

THE SPECIFIC OBSTRUCTIONS AND IMPLICATIONS OF MULTI-GRADE CLASSES

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this inquiry is examining the special obstacles and problems of multi-grade classes and coming up with an appropriate method to improve their quality. The presented inquiry is descriptive and based on an applicable point of view. In this paper, we initially get into the problems and barriers in the multi-grade classes in Iran and then go further to achieve a comprehensive view to enhance their qualities. We have started with a brief definition of multi-grade classes, their peculiar teaching methods, the variables affecting academic performance in such classes, the positive and negative aspects of these classes, studying multi-grade classes in foreign countries as well as Iran and the primary results obtained from them and then we express an analysis about the problems and obstacles of such classes, appropriate methods to overcome these problems, the required conditions to use technology in multi-grade classes to enhance their quality and finally we put these finding together to conclude according to descriptive and analytical methods. The results delineate that the proper utilization of the operational tools in ameliorating the quality of multi-grade classes in deprived areas not only bolsters the educational properties but also provides a solid foundation for students to be productive in their social interactions in future, their independent days. It would prepare them to enhance their problem-solving strategies and to follow a positive life style rather than an incongruent one and to motivate themselves whenever required.

Keywords: multi-grade classes, educational performance, motivation, social interaction.

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INTRODUCTION

One of the most appealing aspects for educational science scholars are finding the necessary conditions and effective equipments to boost the academic performance that would result in success academically. Failing to achieve academic goals is such a setback which ignites the individual and social troubles and could be considered as a variance in attaining educational objectives. Researchers have figured out a variety of effective factors in academic performance of students, but with the cultural distinctions and fast-growing changes as an undeniable part of these effective factors over the course of time, it is impossible to set general rules and regulations in respect to these factors. The cultural background rules and societal parameters, masses' view regarding education, the level of parents' earnings, etc are the agents that influence distinctively on failure or success of one's academic performance. The available sources suggest that altogether five factors affect the education: learner, educator, curriculum, resources, and educational environment; each of the above factors has its own traits that can impress academic progress and learning process (Seifi, 1384).

Meanwhile, academic progress has been associated with more interest between psychologists, since it seems that what can mostly aids a person, a family, and ultimately a country to achieve success, is not only mental health but also a successful academic performance. The awareness of students' mental dimensions can act as a powerful assisting tool. For instance, the ability to realize a student's response to a particular situation would lead in the efficiency of educational tools and methods, academic systems and at last the students' academic progress (Seifi, 1384). Bloom in the academic learning theory often tries to determine the variables that single out individuals and make them stand out from the others in their academic courses. He believes that if the three variables he has defined, get closely scrutinized, the educational process would be performed in its best way in schools and all these schools would step in an error-free educational path. These three variables are as follows:

- 1- The extent of students' mastery over pre-requisites of the subject to be studied.
- 2- The amount of motivation and incentives students get to learn.
- 3- The amount of proportionality of educational methods with students' conditions and characteristics (Bloom, 1982).

Predicting academic progress is of significance from the scientific and practical point of view. The Academic progress is one of the principles for students to take charge of their actions and to

obtain popularity in class (Mehrafrouz, 1388). Great deals of surveys with the contradictory results have been conducted about the positive and negative effects of multi-grade classes or the paucity of enough teachings in these classes. Some of them find multi-grade classes unsuitable for the specific subjects including: mathematics, reading, and the perceptual subjects. Others have somewhat restricted the operational aspect of these classes. The reasons given are: difficulty in separating students in the class, extra pressure on teacher, less attention to the individual needs of students, the lack of enough space for all the students and their inability to perform under their teacher's supervision. Eventually according to acquired experiences in the different countries such as: Australia, Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, Korea, Malaysia, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, and Thailand the primary education programs and list of the least educational capabilities for multi-grade classes have not yet been designed or planned. Thus the common programs using in other schools operated in these classes and has caused evident difficulties; on top of that teachers have not enough educational tools and resources as well. An ongoing evaluation which is a must for these schools is not performed regularly. Besides a number of teachers who work in multi-grade classes have never been trained before or during their service and the academic systems of these countries does not pay enough attention to the proper function of multi-grade schools.

Survey's background

Rettalick results show that the complexity of running multi-grade schools demands a continuous support from the authorities to expand its resources and to enhance teacher's trainings. He has concluded the efficient performing of multi-grade classes requires a deep sense of duty and it can run smoothly only when an appropriate plan been designed with the collaboration of all the authorities and stakeholders. Bery expresses that the students' progress in the normal classes is simultaneous with their educational development. The weaker students in multi-grade classes in a significant way have experienced a better sense of achievement as compared to their counterparts in the mono-grade schools. Hareg Reevez describes that in the multi-grade classes the emphasis is based on promoting learning quality via group activities and simplifying students' individual responsibilities rather than growing to the higher grades. The examining of the results of the multi-grade classes in California demonstrates that these classes provide the students not only with an opportunity to enhance their team-work skills and communication but also grant the students a social development with a mutual understanding of each other and this would cause in

establishing friendship with other grades' students and make them give priority to one another's ideas. The survey shows that if the multi-grade classes gain enough support by the authorities and parents, they would be beneficial. In addition to team-work, the relationship between students and their teacher is deeper in multi-grade classes. Students deal with the same teacher for several years and the students from higher grades can help younger students and through this they revise their knowledge. According to teacher's opinion, students of these classes would be assessed in more than one exam, and each child can learn with his/her own pace and altogether we can say that applying multi-grade classes in the academic system is more efficient and economical than using standard, routine academic system. Keeping all the experiences, researches, and surveys into consideration today there is a unanimous consensus on using multi-grade classes.

A review on conceptual space of the survey

- 1- Reviewing the previous surveys.
- 2- Designing the appropriate models
- 3- Modification of the rules and regulations according to designed models.
- 4- Regenerating the basic concepts regarding the learning theories and students' characteristics.
- 5- Planning for long-term gradual evolutionary changes.

It seems necessary to scientifically analyze the conditions of multi-grade classes according to the researches and experiments done in the countries which are the members of innovation and education center for development in Asia and Oceania and the others. A multi-grade class is a specific educational unit in which at least 2 grades and at most 5 grades are being taught by a single teacher. The reason to hold these types of classes is the low density of the students in such schools as compared to the schools based on mono-grade classes (Mirshafiei, 1385). These classes are held under the different titles such as alternative education, multi-age classes, combined and group classes (Mortazavizadeh, 1388).

Multi-grade classes are held in the remote and low population areas and rural places with less students to provide a complete educational course and enhance the availability of educational resources and utilization of the limited equipments (Matin, 1387).

Kouchaki and Abbasi have indicated the problems such as individual distinctions, exploiting children in agricultural labors, geographical restrictions, and the trivial effect of education in overcoming the setbacks in multi-grade classes. They have suggested the utilization of

experienced and trained teachers in this case. Kadivar and Navabi nejad have compared the students' social skills, self-esteem and academic performance in multi-grade and mono-grade classes and concluded that multi-grade students have better academic performance and average.

Complexities of the multi-grade classes:

Due to the variety of student's ages and gender, handling this type of setting is quite different. The various levels of students' talents and the extensive range of events and activities happening in the class at the fast pace, makes it even more challenging to manage the class. Principal and teachers of such schools apply different methods to manage these classes according to their level of experience, classes' emotional and environmental position, and understanding students and exercising their own knowledge (Mortazavizadeh, 1387).

Organizing multi-grade classes are far more complicated than mono-grade classes are. Due to this fact, teachers of such classes have to organize students' activities, their sitting arrangements, the space including board and walls utilization. The teacher would get to work of organizing and managing classes with the preparation of curriculum and the teaching plan. Preparing a daily schedule for each and every session is as burdensome as a marathon for the teacher, but the lack of the teaching plan causes to wasting time, blabbering, and teacher and students' confusion (Mortazavizadeh, 1388).

One the issues that affect the quality of multi-grade classes are time management. A mono-grade class enjoys 28 hours of weekly teaching sessions so does a multi-grade class (including 2-5 grades) while the volume of their teaching contents is all the same. The students' population, the variety of the grades, and the heavy content of the books in the multi-grade classes, abate the discipline and regulation in the class and causes to a fall in the quality of the class and lagging behind their supposed schedule.

Expenditures:

If we consider the expenses of multi grade schools per capita, it is statistically proven that the expenses of one individual would be more costly in such a setting (Rezayi, 1387). Due to the expenses of these schools and the lack of enough students, a trivial budget has been allotted to them that do not suffice their requirements.

The teachers' lack of specific knowledge

The lack of knowledge is not only bound to the educational and scientific aspects, but also includes ethical, psychological, and especially practical experiences and these shortcomings add to the complexities already mentioned.

Student's academic atrophy

There is no doubt that students in multi-grade classes are less knowledgeable than those in mono-grade classes, but it does not justify the other difficulties.

Bilingual areas

The dense educational system and official learning language have preoccupied our educational specialists. Coming up with solutions like: running one month training classes for the first grade students in bilingual areas in order to familiarize them with the official language is costly and less beneficial. Even though the media's data dissemination and development has helped to attenuate this problem, still the recent condition is worrying. It has been proven that 86% of students while expressing an incident in their mother tongue, showed more excitement and emotions and this number fell to 49% while they expressed the same event in official language and this time it lacked the emotion and zeal. In another inquiry the expressive and receptive language of the bilinguals is significantly lower than that of monolinguals.

Lack of time

The problem of lack of time is of the greatest priority in multi-grade classes' problems. A teacher in these classes has to tackle this issue. He should be able to allocate the appropriate timing to the each grade (Raouf Ziyaei, 1368).

Time management

Because of their multiple and versatile roles in multi-grade classes, the teachers value time management in these classes even more as compared to mono-grade classes and the concept of time is more precious in these settings. In a multi-grade class the teacher has to supervise the class and their educational activities. It would be felt by the teacher to allot some extra-curricular time to the existing classes to enable him/her to cover the syllabus, but this may exhaust the students as well as him/her and be of no benefit. The systematic time management would allow the teacher to organize the educational objectives without sacrificing extra time. Time management is the mastery over time and not being ridden by the time. In multi-grade classes, normally a specific grade would be chosen to get focused upon and the teacher would spend more time to teach that grade while the other grades would practice their lessons or do their

assignments. A successful management is a method that enables the teacher to clarify his/her goals and procedures to achieve them in the class. This is the only way to connect the daily routine to the promotion and satisfaction. In multi-grade schools the schedule is the time table that a teacher plans to allocate the sufficient timing to each grade. The teacher should make sure to ignore the unimportant and unwanted events in the class and stick with the program except the event is education-oriented. A part of time management is done via the delegation of authority. In multi-grade classes teachers can pass a part of their responsibilities to the assistant teachers and then evaluate, supervise, and examine their works and guide them to diminish their pitfalls. Through this he has used the time efficient application more successfully (Soltan Tehrani, 1376). According to the statistical results in Iran we have approximately 1 million students in multi-grade settings. The main reason to establish multi-grade classes is that the number of students of a certain grade does not reach to the quorum. Normally this quorum is determined and assigned by the education system.

Considering the problems that multi-grade classes' teachers facing in respect to the time distribution in the class and according to the observations, interviews with experienced teachers and principals, and studying the books and essays related to this subject, a number of solutions are suggested as follows that have abated the intensity of the concerning problems: using assistant teachers, teaching a single-unit subject, strengthening teachers' knowledge, decreasing the grade variety in the class, allowing different break times, teaching varied subjects with the same goal to different grades simultaneously, being in accordance with the authorities about the management and official progress and recording the extra-curricular activities.

Presenting successful solutions

1- The method of teaching a single-unit subject to all the grades at the same time

In this method the teacher is supposed to prepare a proper background. For example choose a subject like mathematics that has a horizontal relation with all the grades and simultaneously extract the concept vertically and teach it to all the students without separating them or put the pressure only on one grade. For instance: the lesson Circle;

The first grade students get to know its round shape and try to draw it, the second grade students would be taught the name of it and how to draw it using a tool like a coin, the third grade students would draw the radius and diameter of the circle, the fourth grade students would draw a circle with the compass and calculate its perimeter with the ruler or a piece of rope, the fifth grade by

the application of pi number would calculate the perimeter and area of a circle. If you notice some subjects have horizontal relations per se, they can sweep all the grades lessons horizontally with different vertical depth, and this fact enables a teacher to teach all the grades at the same time and even teach them more than required. The main problem of this method that should be regarded from the different dimensions is composed of: though this method is based on team work and is quite active but the problem is that the students in the first, second and third grades do not have civil, history and geography and in fourth and fifth grades these subjects are not related to each others at all. On top of these, exists the paucity of compatibility between the grades' time tables. We can use this method systematically when from the scratch of the academic year; we prepare a concept-oriented schedule which can demonstrate a horizontal relation between all the grades considering the vertical relation as well. It should be designed to follow a common educational aim among these grades and then set a schedule of each grade's activities. For example suppose the animal section of the natural sciences book. In the first grade- familiarity with the animal movements, their different habitats, their benefits

In the second grade- the cover of animal's bodies, their habitat, different kinds of animals, their benefits, comparisons among them

In the third grade- animals' needs, the relation between their habitat and the climate, water and food, categorizing them into vertebrate and non-vertebrate

In the fourth grade- categorizing the animals, their habitats, the various types of flowers

In the fifth grade- living organisms and diatom, the characteristics of some organisms similar to the animals

We have to take a note of these concepts for each grade and prepare an activity table for them, and bring different animals' stickers to the class. For example for the first grade we would pick up the stickers of the animals which can swim in water or fly and let the students lay it on the table. For the second grade we repeat the same process but for the animals live in the deserts or forests. For the third grade we complete the table with the stickers of vertebrate animals and jot down their traits in the table. For the fourth grade the students are supposed to fill in the non-vertebrate part of the table and their nature. In the fifth grade students are to study the different types of fungi, bacteria and viruses with the use of microscope or observational reports.

2- The method of teaching different subjects with a common aspect to different grades

In the previous method we kept on a subject in mind and presented it simultaneously to all the grades but in this method we teach the different subjects with a common aspect to the whole class. The operational levels are as follows:

- a- choosing various conceptual subjects with a common objective
- b- extracting and writing these common points
- c- planning an activity time table for each grade

Level 1- In this method the teacher chooses the conceptual subjects according to his/her schedule and knows what to say and how to elaborate on it. For example

First grade: mathematics-the numbers orders

Second grade: natural sciences- where do animals live

Third grade: social sciences- respecting rules and regulations

Fourth grade: social sciences- the school is our second home (the school rules)

Fifth grade: science, systems (simple systems)

Level 2- we have to pinpoint the common concept for our teaching session. We are able to determine the general goal of the subjects not the detailed ones. For example in above case the common aspect is revolving around the concept of order, discipline, and regulation.

Level 3- preparation of a schedule for the grades' activities for instance arranging a show with the theme "respecting the rules" and the first grade students must be given some beads to put it in the blanks which is set in order from zero to nine. They are expected to fill in the blanks with those beads. Then they pass their work to another group and this group is expected to examine their work and check whether it is right or not. The second grade can be given a table of animals' habitats and they can draw the animals symbolically in the spaces required. In the third grade the students must be asked to express their opinions about the show performed in their groups. The fourth grade can prepare a table and put the name of all the authorities and staffs in the school and then discuss their roles and fill the table with the results. The fifth grade may discuss around the system's functions and their applications and arrangements.

The multi-grade education is based on the principles that allows the teachers to guide the students' academic abilities with their differences in age, talent and skill, but according to the observations in such settings the teachers working in them would run their classes with the same rules they may apply in a mono-grade class and at times their performance is even weaker than that of required to handle a mono-grade class. The reasons of this shortcoming are the lack of

homogeneous group, the limited timing, and the heavy load of the books to be taught. Since the teacher and the way he/she adopts to handle the class impress the quality of the education then the teacher's lack of experience and knowledge can directly affect the academic performance of these classes.

3-reducing the grades existing in multi-grade classes

Considering the fact that due to the long distances to city in the remote rural areas, teachers often are bound to live in the village they can compensate for lack of time in multi-grade settings via dividing the classes into smaller ones which would operate in two shifts, morning and afternoon. Of course their effort should not be taken for granted and the authorities must pay for that.

Teachers can use two blackboards in the class, one set in the southern side of the class and another in the west side, the degree between them must be 90. it is a useful strategy that makes them able to control the students and their activities while students are absorbed in their own assignments and interact considerably lower with the other grades.

While constructing schools, it is better to keep a part of building material in education office or schools' warehouse to reconstruct or repair the school whenever required. The co-operation of people who living in the village is very beneficial. Because people always co-operate to accomplish agricultural, traditional, and religious tasks, the ability to attract their assistance for raising money to repair the schools and improve them or to co-operate in educational procedures is very helpful. The other method that is very effective to reconstruct the schools or decrease the expenses is establishing one school for a number of villages, so in this method the focus is on one village only. Preparing transportation facilities for the students of other villages to enable them to study in the central village, can reduce the expenses of constructing different schools in rural areas and this may cause to turn multi-grade to mono-grade schools with better equipments.

In order to prevent the problems such as decreasing educational qualities and increasing the efficiency in multi-grade classes, embarking on in-service training courses for teachers and principals is necessary.

Employing indigenous and local work-force as teachers or principals in the remote rural areas is another way to mention.

Considering the difficulty and complexities of working in these areas, teachers in addition to their salary must enjoy special bonus and perks.

4- The different break time

In primary schools students are given a 15-minute recess after 45-minute teaching sessions and altogether they have three break times during their school day. If teachers reschedule the recesses in order to teach the students continually this would prevent from squandering time and energy. In this method only the teacher faces with difficulty, but with a good planning strategy this barrier would be removed.

5- Employing assistant teachers

Employing some talented students to teach the others is not a new phenomenon. This method was first applied in England eighteenth century to fight against educational inequalities and it has adopted different names since then including: apprentice teacher, assistant teacher, khalifah. The history of using this type of education in Iran dates back to the old-fashioned primary schools called Maktab khana. This method is being used at the moment in different countries such as England, France, Sweden, Belgium, and Russia.

In this method the more gifted students from the higher grades are being employed to supervise and check the other students. It's profitable since it lessens the shortage in educational timing, grants private education to weaker students in emotional, social and academic aspects, spurs assistant teachers with more confidence and self-esteem and reinforces their sense of independence.

To avoid probable problems such as the inability of the assistant teachers to follow up their own academic progress, it is advisable to change them once in a month and employ the other talented students as well. The other useful method that the author of these words has been trying for many years is employing a rather brighter student from the same grade to teach his/her classmates instead of using assistant teachers from the higher grades.

The solutions to compensate teachers' lack of knowledge:

- 1- studying books, technical magazines, resources and recent researches in respect to their career
- 2- requesting the office to run educational workshops and sessions
- 3- observing successful multi-grade teachers and inspiring from them

The solutions recommended for strengthening students' knowledge:

- 1- reviewing the previous years' subjects for two to three weeks of the new academic year
- 2- Running assessment exams in the beginning of the course after revising the previous year topics

3- Modification in educational method in a way that demands more team work and social interaction from the students in order to give meaning to their learning and enable them to apply it in their real life

The solutions recommended for the bilingual areas:

- 1- Ingraining the habit of reading scientific and academic books in official language among students
- 2- Speaking in official language except the situations that spark miscommunication. In this case try to use short sentences in their mother tongue
- 3- Ordering students to translate short stories from their mother tongue into official language
- 4- Instructing students to prepare a memoir book for themselves and record their reminiscences in it
- 5- Asking students to write down the films, animations, and news and weather forecasting reports in their notebooks and play those roles in the class.

The topic of applicable activities in multi-grade classes:

- 1- Technology application to improve the process of teaching-learning in the class

Solutions:

- 1- In-service training for teachers to familiarize them with modern technology and computer applications
- 2- If there was no possibility to equip the whole school with modern technology, it is recommended to separate sixth grade students and gather them in an independent school and provide them with modern technology
- 3- It is advisable to equip all the schools in rural areas with these technologies and facilitate the access of other rural multi-grade schools to use them in case these schools fall short on these equipments (in addition to the school usage there must be another computer system in a separate room to enable the other schools to use it)
- 4- Education offices must provide teachers with laptops and reduce its cost from their salary
- 5- The same modification that happens in mono-grade schools must be performed at least in a number of multi-grade schools
- 6- It is recommended to use the charitable aids to equip the rural areas schools and persuade the charity institute to invest in these schools

7- Some education offices in order to buy the computers and equipping the schools with them are applying a plan that extracts half of the expenses from the school authorities and people in those areas and the rest is paid by the office itself. It seems that this plan with a variety of its positives aspects can make a revolutionary change in the education level and quality in multi-grade schools

8- Teachers who are involving in equipping schools with modern technology must be appreciated officially and be a source of inspiration for their colleagues

9- Teachers must inform students' parents of the importance of technology application in the schools in their consultation sessions to attract their attention to this matter and persuade them to participate in school equipping process

10- To promote the teaching quality, and with respect to the shortage of work-force in multi-grade schools, it is useful to gather to whole staff of the school including teachers and teach them the modern technology lessons in groups

2- compiling a supervision program to assess the educational quality in multi-grade classes and presenting an applicable model:

Solutions to section A (priority definitions, groups' responsibilities, how to establish and supervise it...)

How to establish professional committees: committees must be held with the presence of office director, education assistant, educators, primary school specialists, technology and educational groups' specialists, and at least one of the enthusiastic multi-grade teachers

Priorities and duties of the group

- supervising multi-grade schools and in-service training courses for multi-grade teachers, predicting students' density and statistics, estimating the required human resources, intense caring for the quality of teaching in multi-grade schools and equipping them with modern technology by the principal and vice principal and teachers, and pinpointing the requirements of multi-grade teachers and appreciating their efforts to promote academic qualities
- establishing consulting and discussing sessions in which teachers of multi-grade schools express their opinions and convey their experiences
- Identification of talented students in the rural areas and motivating them to study in specific schools (according to solution no.5/4 and the major solution no.4 season five evolution policy). In rural areas although the students might not have experience the pre-school courses or

kindergarten ,as soon as they step into the school they show such a great talent that amazes teachers and it is required to guide them to study in specific schools with more equipments.

- Another duty of the mentioned committee is to identify educated parents and participate them in promoting educational qualities in order to facilitate their children's studying and creating equal learning opportunities according to solution 4/4 in evolution policy
- The collaboration of this committee with the principal of multi-grade schools to separate the sixth grade students. This would affect the quality of teaching in these schools and helps the sixth grade students to learn more efficiently.
- Identification of creative and successful teachers of multi-grade schools to apply their experience in schools under cover the institute
- Using holidays like Thursday for extra-curricular activities like reading Quran or academic courses based on brain-storming sessions of teachers
- Cooperation of the committee members to give the office facilities such as minibuses to multi-grade schools in rural areas to visit the museums, libraries, scientific excursions, and to take part in religious celebrations in order to make equal educational opportunities. according to section 8 of values manifestation in evolution policy methods are presented to assess the teachers' educational tools and equipments and performance in order to control their cooperation and coordination with the committee members, and principal
- It is required to have it in mind to provide a specific section in formal and official forms in order to appreciate and motivate active multi-grade teachers
- Holding exhibitions regarding the progress of the students in multi-grade schools in different educational aspects in province and state level
- Summoning the experienced multi-grade teachers through circulars
- Multi-grade schools and their population density must be cross-checked and extra teachers provided to those which have sixth grade students.
- One-month training courses must be held in bilingual areas with the help of parents and official authorities (according to strategy 5/3 in evolution policy)
- Using of arts, traditions, crafts, and local condition of rural areas in Iran, and beautiful pictures of the sceneries in these areas in the manuals and academic books (according to 5/5 strategy, evolution policy)

B) Practical strategies to compile a model for multi-grade teachers' supervision and guidance

The utilization of an expert, prominent and experienced guide teacher who is aware of academic problems in multi-grade schools and accepted by multi-grade teachers, since these teachers have a great experience in this field (selection of a guide teacher among the multi-grade teachers of that area must be prioritized)

- Predicting the duties of a guide teacher and obligation of authorities to him/her in order to cooperate efficiently with the professional board of the mentioned committee and to appreciate creative teachers in multi-grade classes (legal obligations considered for the guide teachers)
- One of the best multi-grade teachers must be selected to collaborate with the guide teacher in order to control and supervise the other teachers in the area. The selected teacher must work in this aspect full-time (in areas that the number of multi-grade schools are high a mere guide teacher would not suffice).
- An apprehensive and perfect form must be designed by educational scholars for the multi-grade teachers and during one academic year this form must be evaluated and scored and the best teachers get selected and appreciated (in section 4 part B we elaborated this point)

3- reinforcing the institutional and multi-grade schools management

A) strategies to teach guide teachers in order to compile the yearly schedule

- Considering the fact that the grade six has been added to our education system and to the primary schools, it is recommended to select the guide teacher from the multi-grade teachers in primary schools not junior schools
- It seems that some of the guide teachers are not aware of annual programs. In order to inform them better it is useful to provide them with in-service training courses (major strategy no.3 season 5, evolution policy)
- It is required for the guide teachers who are not familiar with the primary schools recent modifications, to get to know these changes and to study the latest publishers' books via in-service training courses to achieve better efficiency to supervise and control the schools (primary school is the building block of students' education)
- It is more wise to avoid employing teachers who have been working in mono-grade schools for long time and due to the rise in their salary request for working in multi-grade schools in the last years of their duty

B) practical methods to prepare and produce useful educational packages which helps multi-grade teachers in their career:

- Inviting teachers to present their educational plans, ideas, and packages, since it is likely that they have these ideas in mind but can not put it in practice due to their probable shortages (in respect to strategy 13 the last season evolution policy)
- Holding exhibitions and festivals of these products
- To make the best use of the resources and to avoid wastage it is helpful to equip the rural schools with mathematic kits and make it accessible to other schools under its cover. Or make it possible for the students to use these kits in turn.
- An effective way to equip the schools is cooperation in purchasing these equipments by school and education office

CONCLUSION

According to the article, multi-grade schools have a long history in foreign countries as well as Iran. It has its own merits and shortcomings, but the merits are much more than its pitfalls and are applicable in life (playing an active social role, independent and positive life style). A considerable number of shortcomings of this method can be cancelled with applying these points: utilization of operational and technological points, using the latest psychological, consultancy, teaching methods, employing the natural and environmental facilities in students' local places. In addition to this, arranging students in heterogeneous groups, enables them to overcome mere excitement of being in these environments and increases their problem-solving aptitudes. The interaction of local people exemplifies righteous role models for them to play their social roles positively.

Teaching in multi-grade schools demands its specific strategies. A multi-grade teacher must be superior in his/her skills as compared to mono-grade teachers. The teaching session must be handled by teacher with these methods: categorizing the grade into a focal grade and non-focal ones, employing assistant teacher, grouping heterogeneous grades. At their recess timings, students must be involved in qualitative educational exercises.

In addition to the specific knowledge that his/her job demands, a multi-grade teacher must be equipped with consulting knowledge, psychology, environmental hygiene, administrative management. He should be able to act as a rural setting's referee and feels like one members of the community to observe the events in the village and help them in all these incidents. These cause students' parents take part in academic affairs in the school.

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