key aspect in detail.

4.1 CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

Classroom management is the way teachers organise and exercise control over the various elements of the classroom environment to make teaching and learning interesting and effective.

4.2 KEY ASPECTS OF CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

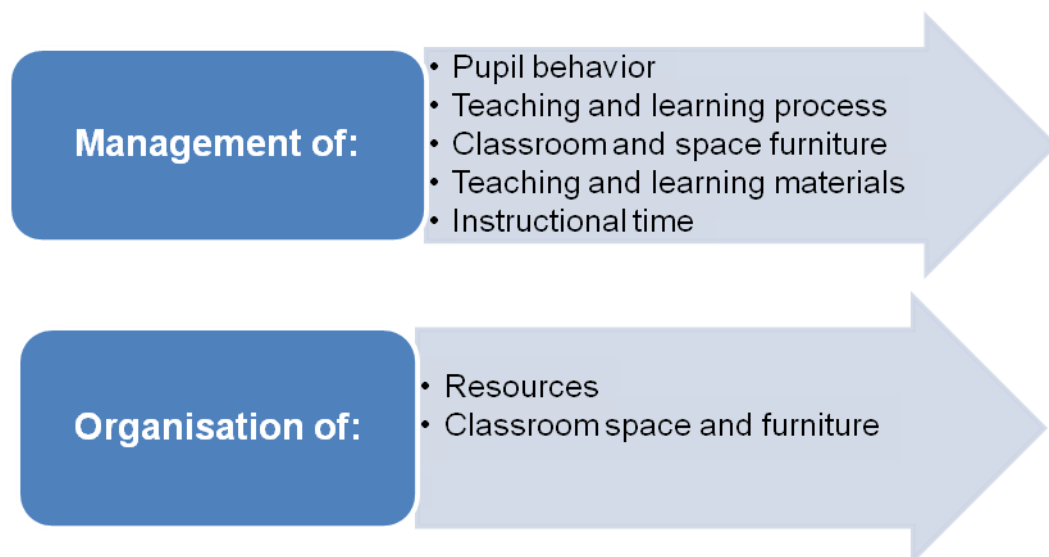
Pupil behavior: The teachers teach people of different ages and also different ability levels. S/he is therefore bound to face some behavior challenges.

Teaching and learning process: A multi-grade teacher deals with pupils of different categories. Therefore s/he must deal with numerous issues in order to exercise control over teaching and learning process in the classroom.

Teaching/Learning materials: Issuing the wrong teaching or learning materials to a particular grade classroom can be confusing and also time consuming to undo. To avoid this, multi-grade teachers should be able to organise and manage the materials for the various grades

Classroom space and furniture: In multi-grade teaching, the teacher needs to employ various strategies in order to be effective. S/he should be able to organize the classroom to suit the strategy being used at any particular stage of the lesson.

Instructional time: In a multi-grade setting, pupils may complete tasks at varying times. The teacher must be skillful in managing time in order to reduce the amount of slack time during which pupils are not fully engaged in meaningful activities.



4.2.1 MANAGEMENT OF PUPIL BEHAVIOR.

Consider this Scenario:

You are working with grade 4 pupils in a multi-grade classroom. You have asked grade 5 pupils to complete a task in Maths. After some time, you notice that some pupils in grade 5 are working quietly but a few of them seem to be talking and disturbing others. You did warn, but they did not heed.

Discuss

- What are the possible causes of the misbehavior?
- What are some of the possible preventive measures to promote acceptable behaviors?
- How can you deal with this and other misbehaviors when they occur?

Multi-grade classroom can be chaotic if the teacher does not have the necessary skills to create and maintain 'trouble-free' teaching and learning environment. This unit focuses your attention on causes of misbehaviors in a classroom, how to prevent them and how to deal with them when they occur.



In your classrooms, what are some of the behaviour challenges that you are experiencing now? See suggestion from teachers at the end of this unit.

Possible causes of misbehavior

The possible causes of the misbehavior:

- **Presenting a lesson that is not interesting:** This can make pupils bored, resulting to general misbehaviors;
- **Poor teacher/pupil relationships:** This can cause pupils not to take the teacher and the lesson seriously. This can lead to many forms of

misbehavior and at a large scale;

- **Physical discomfort:** Due to outside distractions, classroom temperatures, hunger, and thirst are some examples;
- **Early completion of tasks:** This can be caused by setting unrealistic tasks to the ability of the learners as well as assigning tasks that are too easy. These situations can lead to moving about, teasing or fight;
- **Inability to do the task:** This can also be caused by setting unrealistic tasks, and may lead to frustration and general disruptive behaviors;
- **Unfavorable conditions:** Such as hunger, sickness or unhappiness at home.

Possible preventive measures to promote acceptable behaviors

Some ways of preventing misbehaviors in the classroom are:

- Plan your lessons well to make sure that pupils are fully engaged throughout the lessons;
- Engage pupils in interesting activities that make best use of interactive teaching and learning materials;
- Make sure the physical classroom environment is conducive;
- Be a role model. You should lead your pupils by being a good example;
- Formulate clear and realistic classroom rules with your pupils the first time you meet them.

Dealing with misbehaviour patterns when they occur

- It is recommended to give two verbal warnings before moving to the next level of punishment.
- Avoid punishing the whole class. Focus your efforts or punishment on the person that is choosing to misbehave;

- Hide your emotions as much as possible. Never show that you are irritated or angry. If the pupil concerned goes in for argument, stop the conversation immediately and arrange to engage him /her at a more convenient time.
- **Use alternative punishments and avoid corporal punishment . Corporal punishment is a thing of the past in our school system. It is illegal.**
Alternative corrective measures may include:
 - Assigning writing tasks that focus on ‘acceptable behavior’;
 - You may ask the pupil concerned to remain in class during break or after school. Make sure you engage him or her in an useful activity;
 - **Note:** Be careful of not further endangering the safety of the pupils when asking pupils to stay behind after school;
- Discuss with the child about his/her misbehavior. You may counsel or refer him/her to a school counselor if needed;

Visit the home of child if need be and discuss the misbehavior with him/her and the parents.

4.2.2 MANAGEMENT OF LEARNING PROCESS.

During lesson presentation, teachers are always challenged by many different issues relating to the learning process. They are therefore required to be good decision makers and implementers in order to exercise full control over their lessons. In this topic, we will examine some of the key issues of classroom control over the teaching and learning process during lessons. These include:

- How to capture pupils’ attention and interest during lesson introduction;
- How to maintain their attention and interest throughout the lesson;
- How instructions are given for various activities;
- How to support pupils who work in groups;
- How to offer help to those who work individually;
- How to handle external interruption;
- How to conclude the lesson.

Capturing pupils' attention during lesson introduction

When introducing a topic, a teacher should be able to apply creative ways to capture the pupil's attention.

- Make sure pupils can relate what is required to be learned to their daily life and past experiences;
- Display captivating teaching and learning materials;
- Unexpectedly appear in traditional clothing if you are to teach about ceremonies or festivals in social and environmental studies;
- Tell an interesting story that relates to the lesson content.

Retaining pupils' attention throughout the lesson

In order to learn, pupils must want to listen to you and/or take responsibility of their own learning. Therefore, ensure that:

- You do not interrupt an interesting pupil activity. Keep in mind the timing and task;
- They understand that it is important to listen to you;
- You explain the purpose/importance of each lesson activity;
- Pupils are fully engaged throughout the lesson. The use of interactive teaching and learning materials are crucial in this;
- You vary your strategies during the lesson – ranging from whole class teaching to paired, small group, and individual activities.

If the class becomes too noisy, suddenly stand still, keep quiet and stare at pupils especially in the direction of the noise until they recognize that they have to be quiet. This works better than shouting at pupils.

Giving instruction

Giving instructions during any particular lesson depends more on the number of activities required to be done. Think about the following suggestions in making lesson instructions:

- Wait until everybody is quiet and listening;
- Write down your instructions in advance. You may use the blackboard, flip chart or instruction card for this;
- Speak softly but clearly so that pupils will see the need to be quiet in order to hear you;
- Give instructions in clear, simple words and in a logical sequence;
- Find out if pupils understand your instructions by asking specific questions. To ask “Do you understand” is not enough. The answer is often “yes!” Ask an open question such as, “What is it about X that you don’t understand?”

Handling interruptions

- Apply classroom rules strictly. Maintain the same standard everyday;
- Try to meet all visitors at the door and politely ask them to come back at a specific time when the class will be less busy;
- Let your colleagues, friends, and relatives know your free time;
- Send visiting parents to the head teacher.

Supporting pupils to work on their own

- During independent learning, do not interfere, unless they ask for support. This helps them to develop independent skills;
- If pupils are making mistakes or are on the wrong track, help them to discover it for themselves by asking questions;
- Make sure that there are sufficient challenges/tasks to be completed;
- Announce time at regular intervals and make sure they keep to the time;
- Make sure pupils are aware of their mistakes and help them to be able to make their own corrections.

Supporting pupils working in groups

- Make sure that groups fully understand what is required to be done;
- Ensure that each individual in the group understands and carry out their responsibility in completing the task at hand;
- Move around groups to ask challenging questions to those who are off track. However, make sure you do not interrupt those who do not need your help.

Concluding a lesson

- Never allow the school bell to conclude your lesson for you;
- Plan in such a way that you have 10-5 minutes at your disposal to address the whole class at the end of the lesson;
- Collect and sort all the teaching and learning materials before the next lesson.

4.2.3 MANAGEMENT OF TEACHING AND LEARNING MATERIALS

Teaching and learning materials can make teaching and learning process stimulating and effective, provided they are properly utilized and managed. Nevertheless, it is not unusual to find most classrooms in our school system with insufficient resources or sometimes without teaching materials.

It is important to note that multi-grade teachers need teaching and learning materials more because, they are required to cater for the pupils' need to work independently most of the time during the lesson.

In this unit, we will try to explain what teaching and learning materials are and the advantages of using them during lessons. Challenges teachers face in making and using teaching/learning aids and their solutions will be discussed. We will also look at the community as a resource to the classroom and the school as a whole.

Teaching and learning resources

Teaching and learning resources are materials that help to make the teaching and learning process interactive, interesting and effective.

Teaching and learning resources **can be curriculum materials** (syllabus, teachers' guide and pupils' books). They can also be teaching and learning aids (materials) that are often provided by the teacher.

Teaching/learning aids **can be real objects** that are relevant to the topic being taught. Examples include uprooted plants, flowers, tools, scales, thermometers etc.. They **can**

be models pictures and diagrams of things being taught. Game boards/cards and puppets are useful teaching/learning materials.

They **can also be self instructional worksheets** which are designed for pupils to work on a task individually, in pairs or small groups are one of the materials you will need most as a multi-grade teacher.

Consider the following dialogue:

Cluster monitor: “You look worried today, what is the matter?”

Teacher Trainee (TT): “The matter is my pupils. They don’t understand anything I explained about human digestive system. They can’t even explain the path of food from the mouth to the anus. This simple thing. I kept on explaining and explaining all over again. They must be stupid.”

Mentor: “They are not stupid. You shouldn’t label pupils as stupid as it is discouraging. Pupils have different ways of understanding. May be you need to back you explanation by showing them an example of human digestive system.”

TT: “But I cannot open my stomach and show them everything.”

Mentor: “Yes, but you can make a large model or at least diagram with labels on word cards. You may also make sentence cards to indicate the function(s) of each part. You can use these to teach the parts of the digestive system and their functions. Your pupils can also use the labels and function cards to do matching activity to check their understanding. Arrow cutouts may help you show the path of food.”

TT: “But this will take a lot of time.”

Mentor: “Please, why don’t you try? Have you not heard about this Chinese proverb,”

“What I hear I forget
What I see I remember
What I do I understand.”



Are there other ideas you can share with the TT?

Advantages of using teaching/learning materials

Here are some advantages of using teaching/learning materials.

- Concretize abstract objects, through first hand experience.
- Make work easy for the teacher in class.
- Help pupils remember and understand facts, processes and principles.
- Enable pupils to carry out instructions easily, especially worksheets and instructions sheets/cards.
- Develop pupils' independent learning skills.
- Help pupils to develop logical thinking: example, matching cards ordering picture and objects.
- Capture and maintain pupils attention and interest in the lesson.
- Develop pupils' cooperative skills

Challenges teachers face in preparing teaching and learning resources

Some of the challenges expressed by teachers in making their own teaching/learning materials are such as:

- Lack of raw materials (manila cards, glue, colouring materials and so on).
- Lack of artistic skills to make teaching aids.
- Lack of time.
- Lack of equipment (Scissors, knife, saw, hammer and so on).
- Lack of storage facilities.
- Lack of security.

How can you cope with these challenges?

- **Lack of raw materials:** Use available waste (thrown away used materials) found in the local environment. Examples:
 - **Empty rice bags:** Useful in making diagrams and charts.
 - **Cement papers:** Useful in making the same things as in empty rice bag. It could also be used in making worksheet and books .
 - **Empty cartons:** Useful in making flash cards, picture cards, game boards, 100 square chart, clock faces and so on.

- **Bottle caps:** useful in counting during lessons in math (lessons on operations).
- **Old slippers:** useful in making models of animals around us, wheel and axle, and also in making abacus.
- **Jam and mayonnaise jar:** these can be used as beakers.

- **Lack of artistic skills:**
 - Ask colleagues relatives, friends and parents in the community to help.
 - Pupils can help too.
 - Use pictures from old books, magazines and newspapers.
 - Use real objects: Example, in teaching parts of flowering plants, you could use uprooted plants.

- **Lack of time:**
 - Seek for help from colleague, friends, parents and pupils.
 - Use weekends and holiday periods to prepare materials in advance.

- **Lack of equipment:**
 - Borrow from friends, colleague and community members.
 - Make the best use of the carpenters and smiths in the community.
 - Use jam jars; empty bottles empty tins and so on to improvise some laboratory equipment.
 - Raise funds to buy some of the equipment needed.

- **Lack of storage facilities:** There is a need to store your materials once you have made them, because you and your colleagues may need them again. Things that can damage these materials include: mice, termites, dust, damp and fungus, rain and wind. There is also need to protect them against theft. To protect your teaching/learning materials, put them in polythene bags according to grade level/subjects and pack them in strong cartons. Keep them in your class cupboard, the head teacher's office or even in your house.

Tips on using teaching and learning resources

Read this case study below:

Head teacher: “the cluster monitor was in your class this morning, how did your lesson go?”

Teacher: “Well, it went well, but he commented that I should have provided teaching/learning aids.”

Head teacher: “What topic were you teaching?”

Teacher: “I was teaching a passage during a reading lesson. I don’t know what teaching aid I can provide in this case. I wrote all the key words on the blackboard and introduced them. However, he asked me to discuss this with you because he doesn’t have enough time to do so.”

Head teacher: “Ok! I think there isn’t much to discuss actually. Perhaps you needed to write the key words on word cards (flash cards, or picture matching cards) during planning to prevent loss of time in writing them on the chalk board. You may also need them at some point of the lesson. You could also have produced cut-out, sentence cards of the passage from the start to the end. These could be reshuffled for pupils in pairs or groups to rearrange. Ask pupils to read to see how the sentences link to each other to form the passage.”

Teacher: “Oh I see! I will try that during my double periods, I know it can work. Thank you.”

Head teacher: “You are welcome.”

In some instances, teachers may lack the idea about what teaching aid is needed for a particular lesson.

The following guidelines may help:

- Formulate the objectives of the lesson;
- Know what activities will be done to meet the objectives;

- Identify teaching and learning materials required for the activities (seek advice from experienced teachers/personnel);
- Make the materials out of locally available resources. Colleague, friends, pupils and community members could help;
- Real objects may be required;
- Make sure the material you make is durable. They can be used in several other lessons.

Utilization of materials

Note that teaching and learning materials do not actually teach. That is your job as a teacher. How you utilize and organize the materials during lessons is very essential in ensuring effective learning.

Tips on how to utilize and organize the materials

- Make sure you have enough for every group or individuals. This will avoid quarrels or fight over them;
- Ensure that pupils are aware of the rules, softy and correct use of the materials;
- Supervise the learners all the times they are using the materials;
- In the case of posters, diagrams, charts and graphs, make sure they are displayed in such a way that they are visible to even the shortest pupils;
- Ensure that you have a special display area for each grade level;
- Explain to the pupils what is expected of them when using self-instructional worksheet.

Example

- ✓ How long will they have to complete the task?
- ✓ Do they understand the guidelines?
- ✓ Where should they record their responses?
- ✓ How do they check if they are right or wrong?
- ✓ How do they clear their doubts if they have any question?
- ✓ What do they do when they complete the task on the work sheet before the time schedule?

Organizing your teaching/learning materials in class during the school day

Consider this scenario:

You distribute teaching and learning materials to pupils of different grade levels. You then realize that the wrong materials have been issued?

- What are the possible causes of this situation?
- What problems can be faced in this situation?
- How can you avoid this from happening next time?

The possible causes of this scenario are:

Pupils are not clear about where to return materials after a particular activity or after the day's activity. So they dumped the materials in a disorganized way after the previous activity or day;

- The teacher did not develop the skills of sorting and organizing the different grade level materials after every lesson or day's work.



Can you think of other reasons?

One of the problems that can be faced in this situation is:

- That valuable time will be wasted in normalizing the situation.

The following are tips to avoid this from happening:

- After each lesson or day's work, ensure that all materials are sorted accordingly, and stored in separate containers.
- Ensure that the containers for each grade level materials are labeled clearly.
- Make sure that all the pupils know where to find and return their grade level materials.

To keep track of everyday materials such as pupils books, pencils, erasers, rulers and so on:

- Take regular inventory of all grade level materials, perhaps daily.
- Be quick to announce if you discover something missing, but politely. It could be that some one mistakenly packed it in his/her bag or may be it is placed in the wrong resource box by one of the pupils.



What else could you do to keep track of everyday materials such as pupil's books, pencils, erasers rulers and so on in your classroom?

Involving the community as a resource

The community can be engaged as a resource in many different ways. Here are some ways:

- **In teaching:**
 - Some community members may be school leavers waiting to pick up a job. They may be willing to help you supervise one grade level pupils engaged with self-instructional materials while you are working directly with the other grade;
 - The community can also be involved in helping pupils in practical lessons such as Physical Education, Gardening, Environmental trail, Art and Craft, and so on;
 - Some community members are resource persons in lessons on culture and traditions, health and hygiene. They can be involved as key resources to reinforce a lesson;
 - During lesson planning they can help in providing raw materials and equipment and also in making teaching/learning aids;
 - However, community members may not be professional teachers. You therefore, should not expect too much from them in the classroom. Make sure they do not do things on their own.
- Always plan with them, and make sure they understand and keep to what you would like them to do.

- **At the school level:**
 - They can be involved in fundraising activities. Funds raised could be used buy equipment and other materials for teachers to use to make teaching/learning materials.
 - Community members could be involved in repairing classroom cupboards and doors for teachers to be able to keep their teaching/learning aids secured.
- Think of more ways you can involve the community in teaching of multi-grade.

4.2.4 CLASSROOM (SPACE AND FURNITURE) ORGANIZATION

Considering the diversity of pupil's age and academic attainments in a multi-grade class and the corresponding need for teachers to adopt various teaching strategies, multi-grade teachers are required to be skillful in setting up the right kind of physical classroom environment.

The usual classroom organization in The Gambia is to have desks arranged in neat rows facing the teacher and the blackboard. This set-up is appropriate only for the most commonly used teacher centered method, in which the teacher teaches the whole class most of time. In multi-grade classroom this method of classroom organization may not work well. The disadvantage is that, even though the different grade levels may be learning the same subject theme/topic, they may be learning at varying levels. The teacher will find it difficult to be shifting from one grade level to another in using whole class teaching strategy throughout the lesson.

This unit provides the chance for us to reflect on the factors that need to be considered in the way we set up the physical environment of our classrooms. We will also identify various ways of organizing the classroom space and furniture to match the intended teaching strategy.

Factors that influence the way you arrange your classroom

In arranging the classroom the teacher may take note of the following factors

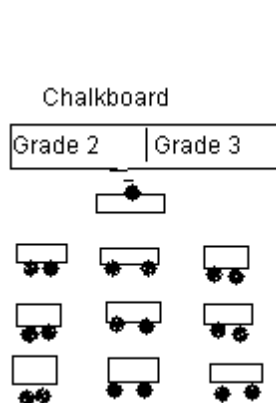
- Can all the pupils see the chalkboard and hear the teacher?
- Can all the pupils access the learning materials without interrupting others?
- Have the needs of the different learnings been taken into consideration such as left handed and right handed pupils should sit in such a way that they do not disturb each other, eye sights
- Group the different grades separately.
- Pupils in wheelchair may be seated near the door.
- Activity corners for both grades.

However the actual classroom organization will depend on the space available, furniture type, the subject/topic being taught, teacher's awareness of options and the strategies used.

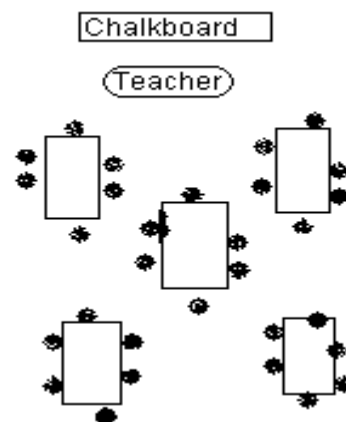
NOTE: Activity corners are areas set aside in the classroom where learning materials associated to subject areas are displayed. These materials are designed to develop pupils' independent learning skills.

The Materials on display may include posters, games, and supplementary readers, examples of pupils work, pictures and models.

How can you arrange your classroom to enhance learning?



Traditional seating arrangement

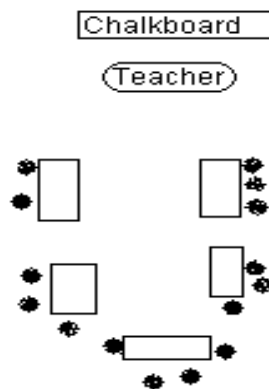


Alternative suggestions



Look at the way the classrooms are arranged in the pictures above. How could you use each of these classroom arrangements in your class?

- Seating pupils in rows is good for a brief whole-class teaching when introducing a lesson, when concluding a lesson and also when giving individual task, perhaps in tests and examinations. It cannot be used for most of the lesson duration because; you cannot direct your teaching to one particular grade for a long time while the other grade level pupils are listening and vice versa;
- Pupils may sit on a number of chairs around one or more tables put together. This is good for group work, yet they can still see and hear the teacher during whole class teaching;
- Pupils may sit in semi-circles (good for storytelling, class discussions, whole class teaching but not for small group). An example is provided below.



- Pupils may sit in twos facing each other (paired work) – good for reading, dialogue, and some PE games.

NOTE: The physical space is organized should be directly tied to the teaching strategies being used. A multi-grade classroom should not remain in a fixed position.

4.2.5 INSTRUCTIONAL TIME MANAGEMENT

Time management is a real challenge teacher's face every day. Loss of time is often the problem and it always has the effect of derailing the course of lessons. This unit therefore, will allow you to examine the factors that may cause waste of time.

Consider the following scenario:

The school bell rings for break while you are still in the middle of your lesson. The teacher on duty calls your class pupils to come out for their share of the school lunch and you are supposed to teach another lesson on a different subject after break.

- What are the possible causes of time loss in this case?
- What would you do differently in this situation?

Here are some factors that can cause loss of time and their checks.

- **Lack of planning:** This can cause digressions and subsequent loss of pupils' learning time.
 - **Check:** Teachers should plan their lessons very well to avoid this.
- **Not considering time during planning:** Un-planned time for various steps and activities can derail the course of a lesson.
 - **Check:** To avoid this, teachers should make good decisions about how much time should be allowed for the various lesson steps and activities.
- **Writing tasks and instructions for various grade levels on the chalk board:** This requires a lot of waiting time on the part of the pupils.
 - **Check:** Write tasks on worksheets in advance (during planning). This saves time. If the task/instruction is for the whole class or individuals, write them bold on a large cement paper, empty rice or sugar bags during planning.

- **Issuing wrong instructional materials to wrong grade level pupils:** Teachers can lose valuable time in trying to normalize this situation.
 - **Check:** At the end of each lesson, separate grade level materials and keep them in labeled containers.
- **Interruptions:** These are un-planned and may lead to loss of time if not checked quickly.
 - **Check;** Handle all interruptions promptly with swiftness but politely.

This list is un-ending. You can think of more and add to the list.

CONCLUSION

- ✓ Effective learning requires not just the planning of lessons but the management and organisation of classroom resources and activities as well.
- ✓ Pupils misbehavior is caused by a variety of factors that includes boredom, physical discomfort, inability to do required tasks among others.
- ✓ A lot of time is wasted in class by doing work not planned for, classroom management at the wrong time and poor planning.

TEACHERS' REFLECTION CORNER

Think of a lesson that you have recently taught or been in when lesson disruption occurred. What was the cause of the disruption? Given what you know now, how would you deal with it?

Think of alternative ways that a teacher can manage a class; do you think asking older pupils to help is a nice alternative? Why?

Think of the lesson you have planned for this week. What classroom management do you think you should be considering? Consider seating arrangement, resources, time management, and approach.

Ideas from multi-grade teachers:

Reasons for Misbehaviour	Preventive Measures
Fast learners finish their work and have nothing to do.	Assign fast learners to the activity table. Plan enough activities to keep the children engaged for the time of lesson. They shouldn't be given extra work (more of the same) but extension work that involves problem solving, application, analysis, etc.
Prefect or group leaders not doing their job.	Make prefect and group leaders active. Give clear instructions.
Large grouping can cause disturbances.	Sizable grouping.
Lack of interest to the lesson.	Lessons should be child-centred and participatory. The activities should be cleared and self-explanatory. Provide and plan appropriate materials for the students.
The teacher wasn't prepared.	Teachers plan ahead of time.
No class rules.	Class rules need to be in place.
Poor grouping.	Place the children in mix ability grouping so that the slow learners can learn from the fast learners.
Lack of responsibility.	Responsibilities should be given to each and everyone in the group.
Work is too difficult.	Monitoring pupils' work. Re-explanation of task. Arrangement of peer support.
Few students try to dominate the class.	Assign responsibilities.
Poor time management	Proper planning of time for each activity.
Unclear instructions.	Give simple and clear instructions.
Pupils' lack of respect and regard for the teacher.	Classroom rules and regulations established and enforced.

Ideas from other multi-grade teachers: Managing the Learning Process

How to capture pupils' attention and interest during the lesson introduction:

1. Create a short warm-up activity at the start of the lesson.
2. Recap the previous lesson.
3. Show some pictures and ask short questions about them.
4. Introduce new concepts using flash cards.
5. Present a short dramatization of the lesson intended to be taught.

How to maintain pupils' interest and attention throughout the lesson:

1. Use child-centered activities.
2. Give clear instructions.
3. Use interactive teaching and learning materials.
4. Incorporate role play and drama.
5. Use varied teaching styles.
6. Motivate students by rewarding their efforts.
7. Use a sense of humor.

How instructions should be given for various activities:

Instructions should be:

1. Politely given;
2. Clear and concise;
3. Relevant to the lesson;
4. Verbal or non-verbal;
5. Ordered, step-by-step; and
6. Time bound

How to support pupils who work in groups:

1. Identify a group leader.
2. Monitor the groups by moving around from group to group to give help when it is needed.
3. Organize the classroom space to match the groupings.
4. Monitor, encourage and redirect their work.
5. Provide enough resources for the task for each group.

6. Ensure that the task matches the ability level of the group.
7. Carefully plan the make-up of each group by (size, abilities, friendships, etc.)

How to offer help to those who work individually:

1. Encourage the individual in their performance.
2. Offer extra aid to those who need it.
3. Give positive feedback.
4. Provide follow-up activities and extra work for those who finish early.

How to handle external interruptions:

1. Draw immediate attention to the administrator responsible.
2. Alert the interrupter that this is not an appropriate time and that they should return after school.
3. Set a time to meet with the community to establish guidelines for visiting the classroom.

How to conclude a lesson:

1. Make sure it matches with the lesson objectives.
2. Recap the main points from the lesson.
3. Give them some ideas about an upcoming lesson.
4. Ask the children to present their work to the rest of the class.

SECTION 5

MONITORING, ASSESSMENT, AND EVALUATION

Key Points:

In this chapter, we shall

- Define monitoring and assessment
- Examine some examples used in monitoring, assessment and evaluation

INTRODUCTION

Teachers are always wondering if the pupils are learning. Monitoring and assessment helps to track the learner's process of learning and answer the question, "How do I know the learners understand the lesson?" Monitoring, assessment and evaluation is important for the teachers as it improves learning achievements. During the process of assessment and evaluation this is what happens:

- The level of achievement reached by each of the pupils is known to the teacher;
- The teacher is given a clear picture of the next stage that the pupils are ready to move on to;
- Assessment and evaluation provide a record of progress over a period of time that will help the teacher identify particular learning difficulties.

5.1 MONITORING

Defining monitoring

The usual definition of monitoring is "observation." Constant monitoring is essential especially in multi-grade classrooms. A teacher must always ensure to keep an eye on

what his/her pupils are doing and give correction and suggestions and not wait until the end of the lesson. It is closely related to the functions of record keeping, reporting and decision making.

Good monitoring entails that a teacher is visible and is walking around the class and checking. By doing this the teacher is able to know the following:

- The flow of the lessons as they are on for each of the grade levels;
- The amount of time taken to complete the tasks being given to each grade level. This will help the teacher to improve on time management;
- The number of pupils who understand the lesson or those who make progress in their performance;
- The behavior problems that need addressing.

The teacher is also to mark small samples of work as he/she moves around the class. This allows the teacher to give immediate feedback to individuals or groups that have difficulties. A multi-grade teacher should divide his/her time between the grade levels and ensures that each group or individual receives enough attention and support during the lesson.

Monitoring Homework

The assignment of homework, like many educational practices, can be beneficial, neutral, or detrimental depending upon the nature and context of the homework. The use of homework assignments is significant in a multi-grade class because it helps to increase students learning time. Homework confers the most beneficial results when assignments are:

- Closely tied to the subject matter currently being studied in the classroom;
- Given frequently as a means of extending student practice time with new material;
- Appropriate to the ability and maturity levels of students;
- Clearly understood by students and parents;
- Monitored by parents; i.e., when parents are aware of what needs to be done and encourage homework completion;
- Quickly checked and returned to students;
- Graded and commented on.

The research also indicates that homework which meets these criteria is positively related to student attitudes. Students may say they don't like homework, but research shows that those who are assigned regular homework have more positive attitudes toward school, toward the particular subject areas in which homework is assigned, and toward homework itself, than students who have little or no homework.

Monitoring classroom activities

As activities progress in work, be it as a whole class teaching or group discussion, monitoring of the process as a process of getting feedback from the pupils.

Class activities can be monitored by:

- Providing immediate feedback on assignments and questions;
- Teachers being visible. As a teacher position yourself where pupils can see you, for example move around during the lesson.

5.2 ASSESSMENT

Assessment can be defined as activities that inform teachers on student understanding of content. They can be used to show individual growth, to determine whether objectives/standards have been achieved, and/or how students perform compared to their peers. As a teacher you assess your students all the time. The more purposeful you are of the types, forms and uses of the results, the better learning environment you will create.

Key Assessment Points - Assessments:

- should always be directly tied to the lesson objectives;
- Should be different for the different grades in your classroom;
- Are only effective if the results are used for planning (i.e. if the pupil(s) do not master the objectives, what re-teaching strategies will you perform?);
- Should incorporate different modes of demonstration of learning (i.e. verbal, linguistic, kinesthetic, musical etc);
- Should be communicated. The scoring plan of the assessment should be communicated to your students (i.e. do you your students know how to earn full points for an assignment?);
- Should always be purposefully planned.

In assessment the following are crucial questions

- How will you know when your pupils have learnt or are learning?
- Would you expect your pupils to be able to answer questions, complete an exercise or piece of writing or make something that will indicate that they have attained the learning objectives?
- The Pupils must not only be able to answer orally or state in writing, for example, how they would carry measurements of various objects; they should also be able to demonstrate their ability to use the meter rule or anything marked in centimeters.
- How can you be sure that pupils have understood the lesson? Do they give the correct answers because they understand the idea or process or because they learnt the answers by heart?

Summary table on types of assessment:

Type of Assessments	Definition	Examples (non-specific)
Formative	Assessments that is ongoing or continuous throughout learning/teaching. These happen throughout a lesson and are most effective on student learning when the results are used to guide instruction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Observation of skills, facial expressions, body language and participation in group work. ▪ Quizzes ▪ Class assignments ▪ Demonstrations ▪ Homework ▪ Questioning ▪ Composition ▪ Project Performance
Summative	Assessments that are given at the end of a planned chapter, unit, term, grade etc. It informs the teacher/student what objectives have been achieved at the end of an instructional period.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tests (written or oral) ▪ Exams (written or oral) ▪ Composition ▪ Project Performance
Diagnostic	Assessments that inform the teachers what students know at the start of a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Test (written or oral) ▪ Exam (written or oral)

Type of Assessments	Definition	Examples (non-specific)
	program, class, or lesson. It could be to assess reading ability, content knowledge, mathematics, etc. The results should be used to plan individual goals and differentiation within the curriculum.	

To assess understanding the teacher should discuss the lesson and question pupils in order to see if they really understand and can apply it in different situations. For example, if pupils learnt about buying, selling, and giving change, they should be able to demonstrate this during an exercise at the class shop.

Specific	Evidence of attainment and methods of Assessment
<u>Math lesson</u> At the class shop pupils should be able to calculate and give to buyers the correct change form a Ten Dalasi note.	Pupils are able to use appropriate formula to calculate and give correct change to buyers at the shop (assessment though observation and demonstration of the skill).
<u>Science Lesson</u> Pupils should understand the difference between living and non-living things.	Pupils categorize and name a variety of living and non-living things in their local environment. Assess through written notes and drawings and/or a display of living and non-living things.

Methods of assessment

It must be clear to the teachers of multi-grade classes that pupils do not only learn about facts (knowledge), but also during the learning process, they acquire **skills** and **positive attitudes**. The teacher therefore uses a variety of methods to assess the pupils-progress in learning.

Here are some other ways to assess your pupils' understanding:

- Games
- Assignments (research)
- Tests
- Dictation
- Experiments
- Homework
- Reports from excursions, projects
- Writing a summary

Written test

Written test may be divided into two broad categories.

- Objective
- Essay

Objective Test
<p>Objective tests are of two different types:</p> <p>1) Supply questions – the pupil is required to give the answer. Supply questions can be in the form of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Completion questions – the capital of The Gambia is.....➤ Matching –for example: Look at the numbers below and match those that are divisible 8, 3, 12, 5,20,2,

(8 – 2) (12 – 3) (20 – 5)

- True/False – pupils are given a statement and they are to state if the statement is True – T or False – F. for example

There are nine planets in the universe. T or F (Ans. F)

- Multi-Choice items- There are two main parts to this type of question. The stem and the responses. The problem is state in the stem and the responses are the options from which one is required to choose the correct answer.

Example: the number nearest to 5 is:

- a. 2
- b. 6
- c. 10
- d. 12

Essay – Type Questions

Essay – type questions require the pupil to write on a topic or subject, for example:

pupils can require writing on how to prepare a favorite dish. The pupils here is free to plan his/her piece of writing and decide what to write.

Marking essay questions

Develop a marking scheme that helps to focus on particular outcomes and allows you to give a mark for each category. For example:

- The organization of the work (clear beginning, middle section and an end/conclusion)

- Its content (is the content relevant)
- Grammar and vocabulary (sentence structure, paragraphing, punctuation, spelling, use of appropriate words)
- Understanding or analysis (does the essay answer the question)

Marking

When work is marked in the pupils books do you give a number or do you just tick the questions that are correct and cross the answers that are incorrect? Do you ever put comment on their work so that they can see where they have gone wrong?

Do you give marks for correct working? In mathematics, at times the pupil may work out the correct process but makes an error at the end and gives a wrong answer. If the process/steps are correct then the pupil obviously knows what to do. It would be good to find out where the pupil went wrong so as to give adequate feedback

In science you can mark the stages of the experiment.

If the pupils are answering simple questions that have a straightforward answer, and are easy to mark, then students can be allowed to mark each others work.

It is important to have pupils' work marked so that they can see what they can do, where they are going wrong, and they can see what they are doing well.

Record keeping

The teacher keeps a record book. The record shows the progress of individual pupils. This record of pupils' achievement is important as the teacher needs to know what the pupils can do in order to plan any future work. The head teacher and parent also want to know about their children's progress.

Progress chart

In a progress chart, simple information about what the pupil is able to **SAY, DO** or **MAKE** is written down.

Portfolios

A pupil's portfolio is a collection of sample of a pupil's work. Multi-grade settings provide excellent opportunities for teachers and pupils to compile portfolios.

The portfolio should have its sample of best efforts or selection of both good and poor pieces of work.

The teacher is to work with the pupil and help each to develop a portfolio of their work.

An assessment of each pupil's work done in a portfolio, when evaluated, can show the levels of achievements reached by the pupil. The portfolios in general also indicate which pupils have progressed in learning the subject.

There is now interest in the assessment of various aptitudes (knowledge, understanding) skills and attitudes as well as cross curricular skills such as communication, technology or problem-solving skills. Personal and social attitudes and skills are being assessed as well. It is important for the multi-grade teacher to build up a record covering a full range of achievements of each of the pupils.

Pupil's assessment is very valuable in a multi-grade setting because it helps to improve the quality of learning and also improves motivation.

In making an assessment of pupil's progress and achievement, the teacher should be clear about:

- **The learning objective** – What you want your pupils to learn during a lesson? Objectives should not just relate to knowledge alone but there should be some relation to skills and attitudes.

Learning objectives of the lesson should be:

S- Specific
M- Measurable
A- Attainable
R- Realistic
T- Time bound

- **The learning outcomes** – This is what the pupils have actually learnt. It will certainly be different from your planned or intended lesson objectives.
- **The evidence of attainment** - The knowledge the pupils have on the content of the subject, the skills acquired and what **demonstrates** that there is understanding is the evidence of attainment.

Assessment skills and attitudes

Under-achievement in an individual or a group may be the result of social, emotional or physical factors. The teacher's assessment and evaluation should take these "hidden factors" into account, therefore; not only specific subject knowledge should be assessed but that skills and attitudes demonstrated by the pupils need to be assessed as well. These might include:

- **Communication skills:** Being able to express themselves clearly and be able to develop a variety of models for, local materials or development simple craft skills.
- **Problem solving and investigative skills:** The ability to answer "why" and "what if" questions. This should be related to all subjects or skills.
- **Personal and social skills:** Pupils' relationship with you (the teacher) other adults, with in their class and with pupils in other classes.
- **Study skills:** Pupils' ability to know how to learn.

5.3 EVALUATION

The period of evaluation is when the responses, marks and grades are analyzed and judged. Evaluation can be defined as a judgment that you, as a teacher, make to determine whether or not the students achieved the learning goals. To make the evaluation, you would use the results of several types of assessments. In most cases it would be beneficial to determine the factors that led to your evaluation. When you reflect on the types of resources, assessments, and instructional strategies you used, the information can indicate what was successful or not in helping your students.

Remember that your students might be prevented from demonstrating what they do know because of lack of time, a language barrier, and/or an invalid scoring guide.

As a teacher, you should also evaluate your lessons. You may use student feedback, head teacher observations, student work, and your own reflection on your practice, to determine the success of your lesson and/or teaching practices.

Evaluation is done so as to make judgments

- What is the overall result of the class?
- What are the results of particular pupil?
- What are the results of particular questions that I have set?
- What action should I take now as a result of these observations?



How is evaluation different from assessment? What is the its relevance of evaluation in a multi-grade class?

Teachers need to assess their lessons reflectively

The teacher also looks back into the lesson (the teaching methods or strategies used) during the period of reflection the teacher asks: Have I.....

- made the best choice of appropriate methods?
- made the best use of display areas?
- kept the pupils busy with challenging activities?
- made the pupils work co-operatively but at the same time encouraged independent learning?
- avoided having a queue at my desk waiting for work to be marked or pupils to ask me about their work?
- been able to curb disruptive behaviors?
- established a routine that pupils can follow with the right balance between teaching and group work?
- provided enough opportunities for group discussions?

CONCLUSION

- ✓ Monitoring and assessment are strategies that teachers use primarily to find out if pupils are learning and the set objectives are being met.
- ✓ When we evaluate, we make judgments on learning and teaching based on the monitoring and assessment of lessons and teaching.
- ✓ There is need to thus record the monitoring, assessment and pupils' progress for effective feedback and quality learning.

TEACHERS'REFLECTION CORNER

What strategies do you use to monitor learning in your classes?

What are additional strategies that you can add to your planning?

How do you know that the objectives set for the pupils have been achieved? How do you communicate to them when they reach (or not) the objectives? How is this documented?

SECTION 6

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS IN MULTI-GRADE TEACHING

In this section we look at some of the questions that are frequently asked regarding teaching multi-grade classrooms and suggested answers. The list is not exhaustive in any way and we hope to add to the questions and feedback based on teachers experiences.

Question:

What happens if a teacher takes over two grades and finds that the lower grade has not covered anywhere near as much as they should and that their level is a long way behind the higher grade?

Suggested solutions: The topics will have to be chosen so that they are easily understood by both grades. For example in teaching a grade 3 and 4 class on Mathematics, give easier sums to the lower grade so that you can assess just how much they know. If you are doing English and Reading arrange the pupils in pairs and have one grade 3 pupils and one grade 4 pupils together so that older pupils can help younger ones. When the passage has been read, do not ask all of them the same questions. Pitch the questions at their level. For example, while grade four can answer questions from the board to test their comprehension of the passage grade 3 can be asked to look for words starting with a certain letter e.g. D. Ask them to write this down in their books and see if they can write a few words to try to explain what the word means d-daddy, d-dog.

The above is just an example you need to assess your class and find out their needs and then plan accordingly. There is no answer that will suit every class. Just select a topic that both grades are to do, then think of an exercise that will not be too difficult for the lower grade and something suitable for the higher grade.

Question:

What do I do if I take over a multi-grade class and I find out one grade has covered nearly all the topics for science and the other grade have covered hardly any?

Suggested solutions: One suggestion is to determine what content the grades have covered and find common themes among the areas left outstanding. For example, you have a science class of grades 3 and 4. Grade 4 has covered five topics and grade 3 has covered only 2. Therefore grade 4 has 3 topics left to do e.g.

- Some forms of energy-heat, light, sound
- Conservation of wildlife
- Reproduction and changes during puberty

Grade 3 have the following left

- Life in water
- Physical exercise and rest
- Life in soil
- Air occupies space and has weight
- Living and nonliving things
- Our natural resources

There are two that naturally go together:

Conservation of wildlife Grade 4 and Our Natural resources Grade 3

Some forms of energy –heat, light, sound (Grade 4) and Physical exercise and rest (Grade 3)

The other topics that cannot be matched and have not been covered by grade 3 still need to be taught. Teach these topics to both grades so that it will be a form of reinforcement exercise for grade 4.

This is what can be done for all subjects if this problem occurs. Remember as a multi-grade teacher your goal must be to keep your pupils busy at all times. One way of doing this is by using instructional sheets. If for any reason you find it necessary to teach the classes separately, two things are possible you could use instructional sheets

or get the other class to work on the activity table or corner which all multi-grade teachers are encouraged to have set up in their classrooms.

For instructional sheets design a sheet for the class you are not focusing directly relating to the topic you are teaching. Let them work as a group or in pairs while you frequently move around and monitor what they do. Samples of instructional sheets are attached to this handbook as an appendix. As a multi-grade teacher your classes must not be affected by slack time.

Question:

What do I do if the head teacher takes out one grade for a special occasion as leaves the other?

Suggested solutions:

Ask the Head teacher to always take both classes. If this is not possible and your lesson will not work if all the pupils are not present, then ask the pupils with you to do extra reading, revision work, PE, ART etc. Save your lesson until they are all present.

APPENDIX 1

More tips on curriculum adaption

Suggestions on multi-grade curriculum development

- Think about the overall goal of each grades. Keep in mind the needs of the learners, teacher's abilities, expectations from the community, the desires of the parents and the requirements of the national curriculum. In many cases, the national curriculum is the best place to start as it stipulates most of the concerns above.
- What are the learning objectives? What do you expect the learners to be able to do after each topic or lesson?
- What are the topics and sub-topics? Which can be taught together, which ones can be used as revision?
- What teaching strategy will you use? (Peer teaching, self instructional materials, whole group and why?)
- What will you need in terms of resources to accomplish your task?
- How will you know that the students are learning? What assessments will you include during the lesson and after the lesson?

Selection of themes across grades

Sample Science Grade 5 & 6

Grade 5	Grade 6
Internal parts of the body	The skeletal and muscular system
The digestive system	The nervous and endocrine system
Blood and circulation	Sexually transmitted disease
The respiratory system	magnetism
Pressure and resistance	Heat energy
Common substances	Substance abuse
Medicinal plants	Green plants as prod.
Eating habits	Feeding relations between organisms
Water as a solvent	Using measurements

Sample English

Grade 3	Grade 4
Meet our friends Unit 2 – Page 4	Don't be late for school Unit 1 – Page 1
What is your favorite subject? Unit 6 – Page 16	Mariama has a test Unit 2 – Page 5
Journey to Farafenni Unit 14 – Page 40	Visit to Kaur Unit 11 – Page 35
The eagle and the turtle Unit 9 – Page 25	The bag of gold coins Unit 8 – Page 23
Take care of yourself Unit 18 – Page 52	The health center Unit 23 – Page 82
Plant a tree Unit 25 – Page 73	Community forest Unit 22 – page 78
Stormy weather Unit 7 – Page 19	What is the weather like? Unit 6 - Page 18
At the riverside Unit 21 – Page 61	People and their work Unit 17- Page 59
Haddy's Wedding Unit 11 – Page 31	The Naming Ceremony Unit 14 – Page 44
I went to a village Unit 17 – Page 49	The Baobab tree Unit 16 – Page 52

Sample Scheme of Work

Subject: Integrated Studies Grades: 1 & 2	Date: 18 th – 22 nd September Duration: 45 min															
Topics: G1 – My family G2 – Where do I live?																
Objectives: G1- <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Identifying different members of the family and their responsibilities▪ Explain relationships▪ Different types of families Objectives: G2- <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Locate the town or village in which they live▪ Show understanding of the difference between village and town																
Materials: pupils books G1&2, posters, map																
Examples of Activities: <table><tr><th>G1</th><th>G2</th><th>Remarks</th></tr><tr><td>Lesson 1: Picture talk</td><td>Naming important buildings</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>Lesson 2: Naming family members</td><td>Villagein relation to school</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>Lesson 3: Duties and responsibilities of family members</td><td>Village in relation to town</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>Lesson 4: Revision of duties and responsibilities</td><td>Greetings</td><td></td></tr></table>		G1	G2	Remarks	Lesson 1: Picture talk	Naming important buildings		Lesson 2: Naming family members	Villagein relation to school		Lesson 3: Duties and responsibilities of family members	Village in relation to town		Lesson 4: Revision of duties and responsibilities	Greetings	
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Lesson 4: Revision of duties and responsibilities	Greetings															

Self-Instructional/Independent Worksheets

It is very important to proceed step by step when creating self-instructional worksheets. The majority of pupils are not prepared for this type of individual work and if they are not properly prepared, it could be a very chaotic transition. If pupils are simply given the worksheets and asked to work independently while the teacher works with the other grade level, the pupils may not know how to handle their new found liberty. Therefore, a careful preparation must be assured so that the pupils know exactly what is expected of them.

Self-instructional worksheets can serve several purposes. They can:

- Further explain a concept,
- Accompany or complete an explanation,
- Fill a need,
- Help pupils to understand, explain and practice through exercises,
- Encourage pupils to learn to work independently.

Getting Started

Considerations

In order to properly use self-instructional worksheets, the teacher must consider how to organize, group and manage the class.

When to Use

Self-instructional worksheets are most often used when the teacher needs to directly work with one group of students. By assigning the second group to do the worksheets, the teacher is ensuring that all students are engaged in meaningful learning and is able to devote her attention more fully to one group of students.

Scheme of Work

In the beginning, only reserve a small portion of time in your scheme of work for this type of work: a half-hour for younger students and an hour for the older ones. If you introduce the worksheets properly and slowly integrate them into your lessons the students will quickly adapt to them.

Classroom Space

Organize the desks so that the pupils sit in small groups facing each other so they can help each other if need be. The teacher should also find a place where he/she is able to keep an eye on all the students.

Explain how to work independently

The teacher should explain to the students exactly what is expected of them.

- How long will they have for the assignment?
- Do they understand the directions?
- Where should they write their answers?
- How do they check their answers?
- What if they have a question?
- What do they do when they complete the worksheet?

While you are giving directions about the self-instructional worksheets, the other group should be involved in an independent activity such as silent reading, so that time is not wasted. It is not until the teacher is sure that all of the students have understood the assignment that he/she can begin a lesson with the other group of students. When self-instructional worksheets are first introduced, this process will take much longer, but after pupils become accustomed to using them, they should only need minimal instructions from the teacher. The worksheets could be handled in several ways:

- One student per worksheet
- One student with several worksheets
- A group of students with several worksheets

Once they have finished their work, they should check their answers with the correction sheet and then show the teacher who will quickly verify each child's work (this may be done during class or after as well).

Answers:

The pupils should never write their answers directly on the worksheet. First, because it's important that the student show his work and not just fill in the blank, and second because this allows the teacher to preserve the worksheets in good condition for

future use.

Discipline:

Now the teacher must ensure that the proper classroom conditions are maintained for this independent work to occur. Following are a couple of suggestions.

Set the rules:

Many teachers refuse to use self-instructional worksheets because they think that they will lead to talking and high levels of noise and loss of classroom control.

The first couple of times self-instructional worksheets are introduced, students will naturally be more talkative as they will not be used to working independently of the teacher. However, it is important to set up some rules from the beginning so that all pupils know what to expect from the activity and what is expected of them. For example:

- They should not disturb the teacher while he/she is working with the other group
- They should speak in low voices with their neighbors so as not to disturb the other students
- They should move around without making noise if they need to get up to obtain a worksheet
- They should (read a book, review their lesson....) when they are finished with their worksheet

Evaluation

Evaluation is a very important part of the learning process. Not only does it allow the students to learn from their mistakes, but it allows the teacher to see where the students might need extra help. Using the answer grids allows the students to also take responsibility for their own learning but it is also important for the teacher to survey each child's work.

Le Nouvel Édicateur supplément au numéro 107, mars 99

<http://www.freinet.org/icem/outils/outils107supl.html>

Sample case studies/scenarios to think about

Read the following scenario and then follow the directions:

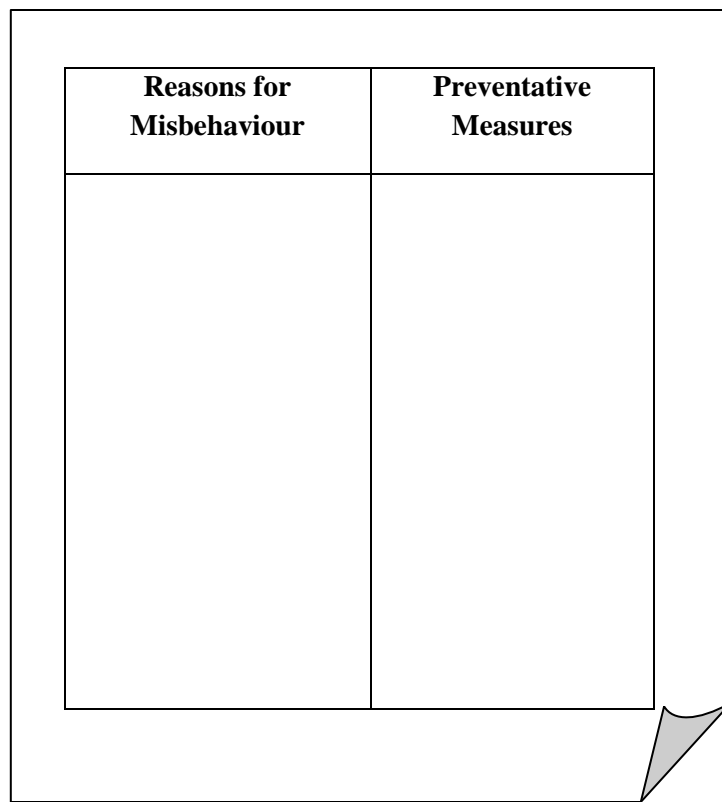
Scenario:

You are working with grade 4 pupils in a multi-grade classroom. You have asked grade 5 pupils to complete a task in math. After some time, you notice that most pupils in grade 5 are working quietly but a few of them seem to be talking and disturbing others. You give them a warning, but they don't listen.

Instructions:

On a piece of paper, create a chart, (See example below), listing both the possible reasons for the misbehavior observed in the scenario, and the preventative measures that the teacher could have taken so that the behaviors do not happen in the first place.

Reasons for Misbehaviour	Preventative Measures



Classroom Observation Tool

Observer Name & Title: _____

Date: _____

School: _____

Classes observed: 1 2 3 4 5 6

Teacher Name: _____

Subject Observed: _____

Expected duration of the lesson: _____

Actual duration of the lesson: _____

Purpose of the evaluation tool:

Improve the quality of teaching by:

- Motivating teachers
- Monitoring teaching and learning outcomes
- Demonstrating the commitment of the head teacher or cluster monitor
- Providing pedagogical support
- Sharing experiences and mentoring

-
- ❖ It is important to view the teacher's scheme of work and lesson plan before the start of the lesson so that you, as an observer, know what material the teacher is expecting to cover.
 - ❖ Try to arrive early and view the teacher's lesson plan before the lesson begins so that you do not interrupt class time.
 - ❖ After reviewing the lesson plan, find a seat where you can observe the pupils and teachers with as little distraction as possible.

Notes or Comments on Scheme of Work or Lesson Plan:

Materials/Resources

1. Does the teacher make use of all available resources?
2. Are materials prepared and present by the start of the lesson?
3. Does the teacher make use of locally available materials?
4. Are materials relevant, well explained and appropriate for the lesson?
5. Are there sufficient materials for the students?
6. Are materials preserved for future use?
7. Are materials safely used?

Classroom Organization and Management

1. Are the seating arrangements appropriate for the lesson?

2. Are class rules clearly displayed and followed?
3. Do the teacher and students cover the lesson content in the allocated time?
4. Does the teacher start and end the lesson on time?
5. Does the teacher wisely utilize instructional time?
6. Are all students engaged in learning that is relevant to the lesson?

Teaching Strategies

1. Does the teacher use effective questioning techniques (open questions) as opposed to closed, yes or no questions?
2. Is there a review of previous learning at the beginning of the lesson?
3. Is the choice of grouping appropriate to the learning to be achieved? (example, independent, peer, group)
4. Does the teaching incorporate the varied learning styles of the children? (visual, auditory, sensory, kinesthetic)
5. Does the teaching draw upon the children's own experiences?
6. Do the teacher's body language and gestures encourage learning?

Assessment

1. Is the content of the lesson appropriate to the level of the students?
2. Are the questions focused on the objectives of the lesson?
3. Did the teacher use an appropriate marking scheme?
4. Does assessment take into consideration the different abilities of the students?
5. Does the teacher allow time for both content coverage and assessment?
6. Does the teacher use various methods of assessment?
7. Does the teacher continuously assess students?

After the Lesson – Teacher Interview and Review of Pupils' Work

1. Review the students' work.
2. Ask the teacher to evaluate his or her own lesson focusing on strengths and weaknesses and where he or she would like to improve.
3. Provide feedback from your own observations making sure to include positive feedback as well as areas the teacher can work on.
4. Work with the teacher to identify a specific goal for improvement.

SAMPLE MULTI-GRADE COMPOSITE TIMETABLE

GRADES 1 AND 2

TERM ONE

	8:15 8:30	8:30 9:15	9:15 10:00	10:00 10:45	10:45 11:30	11:30 12:15	12:15 13:00	13:00 13:45	13:45 14:00
MON	A S S E M B L Y	English	Islamic	Math	P.E	B R E A K	Integrated	Integrated	P R A Y E R S
		Phonics	Studies				Studies	Studies	
TUES		Oral	Arabic	Math	Math		Integrated	Arts	
		English					Studies		
WEDS		Maths	Islamic studies	English Language	English Language		Integrated	Integrated	
							Studies	Studies	
THURS		P.E	Arabic	Maths	Oral English		Integrated	Handwriting	
							Studies		
FRI		English	Maths	Rhymes/ Singing	Islamic				
		Phonics			Studies				

INSTRUCTIONAL HOURS 21 HOURS PER WEEK 294 HOURS PER TERM 882 HOURS PER YEAR