

Professional Development Strand

Unit: Multigrade Teaching (College Option)

## **Module MG.1 Introduction to Multigrade Teaching**



**Lecturer Support Material**

## Acknowledgements

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## Unit outline

Unit	#	Modules
Unit MG  Multigrade Teaching	MG.1	Introduction to Multigrade (Core)
	MG.2	Managing the Multigrade Classroom (Core)
	MG.3	Teaching in the Multigrade Classroom (Core)

## Icons



Read or research



Write or summarise



Activity or discussion



Suggestion or comment for lecturers

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# The Multigrade Teaching Module

## *Introduction*

This guide provides additional ideas for teaching and assessing **Module MG 1 Introduction to Multigrade Teaching**.

Please take note of the following:

- It is important to read the module first, to decide what materials you will use, and what tasks and activities you will set for the students. It is also important to see how this module fits within the complete unit.
- The material is written as a resource for the teaching of this module.
- Do not expect students to work through the total module alone. There may be too much material and they will need assistance in determining the tasks required.
- The activities: Many of the activities have a number of questions to discuss and tasks to do. They are included to provide some ideas and stimulus, not necessarily to complete every part of each activity.
- The activities provide a focus for learning, and some may be suitable for developing into assessment tasks, but the activities are not written to be used as the assessment program. Ideas for assessment tasks are provided in this material.
- Suggested time allocations are provided to give some idea of how this module fits in with the others in this unit. Lecturers have the flexibility to select material and use it in a way that will fit within the lecture program.
- The Lecturer Support Material is the same as the Student Support Material, with additional notes included in the text boxes.
- Additional readings included as an appendix are included as additional information for lecturers. These may be photocopied for students where appropriate.

## Rationale

This module is one of three in the three-credit point college option **Unit MG: Multigrade Teaching**. The recommended time allocation for this module is approximately 6 hours of lectures, which could be completed in two weeks of the semester. The actual break-up of topics and time allocation is flexible, and to be decided upon by the individual lecturer.

The remaining modules, which comprise this unit, are:

**Module MG.2 Managing the Multigrade Classroom**

**Module MG.3 Teaching in the Multigrade Classroom**

Multigrade teaching is one of the important focuses in the Education Reform program. By adopting a Multigrade approach, access to education can be increased and teacher deployment can be more effective.

Teaching in the Multigrade classroom requires a sound knowledge of curriculum, strategies for providing student centred and group learning, and a different approach to assessment and evaluation.

This module explores the reasons, developments and direction of Multigrade policies and practices in Papua New Guinea schools.

## Objectives

By the end of this module, students will be able to:

- define the term 'Multigrade'
- discuss the current developments in curriculum reform, and the advantages of Multigrade teaching to promote access to education in PNG
- demonstrate awareness of Multigrade policies and practices in PNG schools

## How to use this material

This module is written as a series of topics, identified in the table of contents, and by their large subheadings. Each topic includes some readings and activities to complete.

It is the lecturer's responsibility to develop a course overview, according to the credit point loading and available time within the semester for each module. As this will vary between colleges running semester programs and those running trimester programs, lecturers will need to select topics which are most relevant to the needs of their students.

## Assessment

Assessment tasks should be developed at the unit level, recognising the development of knowledge, skills and attitudes across the three modules that make up this unit.

The number of assessment tasks will be determined by the credit point loading given to the unit. See the unit guide for suggestions.

**Assessment tasks should take into account the different learning styles students. Some suggested tasks for this module include:**

Ask students to complete a survey, with other year levels and/or teachers in local schools to determine the level of awareness of multigrade issues . If awareness is low, present a brief talk to a local school on multigrade.

Hold a debate and argue the advantages and disadvantages of multigrade teaching.

Make information posters with key points concerning multigrade to be distributed around the college classrooms and local schools.

## References

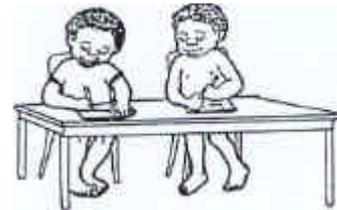
The student support materials contain all the readings necessary to complete the unit. These readings have been adapted from the following texts:

National Department of Education, Papua New Guinea (1996). *Education Gazette Vol. 26, No.1, 1996*

National Department of Education; Education Reform Facilitating and Monitoring Unit (1999). *The State of Education in Papua New Guinea*. National Department of Education and AusAID.

Farley, F. (1998). *Multigrade Workshop Materials*. Unpublished notes.

The Journal of the Multiage Association of Queensland *Free to Learn* Vol 6 No 1. 2000



# Introduction to Multigrade Teaching

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## MG.1 Activity 1

*Before you read on, write down what you understand about Multigrade teaching. Try to write your own definition and what you know about teaching and learning in the Multigrade classroom. Do this on your own, then share with a partner, then the group.*

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 Think, pair share strategy is useful for promoting thinking and discussion about a topic or reading. Students may know very little, so some assistance from the lecturer may be required.

## ***What is Multigrade teaching?***



It is important from the beginning to establish a common understanding of what Multigrade teaching is, and what it involves. There are many different viewpoints and understandings of Multigrade teaching at present amongst teachers in PNG schools. Availability of information is limited, so teachers may form their own ideas on what Multigrade teaching involves, and they may not be consistent with each other.

- A Multigrade class is made up of students in several (two or three) grade levels with one teacher for an entire school year.
- Multigrade schools are those which have classes that combine students of different ages and different abilities in one classroom.
- A Multigrade class involves students of different ages and developmental levels, with different skills and learning abilities learning together with one teacher.
- Multigrade should remain as a class for a minimum of two (2) years but often for three (3) years. They should have the same classroom teacher for all those years.

## **What is the difference between Multigrade, Multiage and Composite groups?**

When you talk to teachers or read information about Multigrade, you will come across these different terms. Multigrade we have already defined as a class of more than one grade level taught by the same teacher in the same room, but it is the way that the students are taught and the organization of the teaching program that differs.

**Composite classes** are two or more classes working in the same room with one teacher, but usually with **separate programs**. For example, the Grade 4 will be following the syllabus for their grade, and the Grade 5 likewise. The curriculum is still structured and taught strictly in separate grades. This sort of teaching is **syllabus** driven; the teacher sticking rigidly to the curriculum for that level.

Composite  
Classes

Most classes in PNG are already **multi-age**. There can be a wide range of ages in anyone class, varying by quite a number of years sometimes. In the traditional class, all students in the class will be working on the grade curriculum, despite their age differences. In this sense, the teaching is also **syllabus** driven, as there is no special consideration for the differences in age or ability.

Multiage  
Classes

**Multigrade** teaching is different in two main ways:

Multigrade  
Classes

- The **curriculum** for the grades being combined is **integrated**, that is, common elements from the different year programs are **combined into one program for the class**. There is not two or three separate programs operating, just one that provides different levels of challenge to the students
- The learning is **student centred**, not grade level centred, so students have the opportunity to work at their level of ability, through the different levels of activities provided by the teacher. The needs of the student determine the teaching and learning; learning is **student** driven.

 Make sure students understand the difference between these terms.

## What Multigrade is Not

- Multigrade is **not** one teacher running between two classrooms to teach two separate grades with separate programs.
- Multigrade is **not** two classes working in isolation in the same room, seated at each end of the classroom and being taught separate programs by one teacher.

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## MG.1 Activity 2

*Compare your definition with what you have just read about Multigrade. How was your definition similar or different?*

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## What might be different in a Multigrade classroom?

Modules 2 and 3 will provide more detail about planning and organising for the Multigrade classroom. In this module we are exploring what we currently know about Multigrade. We will use this information to build upon during the unit.



### MG.1 Activity 3

*Work in groups with a sheet of butchers paper and a marker. Your lecturer will give you one of four topics to discuss. Brainstorm with your group and record your ideas on the chart. These will be shared with the class at the completion of the activity.*

*The four topics are:*

- *How might the physical arrangements of the room be different in a Multigrade classroom?*
- *How might the way students work be different in a Multigrade classroom?*
- *How might the teachers program be different in a Multigrade classroom?*
- *How might the responsibility for teaching and learning be different in the Multigrade classroom?*

## Multigrade policy and practices in PNG schools

Why is there a need for Multigrade teaching?



The following reading is a summary of a newspaper article. Read it carefully.

### Multigrade Teaching adopted under Reforms

By Barbara Masike

Low enrolment rates in rural areas and shortage of teachers are two major problems leading to children being turned away from school. In most cases the results are pathetic as children miss out on getting into school at their required age. While some might start later, others give up because they feel out of place with younger children.

The re-introduction of Multigrade teaching is a policy which allows more access for children. Small class intakes or small groups can be combined to form one class, rather than missing a grade or having bi-annual intakes.

Multigrade teaching is designed to assist with the teaching of more than one grade by one teacher. The system will be useful in rural areas where enrolments are low. Schools in urban centres will not need to apply Multigrade teaching as enrolments are usually high.



Provide some reading strategies to ensure students understand what they are reading eg, finding the main points, summarising a paragraph in groups etc.

Multigrade teaching also strengthens the use of vernacular as specified in the education reforms. Grouping children into language groups encourages them to communicate and comprehend their learning situations in a friendly environment. The children are also encouraged to learn themselves and not depend on the teacher at all times.

Teaching in a Multigrade classroom requires special skills or strategies to organise classrooms better and produce the best outcomes for students; teachers and the community at large.

*Post Courier, 22 August 2000.*

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## MG.1 Activity 4

*What are your opinions on Multigrade teaching? Do you think it is only suitable for remote schools? Do you think Multigrade teaching will address the issues and problems? Discuss with your group.*

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## Problems of access



*Adapted from: National Department of Education; Education Reform Facilitating and Monitoring Unit (1999) 'The State of Education in Papua New Guinea'. Department of Education and AusAID.*

In the remote parts of the country, schools have an intake only every two or three years. These are known as biennial and triennial intakes. Some schools have intake patterns that are even less frequent than these. In fact, only about 40% of primary schools in the country have an **annual intake** pattern, a Grade 1 class being added each year. The reason for this has always been that there are insufficient children to make up a class group. The number for a Grade 1 class to be formed varies from province to province but 25 was used in a number of provinces, including New Ireland. The large number of schools without annual intakes means that Universal Primary Education (UPE) can never be achieved in these areas.

The present situation is that teachers are allocated to Grade 1 classes based upon the number of children. This is the correct thing to do. The same number of teachers then continue teaching the classes as they progress through the grades **regardless of the number of children that might have dropped out on the way**. As an example, there might be 60 children in a Grade 1, and so two teachers will be allocated. If 18 children drop out between Grades 1 and 6, there will only be 42 left. There will still be two teachers allocated when there is only a need for one.

**Under the present guidelines for deployment, teachers are allocated to schools according to grades, rather than total enrolments.**

## Some more reasons for the adoption of Multigrade practices

- Increase access to education
- Overcome the shortage of teachers
- Modernise teaching methods
- Reduce drop out rates and repetition
- Achieve Universal Primary Education
- Increase participation, cohort survival and literacy rates
- Provide incentives as a means of teacher rationalisation to meet shortfalls during the period of reform implementation.

## Possible effects of Multigrade teaching

- Increase enrolment (make annual intakes possible in small schools)
- More efficient use of facilities and resources
- Employ teachers more effectively
- Improve learning by allowing students to learn at different rates.
- Better quality of teaching.

## What other advantages can Multigrade teaching offer?

- It gives students an opportunity to associate and work with others on the basis of skills, abilities, interest, personality and age.
- It provides students with a wider range of relationship and social experiences.
- It promotes development of social skills.
- The age range is increased and so is the range of development.
- Students form friendships based on things other than age.
- Older students can help younger students with learning.
- It provides opportunities for older students to act as teachers in cross-age and peer tutoring situations.
- Research suggests that older students tend to become more responsible and independent learners.
- There are advantages in having the same teacher for two or more years
- Students learn to accept and tolerate others.
- It provides a more natural learning situation where students learn at their own level.
- It increases a school's ability to place students in the most positive learning environment because of an increased range of possible classroom organizations.

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 **MG.1 Activity 5**

*Discuss the reasons and possible effects listed with your group. Choose two or three points and together with your group, explain how this point would help and/or how it could be achieved. Share your discussion with the group.*

*What disadvantages or problems could you see with implementing Multigrade programs in schools?*

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## ***Structuring the Multigrade school / class***



Setting up the Multigrade school is the responsibility of the Headmaster. If you are in a small, remote school, the responsibility might be yours. Setting up the Multigrade classroom is the responsibility of the teacher(s) in a particular area of the school.

### ***Factors which need to be identified***

The principal needs to identify the following prior to the beginning of the new school year the:

1. total number of students for the year
2. total number of students expected in each grade level
3. anticipated number of teachers
4. number of classrooms.

### **Questions to ask:**

- Which grades to combine?
- How many classes altogether?
- How many teachers?
- What classrooms?

## Does the Department of Education have a policy on the formation of Multigrade schools?

On the 7 March 2000, The Department of Education issued a circular from the Joint Secretary for Education and Chairman, TSC outlining the administration of a Multigrade teaching policy for all primary and community schools.

Extracts from this circular are reprinted below.

### **Multigrade Teaching: Circular No. 1 of 2000**

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of this circular is to direct and inform all Education Authorities including heads of institutions and teachers in member schools within the National Education system about the Multigrade Teaching Policy to be effective in January 2001 for primary and community schools. Within the same period, 2001, the policy will be trialled in selected Elementary Schools to determine the extension of the policy implementation to Elementary schools.

#### **Rationale**

The following are the major reasons for introducing Multigrade Teaching Policy. These include:

- ? To compensate teachers in primary and community schools who are appointed to carry out Multigrade teaching duties and responsibilities.
- ? To formalise the process and procedures necessary for provinces and schools with continuous low enrolment and teacher shortage problems to implement multigrading.
- ? To provide an incentive for teachers to take up teaching in registered primary and community schools taking Multigrade classes.
- ? To institute a more cost-effective strategy for teacher deployment in PNG

#### **Implementation**

The successful implementation of this policy will require all appointing authorities to adhere to the following procedures. These include:

- ? All provinces to formulate and produce an Annual Multigrade Plan
- ? To plan in advance which teaching positions in primary/community schools will be required to undertake Multigrade classes. A separate TSC Form 26 must be completed for abolition and creation of positions for each school taking Multigrade class or classes
- ? To accurately provide the following information to prevent unnecessary delays for registration and implementation:
  - ? The name and location/code of the school
  - ? The name and file number of teacher(s) to be engaged in Multigrade teaching
  - ? The grades which are to be combined and the enrolment of each Multigrade class

? The redundant position(s) to be abolished

? The total enrolment by grade including the Multigrade class(s) in the school

It is to be expected that the process of creation and abolition of positions through the use of TSC Form 26 will result in the lowering of the official level of each registered Multigrade primary and community schools, unless otherwise directed by the TSC for the school to retain its current status for the period. An annual Provincial Multigrade Plan and effective management skills of Provincial Education Advisors will be necessary to continuously monitor and control the proper planning, budgeting and appropriations for teachers' salaries and allowances for each province.

#### **Payment of Allowance**

The Multigrade Teaching Allowance is payable at 10% of the annual gross salary of the position to which the teacher is appointed. It shall be payable on a 'one – off' basis upon the completion of the TSC Form 36 by the teacher.

#### **Provincial Responsibility**

The Division of Education in each province is responsible for the administration of Multigrade teaching which includes planning, budgeting and registration of schools. It is also a provincial responsibility to ensure that necessary training is conducted for Multigrade teachers before Multigrade teaching is formally introduced. The Papua New Guinea Education Institute (PNGEI) may be consulted to assist in providing or facilitating Multigrade teaching courses to suit specific provincial requirements.



Organise a visit from a representative of the Provincial Education Office in your area to discuss Multigrade plans for your Province.

### What changes are still to be made which will affect the implementation of Multigrade programs?

- Do date, there has been no policy change in the way schools are staffed. They continue to be staffed by grades, not total enrolments.
- There are still many community schools in operation throughout PNG. Not all schools have been able to restructure to create the elementary and primary schools of the reform project.
- There is no policy on class size for Multigrade classrooms.

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## MG.1 Activity 6

*A Problem for you to solve:*

*An enrolment example is given below.*

*Analyse the structure of the classes, the number of students, the number of teachers and the available classroom space.*

*How could you restructure the school using a Multigrade approach to improve the efficiency of resources at this school?*

<b>Total Enrolment – Grades 3 – 6</b>	<b>125 students</b>
	<b>20 Grade 3</b>
<b>4 classrooms</b>	<b>35 Grade 4</b>
<b>4 teachers</b>	<b>15 Grade 5</b>
	<b>50 Grade 6</b>

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## Structuring the Multigrade classroom



Once you have been appointed to a Multigrade class, what do you need to do next?

There are many things to be considered:

- Teachers in Multigrade classes need to focus more on students as individual learners with individual needs. They need to **KNOW THEIR STUDENTS**.
- Teachers in Multigrade classes need to develop their scope and sequence, year, term and weekly programs, timetables and assessment strategies. They need to **KNOW THEIR CURRICULUM** to make sure it fits the needs of the students. They need to know how to find common elements in the curriculum to plan their learning experiences.
- Teachers in Multigrade classes need to be able to provide a range of challenging activities which include a range of expected outcomes. They need to provide opportunities to work individually, in pairs and a variety of group structures. They need to **KNOW THEIR TEACHING STRATEGIES**.

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## MG.1 Activity 7

*Using the information in this module and your opinions discussed, organise a debate with your group. One group should argue that Multigrade will solve the problems of access and teacher shortage, the other that Multigrade will not.*

*This debate could be presented in groups and marked as an assessable task by your lecturer. A short paper may also be required. (Your lecturer will decide this.)*

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## Summary

This module has introduced Multigrade teaching, defining Multigrade, understanding what might be different in a Multigrade classroom, and PNG Education Department policies and practices have been examined. The structuring of Multigrade schools and classrooms is a significant change from the traditional single grade arrangement. It will require the support of the Provincial Education Administrators, Headmasters, staff and students.

