



Experiences of Multigrade Teachers in Managing Classrooms: Basis for the Development Project ELEVATE-MG

Rose Angelie D. Hubilla^{1*}, Gerry S. Digo²

^{1,2} Sorsogon State University Graduate School, Sorsogon City, Philippines

ABSTRACT

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This study explored the experiences of multigrade teachers in managing classrooms in a rural elementary school as the basis for the development of Project ELEVATE-MG (Enhancing Learner Engagement and Versatile Approaches in Teaching for Effective Multigrade Education). This study employed an action research design to describe the classroom management experiences and needs of multigrade teachers and develop a context-responsive intervention. Data was gathered from three multigrade teachers and one school head through interviews and a post-intervention Google Form survey. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the experiences of the participants, while descriptive-narrative analysis describes participants' feedback on the intervention. Findings revealed challenges involving instructional complexity, learner behavior, low engagement and participation, and curriculum implementation. Teachers employed strategies such as jump-jump, differentiated instruction, peer teaching, and individualized instruction to address learners' varied needs. They also utilized flexible classroom management styles and utilized available resources and technology. The findings further indicated that teachers identified continuing needs for strategies, instructional resources, and professional support in managing the classroom. These identified needs informed the development of Project ELEVATE-MG through a LAC session focusing on learner engagement strategies and classroom management practices. Participants described the intervention as practical, relevant, and applicable to their teaching context, reporting increased confidence, enhanced classroom management, and instructional practices. The study recommends sustained professional development, mentoring, and LAC sessions to support multigrade teachers in addressing the classroom management and instructional challenges.

KEYWORDS:

action research, classroom management practices, multigrade, multigrade teachers

1. INTRODUCTION

Multigrade education is an established educational approach that promotes access to basic education, particularly in communities where geographical isolation, enrollment, and limited resources make conventional monograde schools difficult. Multigrade education has been implemented for over a century in developing countries such as India, Africa, the Philippines, Turkey, the Netherlands, and Pakistan (Shareefa, 2021; Recla & Potane, 2023; Qayoom et al., 2024; Bumacas & Asuncion, 2025). In the Philippines, approximately one-third of public elementary schools use

multigrade education (Hilario, 2025), particularly where enrollment, teachers, and classrooms are limited (Kalender & Erdem, 2021; Hilario, 2025). It allows learners in remote communities to access basic education (Bongala et al., 2020; Naparan & Alinsug, 2021; Tayoni & Aboejo, 2023). However, managing learners with different ages, abilities, and grade levels simultaneously creates challenges in time management, training, learner behavior and management, and curriculum implementation (Bongala et al., 2020; Kalender & Erdem, 2021). Thus, providing appropriate instructional, professional, and institutional support is essential to help address these challenges and foster positive learning outcomes.

Multigrade education in the Philippines is guided by international frameworks and national policies that promote equitable access, teacher development, and inclusive education. Aligned with UNESCO's SDG No. 4, multigrade

Corresponding Author: Rose Angelie D. Hubilla

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education supports inclusive, equitable, and quality education for all, especially in underserved communities (United Nations, 2015). In the Philippines, DepEd Order No. 96, s. 1997 provides operational standards for multigrade classes (DepEd, 1997), while DepEd Order No. 81, s. 2009, and DepEd Order No. 63, s. 2010 strengthened the Multigrade Program in Philippine Education (MPPE). This includes up to 25% Special Hardship Allowance as an incentive for multigrade teachers (DepEd, 2009, 2010). DepEd Order No. 001, s. 2020, further established guidelines for NEAP approval of professional development programs (DepEd, 2020), while DepEd Order No. 42, s. 2017, established PPST to guide teachers in effective classroom management and instructional practices (DepEd, 2017). DepEd Memorandum No. 043, s. 2025, highlighted inclusive education and addressing the diverse learner needs (DepEd, 2025). These policies highlight that multigrade education requires not only access to schooling but also the need for continuous teacher development that is adaptable, strategic, and contextualized support.

Classroom management is essential in multigrade education to maintain an organized and positive learning environment (Bonna, 2023). Multigrade teachers manage learners with diverse curricular levels, developmental needs, and classroom behavior. Studies in Turkey, the Netherlands, and Africa have identified challenges such as limited parental support, socio-economic constraints, transportation difficulties, space limitations, addressing individual needs, and behavior management (Naparan & Alinsug, 2021; Qangule & Letuma, 2025; Recla & Potane, 2023). Existing studies have shown that effective classroom management depends on structured strategies and appropriate teaching approaches (Ki et al., 2025; Putra & Yanto, 2025). These challenges make classroom management more complex in multigrade settings, as teachers must simultaneously address varied learning needs while maintaining an organized classroom. Thus, multigrade teachers need adaptable strategies to support diverse learner needs.

Multigrade teaching reflects perspectives that promote active, collaborative, contextualized, and learner-centered teaching. Pragmatism highlights learning by doing and encourages learners to apply knowledge to real-life situations (Anggraeni & Andriani, 2025). Constructivism views learners as active participants by engaging actively in interaction, inquiry, collaboration, and reflections instead of passive instruction (Romdhon et al., 2024; McLeod, 2025). Vygotsky's scaffolding theory highlights the importance of guided support that allows learners to accomplish activities they cannot complete independently, with assistance gradually reduced as learners develop competence (Li et al., 2023; Garland et al., 2025). Humanism highlights holistic development of students by providing social, emotional, personal, and academic growth (Van der Westhuizen, 2024;

Darmawan & Ramli, 2025). These perspectives are relevant to multigrade classrooms because they support contextualized instruction, peer collaboration, differentiated assistance, and positive teacher-learner relationships, which allow teachers to address the diverse learner needs and abilities. Together, these perspectives provide a basis for understanding how teachers can respond to learner diversity while maintaining meaningful, supportive, and engaging learning environments.

Instructional approaches and strategies play a crucial role in managing the complexity of multigrade classrooms because they enable teachers to accommodate the various abilities and levels of the learners (Naparan & Alinsug, 2021). Common strategies include differentiated instruction, flexible grouping, tiered activities, peer teaching, independent learning tasks, collaborative learning, and the jump-jump strategy (Bongala et al., 2020; Naparan & Alinsug, 2021; Bhardwaj et al., 2025). Differentiated instruction allows teachers to modify learning materials, activities, and assessment, while collaborative approaches such as peer teaching, group work, and cooperative learning help strengthen active participation and learners' mutual support (Bhardwaj et al., 2025; Bumacas and Asuncion, 2025). The jump-jump strategy, where teachers shift instruction between grade levels while students' complete activities independently or collaboratively, also helps maximize instructional time in multigrade classrooms (Bongala et al., 2020; Naparan & Alinsug, 2021). These approaches provide teachers with practical means of organizing instruction while addressing learner diversity and sustaining engagement in multigrade settings. These strategies enable teachers to organize time, tasks, and competencies while responding to differences in learner readiness and maintaining engagement across grade levels. Thus, systematic lesson planning and adaptable instructional strategies provide practical ways to manage learner diversity and sustain effective teaching in multigrade classrooms.

Classroom management styles influence learner behavior, engagement, participation, and the classroom environment. Common classroom management styles include authoritative, permissive, authoritarian, indulgent, and democratic approaches, with each approach characterized by distinct features that influence behavior and classroom environment (Ianniello & Alodat, 2024; Rodilla & Rabara, 2025). Piquero (2023) reported frequent use of authoritative and authoritarian management styles, alongside permissive and indulgent approaches. The study also found stronger association between learner engagement and motivation to indulgent and permissive styles than authoritarian or authoritative. The studies imply that the effectiveness of management styles is determined by the educational context applied. Moreover, in multigrade classrooms, relying on a single method may not adequately address differences in age, ability, behavior, and learning needs. Thus, flexible

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management styles and instructional approaches are important to cater to the diverse demands of multigrade teaching.

Managing multigrade classrooms presents teachers with instructional, organizational, and classroom management challenges due to diverse learner needs and multiple grade levels. Teachers faced diverse challenges such as limited parental support, low socio-economic conditions, inadequate classroom space, and behavior diversity among learners (Naparan & Alinsug, 2021; Recla & Potane, 2023; Qangule & Letuma, 2025). In addition, curriculum also requires teachers to plan, adapt, and implement across multiple grade levels (Bongala et al., 2020; Kalender & Erdem, 2021). Moreover, inadequate pre-service and in-service professional training may lead teachers to rely on improvisation to address instructional and classroom management challenges (Tayoni & Abocejo, 2023; Ares-Ferreirós et al., 2025). Similarly, Qangule and Letuma (2025) reported that inadequate professional development limited teachers' ability to consistently apply classroom management practices such as rule-setting, behavior enforcement, and learner monitoring. These challenges increase teachers' demands for organizational, pedagogical, and classroom management skills. Inadequate training and guidance could constrain teachers' capability to address varied student needs and sustain structured and nurturing classrooms. Thus, continuous professional development and contextualized support are essential to strengthen teachers' capacity to manage the complexities of multigrade teaching.

The existing literature showed that maintaining a productive learning environment, adaptable organizational strategies, and sustained professional growth are essential for classroom management. Studies emphasized pragmatism, constructivism, humanism, and Vygotsky's scaffolding theory as perspectives supporting teachers to create inclusive approaches and responsive teaching for diverse learners (Luo, 2024; Darmawan & Ramli, 2025; Garland et al., 2025; McLeod, 2025). Instructional strategies such as jump-jump and differentiated instruction also address varied needs of learners (Bongala et al., 2020; Naparan & Alinsug, 2021; Bhardwaj et al., 2025). However, multigrade teachers still face challenges in teaching, behavior management, resources, training, and multiple grade responsibilities (Recla & Potane, 2023; Tayoni & Abocejo, 2023; Ares-Ferreirós et al., 2025). Existing studies commonly use qualitative, descriptive, correlational, and survey methods (Naparan & Alinsug, 2021; Piquero, 2023; Rafiq-uz-Zaman et al., 2025). Although these studies highlighted valuable insights into multigrade teaching, most focused on describing existing conditions, teaching practices, and teacher experiences. Few studies systematically develop and evaluate need-based, school-based interventions for multigrade classroom management, particularly in the Philippines. Gaps in training, guidance, and

contextualized professional development further highlight the need for practical intervention. In response, the present study developed and evaluated an LAC training workshop grounded in multigrade teachers' experiences. The intervention focused on learner engagement strategies and classroom management practices, creating a cycle of teachers' experiences to intervention development, implementation, and feedback. This framework provided the basis for addressing identified classroom management needs through contextualized professional learning.

Moreover, the framework was structured as a cyclical process consisting of three interconnected stages of looking, thinking, and acting (Digo & Labor, 2022). Looking at the stage involved collecting information to describe the experiences faced by multigrade teachers in managing classrooms. The thinking stage involved analyzing these experiences, identifying gaps, and planning an actionable intervention based on teachers' identified needs. The acting stage involved implementing and evaluating the intervention and gathering teachers' feedback regarding its usefulness in managing multigrade classrooms. The outcome of the study was the development and implementation of a contextualized LAC training workshop that provided practical strategies for learner engagement and classroom management. The intervention also contributed to increased teacher confidence and enhanced classroom management and instructional practices. Thus, the framework demonstrated how teachers' experiences informed the development of an intervention, while its implementation and feedback provided a basis for improving classroom management practices in multigrade settings.

The locale of the study is classified as a multigrade school in a mountainous community of Bacon East District, Sorsogon City Division, that is characterized by a geographically isolated setting in terms of accessibility and limited access to resources. Based on school records, approximately 40 to 50 learners are enrolled in the school and handled by four teachers across four multigrade classrooms for the current school year. In the local context, multigrade teachers reported that extensive lesson planning and material preparations increase their workload and classroom management challenges. These experiences in handling multigrade classes show the connection between instruction, lesson planning, and classroom management. The challenges of multigrade teaching highlight the need for school-based intervention that supports teachers and improves classroom management.

This study aimed to develop Project ELEVATE-MG to address the multigrade teachers' experiences in managing classrooms in a rural elementary school. Specifically, it aimed to (1) describe the multigrade teachers' experiences in managing classrooms along with the challenges encountered, instructional approaches employed, classroom management

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styles implemented, utilization of teaching and learning resources, and administrative and professional support provided for multigrade teachers; (2) develop Project ELEVATE-MG as an actionable intervention; (3) examine the implementation of Project ELEVATE-MG; and (4) describe the participants' feedback on Project ELEVATE-MG.

II. METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed an action research design to describe the classroom management experiences and needs of multigrade teachers and develop a context-responsive intervention. Action research is a cyclical approach that uses real-life experiences to generate practical knowledge and improve teaching practices through planning, acting, developing, and reflecting (Coghlan, 2023; Mertler, 2023). The study followed a cycle of planning, acting, and reflecting to identify needs, implement practical strategies, and determine areas for improvement.

Participants

This study involved three multigrade teachers and one school head in the Bacon East District. The participants were selected based on the grade level they handled, wherein they taught multiple grade levels in a single learning space; their years of teaching experience in a multigrade setting, which ensured familiarity with its demands; their current assignment in a recognized multigrade school; and their willingness to participate in the study. Monograde teachers and administrative officers were excluded to ensure that only the participants with direct multigrade experience contributed relevant data.

The profile of the participants may be summarized as follows: Participant A was a female teacher who had served in a multigrade school for 12 years and handled Grades 1 and 2. Participant B was also female, with one year of experience in multigrade teaching, and was assigned to Grades 3 and 4. Participant C was a male teacher who had served in multigrade school for nine years and handled Grades 5 and 6. Lastly, Participant D was a female school head with one year of service in a multigrade school setting and served as key informant, providing an administrative perspective on the experiences and practices reported by the multigrade teachers. All participants were provided informed consent before data collection. Participation was voluntary and allowed decline without consequences. Confidentiality was maintained by using participant codes instead of names.

Data Collection Materials

The researchers primarily used an interview guide to gather data on the experiences of multigrade teachers in managing classrooms. This instrument was composed of open-ended questions focusing on classroom management practices, instructional issues, teaching strategies, and learner engagement. It captured the experiences and perceptions in

relation to the complexities of managing classrooms in a multigrade setting. The information gathered served as the basis for developing a training entitled Project ELEVATE-MG (Enhancing Learner Engagement and Versatile Approaches in Teaching for Effective Multigrade Education) through a Learning Action Cell (LAC) Session. After the intervention, a semi-structured Google form was used to assess participants' perceptions of the training.

Data Collection Procedures

The researchers secured approval and informed consent from the school head and the multigrade teachers after explaining the study's objectives, procedures, and ethical considerations. Participation was voluntary, with confidentiality and anonymity of the information ensured. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the three multigrade teachers and one school head from March 9 to 16, 2026, focusing on the participants' experiences in managing multigrade classrooms, including classroom management practices, instructional strategies, learner engagement, curriculum implementation, challenges encountered, and the support they received from the school. With permission, the interviews were audio-recorded to ensure the accuracy and completeness of the gathered information.

The validated Project ELEVATE-MG (Enhancing Learner Engagement and Versatile Approaches in Teaching for Effective Multigrade Education) was implemented from April 27 to May 1, 2026. The workshop was facilitated by a qualified resource person and consisted of lectures, collaborative discussions, experience sharing, strategies, and workshop activities. Participants developed enhanced lesson plans incorporating the learner engagement and classroom management strategies presented during the training and completed a Google Form feedback survey regarding the relevance, usefulness, and applicability of the intervention. The school head and public schools district supervisor reviewed the lesson plans to provide professional feedback rather than to serve as a standardized evaluation using a rubric.

Data Analysis Methods

This study used thematic analysis to identify and analyze patterns in qualitative interview data (Morgan, 2022; Bumacas & Asuncion, 2025). Following Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase framework—familiarization, coding, searching, reviewing, defining and naming themes, and reporting (McLeod, 2024)—the analysis described the classroom management experiences of the multigrade teachers and identified their priority needs, which served as the basis for developing Project ELEVATE-MG (Enhancing Learner Engagement and Versatile Approaches in Teaching for Effective Multigrade Education) through LAC Session.

The recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim and analyzed thematically to identify recurring themes and

patterns of participants' classroom management experiences. The findings from the interviews served as the basis for the development of Project ELEVATE-MG (Enhancing Learner Engagement and Versatile Approaches in Teaching for Effective Multigrade Education) through a Learning Action Cell (LAC) Session. The training contents were based on the identified needs of the participants and supported by relevant literature, educational theories, and classroom management practices. The training matrix and materials were reviewed and validated by experts before implementation.

Descriptive-narrative analysis was also employed to examine the implementation and participants' feedback. This method focused on organizing and interpreting participants' reflections, feedback survey responses, and workshop outputs to provide a comprehensive description of their perceptions regarding the relevance, usefulness, and applicability of the training in managing multigrade classrooms (McLeod, 2024). The findings addressed the third and fourth objectives of the study.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. MULTIGRADE TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES IN MANAGING CLASSROOM

The first objective was to describe the challenges encountered, instructional approaches employed, classroom management styles implemented, utilization of teaching and learning resources, and administrative and professional support provided for multigrade teachers. The data revealed that participants encountered challenges related to instructional complexity, learner behavior, low learner engagement and participation, and curriculum implementation. Despite these challenges, they employed different instructional approaches, implemented a combination of classroom management styles, utilized various learning resources, received various administrative and professional development support, and faced some challenges in curriculum implementation to address the demands of multigrade teaching.

1.1 Challenges Encountered by Multigrade Teachers

The findings revealed that multigrade teachers experienced challenges related to instructional complexity, behavior challenges, and low learner engagement, participation, and curriculum implementation. These challenges demonstrated the complex nature of multigrade teaching, where teachers simultaneously address multiple grade levels, diverse learner abilities, and different curriculum competencies within a single classroom.

1.1.1 Instructional Complexity in Multigrade Teaching. Multigrade teachers faced instructional complexities in lesson planning, material preparations, and

curriculum implementation due to the need to address the varied learning needs of different grade levels simultaneously.

When asked about the daily experiences he experienced in his classroom, Participant D stated that "*hindi nila nauunawaan yung lesson o hindi naiintindihan...*" [...they don't understand the lesson]. Participant B explained her workload when asked about lesson planning, stating, "*In a week bawat subject is dalawa yung lesson plan; ngayon nasa fifteen lesson plan in a week.*" [In a week, I create two lesson plans for every subject, so I make a total of fifteen lesson plans in a week.] Participant B also explained the issue she faced in the instructional materials provided, stating, "*Napansin ko doon sa activities sa MATATAG medyo challenging siya sa aming learners so kumukuha ako ng medyo simple lang doon sa internet para maibigay sa mga batang medyo mahina pa.*" [I observed that the activities on MATATAG are quite challenging for our learners, so I get simpler ones on the internet to provide to the children who are struggling.]

These statements indicate that instructional complexity stemmed from preparing multiple lesson plans, modifying instructional materials, and responding to learners with varying academic needs. Teachers handled different grade levels simultaneously; they were required to continuously adjust instructional content while ensuring that learning competencies were achieved. These findings are consistent with Sitabkhan et al. (2022), who found that it is essential for multigrade teachers to adapt learning activities, regular learner assessment to inform teaching plans, and adaptable teaching practices to modify learning activities during discussions. Their study emphasized that differentiated instruction is important in multigrade classrooms because a single instructional approach cannot adequately respond to the varying needs of students. Likewise, Christopher and Newman (2022) emphasized that reducing transition time, providing sequential and cooperative activities, maintaining a positive climate, encouraging meaningful teacher-student interactions, and delivering high-quality instruction were linked to an increase in participation. These organized instructional practices helped learners to participate more actively in tasks, resulting in improved learning outcomes.

This finding also supports previous literature. Recla and Potane (2023) highlighted that multigrade teachers spend considerably more time preparing lessons because they must develop learning activities appropriate for different grade levels. Similarly, Bongala et al. (2020) found that preparing multiple lesson plans increases teachers' workload and reduces instructional time. The findings further reinforce Bunga et al. (2025), who emphasized that differentiated instruction functioned as an efficient method in addressing learner diversity in multigrade settings. Thus, instructional complexity emerged as one of the primary demands of multigrade teaching, highlighting the importance of instructional planning, differentiated instruction, and effective classroom organization.

1.1.2 Learner Behavior Challenges. The multigrade teachers faced diverse challenges, particularly misbehavior and different personalities requiring strong classroom management strategies.

Participant D emphasized the behavior challenges; she stated that "*Ang nakikita kong concern is paghandle ng mga learners na iba-iba ang ugali.*" [The concern I see is handling learners with different behaviors and personalities.] Additionally, when asked about the daily experiences in multigrade classes, Participant C verbalized that "*...bakit sila nag mi-misbehave ay hindi nila nauunawaan yung lesson so kapag hindi nila nauunawaan ang lesson magmimisbehave sila.*" [...they misbehave because they don't understand the lesson.] Also, Participant A explained the difficulty in managing two grade levels if faced with behavior challenges; she stated that "*Ang pag manage sin 2 grade levels medyo mapagal sa pag execute ng lesson lalo pa kung unruly ang mga aki.*" [Managing 2 grade levels is quite difficult in the execution of lessons, especially if the children are unruly.] Moreover, when asked about the daily experiences he experienced in his classroom, Participant B explained that "*Natural na siguro ngayong panahon yung behavioral challenges...*" [I think it's natural now to encounter behavioral challenges...].

These findings revealed that learner behavior challenges were closely associated with instructional demands and varying learner abilities rather than merely classroom discipline. Learners

who struggle to understand lessons often become disengaged, resulting in inattentiveness and disruptive behavior. These findings strongly support Kounin's Classroom Management Theory, which argues that learner misbehavior is often prevented through effective instructional management rather than punishment. It also emphasized maintaining learner involvement, smooth transitions, and teacher awareness to reduce opportunities for disruptive behavior (Mohn, 2024). The participants' experiences implied that when teachers are unable to provide immediate instructional support because they were teachers at another level, some learners become disengaged and display inappropriate behaviors. This finding is consistent with Christopher and Newman (2022), who stated that students who spent more time in classroom transitions exhibited lower engagement because transitions were often prolonged by teachers gathering materials, managing behavior, or interrupting instruction. The study further emphasized that organized routines and minimizing unnecessary transitions help sustain learner engagement and reduce classroom disruptions. Chen and Zhang (2022) found that satisfaction of students' basic psychological needs was positively associated with academic engagement and that meeting these needs helped foster positive emotional states and active participation in learning. Further, learners whose psychological needs are supported become more motivated, energized, and engaged in classroom tasks, which highlighted the importance of addressing students' psychological needs to promote positive learning behaviors. These interpretations are consistent with Kalender & Erdem (2021), who found that behavioral problems were common in multigrade settings. Moreover, mixed-ability classrooms create behavioral and emotional challenges that require adaptive instructional and classroom management strategies (Saifuddin et al., 2024; Qangule & Letuma, 2025). Thus, the findings demonstrate that effective learner behavior management in multigrade classrooms depends on combining instructional support with responsive classroom management practices.

1.1.3 Low Learner Engagement and Participation. The multigrade teachers faced engagement challenges such as inattentiveness and low participation.

When asked about her daily experiences, Participant B enunciated that "*May mga bata na ayaw sumunod sa teacher, ayaw makinig, minsan sumasagot pa.*" [Some students do not follow the

teacher, don't listen, and sometimes even talk back.] Additionally, Participant A noted behavior challenges and stated that "They are not paying attention." Participant C observed a lack of engagement, stating, "Pupils are not active or not participating."

These findings indicate that learner engagement became difficult because teachers simultaneously attended to varying grade levels and different abilities of students. As teachers simultaneously attended to different grade levels and varying learner abilities. As teachers shifted attention between grade levels, some learners experienced reduced teacher interaction, resulting in passive participation and lower engagement. The findings are explained by Vygotsky's social constructivist theory, which asserts that learning develops through continuous interaction, teacher guidance, and collaboration with more knowledgeable individuals. Moreover, constructivist learning promotes active participation through teacher scaffolding, collaboration, and learner-centered instruction (Romdhon et al., 2024). Moreover, Sitabkhan et al. (2022) stated that multigrade teachers sustained learner engagement through modifying teaching tasks and resources to learners' diverse needs, and Aldanese and Limpot (2023) stated that differentiated instruction positively influences student engagement. Moreover, these findings aligned with studies showing that multigrade instruction requires flexible teaching approaches and learner-centered strategies to sustain participation (Chalway, 2025; Vigo-Arrazola & Moreno-Pinillos, 2025). Likewise, learners who receive insufficient instructional guidance are less inclined to engage actively in classroom activities (Magallanes et al., 2024). Therefore, learner engagement in multigrade classrooms extends beyond participation; it represents an essential component of effective classroom management because engaged learners are more attentive, cooperative, and academically involved.

1.1.4 Curriculum Implementation in Multigrade Classrooms. The data showed that multigrade teachers primarily implemented the MATATAG Curriculum and carefully aligned learning skills required to support learners at varying grade levels.

Participant A stated that MATATAG lesson exemplars and learning activity sheets were followed, while some

other schools implemented ILE, stating, "*MATATAG Lesson Exemplar tapos Learning Activity Sheets, MATATAG ang pinapasunod pero sa Multigrade lang, sa ibang schools ILE ang ginagamit.*" [MATATAG Lesson Exemplar and Learning Activity Sheets of MATATAG Curriculum are being followed by Multigrade Schools, but some other schools used ILE].

Further, Participant D verbalized that multigrade teachers followed the MATATAG curriculum and carefully studied curriculum guides, noting that ILE is not applicable to multigrade settings, stating:

"Multigrade teachers also used the MATATAG curriculum; however, since we are dealing with two grade levels in one classroom, it is a must really to study thoroughly the curriculum guides so that the competencies that should be taught in the classroom are somehow correlated in terms of the two grade levels. Somehow as a multigrade school, the ILE, which is a directive from the regional office, is not somehow applicable to the multigrade classes, so with that we stick to the MATATAG curriculum."

The results revealed that implementing the curriculum extends beyond following prescribed competencies. Teachers aligned competencies, adapted some activities, and modified lessons based on students' needs. The findings show that differentiated instruction adapts curriculum and strategies to address the demands and pace of students (Sitabkhan et al., 2022). These findings support Pedroches (2025), who highlighted that teachers need to adapt the content to meet competencies and address the needs of learners. The findings reinforce existing literature that emphasizes the need for curriculum adaptation. Thus, multigrade curriculum implementation needs to align, contextualize, and utilize adaptive approaches for meaningful learning.

1.2 Instructional Approaches Employed

The instructional approaches employed in this study refer to the strategies used by multigrade teachers to address learners' diverse needs while maintaining classroom engagement and instructional continuity. These approaches included differentiated instruction, peer teaching, individualized instruction, and jump-jump strategy.

1.2.1 Differentiated Instruction. The multigrade teachers employed differentiated instruction as one of their instructional approaches aimed at responding to varying student demands.

When asked about strategies employed, Participant A verbalized that “*Differentiated Instruction...magkaiba ang activities tapos more on board work, inoobserve ko kung ma-answer...*” [Differentiated Instruction means having different activities...] Correspondingly, Participant B highlighted the use of differentiated instruction by assigning tasks according to the learners’ interest or skills, stating, “*Meron kasi na may ibang mahilig magdrawing, yung activity nila may kaunting drawing so dun ko sila pinapadrawing, tapos may iba naman na marunong magsulat ng sentences yun yung pinapagawa ko sa medyo advanced na...*” [Some learners like drawing, so I include a little drawing activities and let them draw, while others who can already write sentences were given tasks suited for more advanced learners]. In addition, Participant C emphasized that differentiated instruction requires flexible arrangement, as learners must be organized according to their individual needs, stating, “*Yung Differentiated Instruction iba-iba ang nagiging set-up...kailangan silang i-arrange depende sa kanilang needs...*” [Differentiated instruction varies in set-up, as learners need to be arranged depending on their needs].

Findings indicate that differentiated instruction enabled teachers to support students’ diverse needs. They modified activities, groupings, and support depending on the student’s ability. It minimizes students’ inactivity, fosters continuous learning, and promotes inclusivity by addressing their needs. The findings align with Bunga et al. (2025), who differentiated instruction needs flexible and collaborative strategies such as rotational group activities, collaborative support, and adaptable lesson structures to address demands in multigrade classes. While previous studies emphasized differentiation as an instructional strategy, the present study extends the literature by demonstrating that differentiated instruction simultaneously functions as a classroom management strategy that helps teachers organize multiple learning groups, maintain learning engagement, and effectively

manage instructional complexity. Thus, differentiated instruction served as an essential strategy that fostered equitable learning opportunities, sustained engagement, and improved classroom management in multigrade classes.

1.2.2 Peer Teaching. The multigrade teachers employed peer teaching to promote collaboration and peer support in multigrade settings.

When asked about the strategies employed, Participant B stated that “*Gumagamit ako ng peer teaching, yung medyo advanced na hinahayaan ko sila na turuan yung medyo mahina pa sa klase.*” [I used peer teaching where the more advanced students are allowed to teach those who are still struggling in the class]. Moreover, Participant C underscored the role of collaborative learning and peer support in enhancing learner engagement and participation, stating, “*Peer support or peer learning ay palaging na-aapply, and yung yung tinatawag na collaborative learning kasi kung wala nun, walang engagement hindi magiging active ang learners*” [Peer support or peer learning is always applied, and this is collaborative learning because without it, there would be no engagement, and learners would not be active.]

The findings indicate that peer teaching enabled learners to enable students to take an active role in activities by allowing more capable learners to assist classmates experiencing learning difficulties. This instructional approach expanded learning opportunities beyond teacher-directed instruction while allowing teachers to attend to another level without interrupting learner engagement. Li et al. (2024) noted that Vygotsky’s Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) explains how students develop understanding through guidance from more knowledgeable individuals. In this study, advanced learners functioned as peer facilitators who scaffolded the learning of classmates, thereby promoting collaborative knowledge construction and continuous learner participation. Moreover, Li et al. (2024) found that teachers’ scaffolding during cooperative learning enhanced students’ participation, interaction, and understanding. By providing appropriate guidance, it enables learners to engage more actively in learning tasks and supports collaborative knowledge construction. Likewise, peer teaching in multigrade classrooms improved support and foundational

skills like reading and writing (Kalender & Erdem, 2021). Additionally, collaborative and peer learning increased learner engagement and academic performance in multigrade classrooms (Bumacas & Asuncion, 2025).

However, the present enriches existing literature by showing that peer-assisted learning also functions as a classroom strategy that promotes learner independence while reducing teachers' instructional workload in managing grade levels simultaneously. Thus, peer teaching contributed not only to improving academic support but also to learner responsibility, collaboration, classroom engagement, and effective multigrade classroom management.

1.2.3 Individualized Instruction. The multigrade teachers also utilized individualized instruction to address learners' specific needs and academic difficulties.

When asked about the strategies employed in the classroom, Participant C enunciated that "*Dito sa strategy na ginagamit ko is individualized instruction kasi kailangang i-approach individually and ask questions kung saan sila nahihirapan*" [The strategy I used is individualized instruction because learners need to be approached individually and asked about the parts that they are having difficulty]. Additionally, Participant B emphasized the use of individualized instruction to address learners' varying abilities, stating, "*Ginagamit ko ang Individualized Instruction para matugunan ang ibat-ibang kakyahan ng estudyante ko para mabigyan ng angkop na gawain at gabay ang bawat bata habang tinuturuan ko sila*" [I use Individualized Instruction to address the different abilities of my students so that each child can be given appropriate task and guidance while I teach them].

This implied that individualized instruction allowed teachers to identify specific learner needs, provide focused guidance, and address learning gaps according to individual readiness. Since multigrade classrooms consist of learners with varying grade levels and developmental abilities, individualized instruction enabled teachers to provide equitable learning support despite instructional diversity. The findings also reflect Vygotsky's Social Constructivist Theory, particularly the concept of scaffolding, wherein teachers provide guidance to

students in performing activities that they cannot accomplish without support. These findings support Naparan and Alinsug (2021), who emphasized that individualized instruction, differentiated tasks, and real-life connection enhance learner understanding and engagement. The present study expands such findings by highlighting that individualized instruction also contributes to classroom management by minimizing learning difficulties that often lead to inattentiveness and disruptive behaviors in multigrade classrooms. Thus, individualized instruction promoted equitable learning opportunities, strengthened learner achievement, and supported effective classroom management through continuous learner monitoring and timely instructional intervention.

1.2.4 Jump-Jump Strategy. Multigrade teachers employ the jump-jump strategy, in which teachers handle various grade levels by switching between instruction and tasks.

When asked about the strategies employed in the classroom, Participant D stated that "In a multigrade classroom, at some point in the lesson, while the other grade level is having discussion, another grade level has an activity." In addition, Participant B described the jump-jump strategy wherein teachers alternate between grade levels to ensure continuous instruction, stating, "*Habang yung sa kabila, sa kabila naman ako nag le-lesson, after ng lesson magbibigay ako ng activities doon sa nalesson ko na, pupunta naman ako sa nag activity to discuss the lesson*" [While the other group is working, I teach the other group on the other side, and after the lesson I give activities related to what was discussed, then I go to the group doing the activity to discuss their lesson as well].

These statements implied that the jump-jump strategy enabled teachers to maximize instructional time by alternating between direct instruction and independent learning activities. Rather than leaving one grade level idle while teaching another, teachers intentionally organized learning tasks that maintained engagement throughout the instructional period. Likewise, this result aligns with Christopher and Newman (2022), who verbalized that reducing transition time and implementing organized instructional practices were associated with higher student engagement, whereas prolonged transitions resulting from disorganized routines and instructional interruptions contributed

to lower levels of student engagement. These findings correspond with Ares-Ferreirós et al. (2025), who organized instructional transitions and interactive learning strategies to improve engagement and learning continuity in multigrade classes. However, the present study further demonstrates that the jump-jump strategy served as an instructional management approach that simultaneously addresses instructional complexity, learner engagement, and classroom organization in multigrade settings. Thus, the jump-jump strategy strengthened classroom management by enabling smooth transitions between grade-level activities, reducing downtime, and maintaining consistent learner engagement throughout the lesson.

1.3 Flexible Classroom Management Styles Implemented

Based on the findings, multigrade teachers utilized authoritative, permissive, and democratic management styles to promote discipline, engagement, and autonomy while maintaining classroom order.

1.3.1 Combination of Authoritative, Permissive, and Democratic Management Styles. The findings showed that multigrade teachers employed flexible management approaches to address learner diversity.

When asked about the classroom management styles employed, Participant C stated that:

“Actually, parang combination to ng authoritative, permissive, and democratic kasi kapag nagmamana ng isang class, kailangan mayroon sini-set na standard so pasok dito yung authoritative pero di naman kailangan 100% na ganyan so may combination pa rin from that binibigayn mo ng freedom yung mga bata if they are going to follow that...” [Actually, it is a combination of authoritative, permissive, and democratic styles because when managing a class, standards need to be set, which reflects the authoritative approach; however, it does not need to be 100%, as there is still a combination where students are given freedom to decide to follow that standard].

In addition, Participant B highlighted the use of both authoritative and democratic classroom management to maintain discipline while promoting engagement and participation, stating,

“Ginagamit ko ang authoritative classroom management sa pamamagitan ng pagtatakda ng malinaw na rules at pagmaintain ng kaayusan para maging disiplinado sila. Minsan, inaapply ko din ang democratic style sa pagbibigay ng chance na magbahagi ng opinyon at magjoin sa mga gawain.” [I use authoritative classroom management by setting clear rules and maintaining order to help learners become disciplined. Sometimes, I also apply the democratic style by giving them opportunities to share their opinions and participate in activities.]

The findings emphasized that flexibility and adaptable approaches are essential to address behaviors and varying needs of students. The multigrade teachers established clear expectations and routines while simultaneously encouraging learner participation, collaboration, and appropriate independence. This flexible approach enabled them to maintain classroom order without limiting learner engagement, which is especially important in multigrade classrooms where teachers simultaneously manage learners from different grade levels with varying developmental needs. These findings highlight that adaptive classroom management practices contribute to the development of inclusive and responsive classrooms. These findings support the study of Bonna (2023), highlighting the need for flexible classroom management, balancing rules and autonomy of learners. Furthermore, Lacre and Valle (2024) verbalized that effective classroom management influences academic performance through positive environment and instructions. This research broadens existing literature by revealing that multigrade teachers do not merely alternate among different classroom management styles; instead, they intentionally integrate authoritative, democratic, and permissive approaches according to instructional demands and learner needs. This adaptive management allows teachers to sustain engagement while maintaining classroom order across multiple grade levels. Thus, this suggests that flexible classroom management is an essential competency for multigrade teachers. The integration of authoritative, democratic, and permissive approaches enabled teachers to maintain discipline, encourage participation, respond to behavioral challenges, and support meaningful learning. This strengthens classroom organization, promotes positive teacher-learner relationships, and contributes to an inclusive and productive learning

environment despite the instructional complexity of multigrade classrooms.

1.4 Utilization of Teaching and Learning Resources

The multigrade teachers used textbooks, worksheets, visual aids, and technology like PowerPoint, TV, and projectors to support lessons and improve learner engagement.

1.4.1 Use of textbooks, worksheets, visual aids, and technological tools. Based on the findings, multigrade teachers used various instructional resources to deliver lessons across different grade levels. When asked about how they plan, organize, and deliver lessons, Participant B explained that:

“Minsan gumagawa ako ng tarpapel para doon sa isang grade level, tapos sa kabila naman is PowerPoint. So karaniwan ginagamit ko ay textbooks kung meron man, nagpi-print din ako ng worksheets, sa visual aids naman gumagamit ako ng tarpapel, then meron din akong PowerPoints.” [Sometimes I make tarpapel for one grade level, while for the other I use PowerPoint. Usually, I use textbooks if available. I also print worksheets, and for visual aids I use tarpapel and PowerPoint presentations as well.]

In addition, Participant C highlighted that the school provided necessary learning materials to support instructional needs, stating, *“In terms of resources, na supplyan tayo ng school supplies na kailangan din ng mag-aaral”* [In terms of resources, the school provided supplies and materials needed for instruction].

The findings, likewise, reflect the Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) Framework, which explains that this framework enables teachers to effectively integrate technological, pedagogical, and content knowledge to select appropriate teaching approaches and learning materials that foster improved student outcomes. In this study, the participants demonstrated this integration by combining traditional materials such as textbooks, worksheets, and visual aids with technological tools, including PowerPoint presentations and TV instruction whenever available. Their instructional decisions were guided not merely by the need to provide appropriate learning experiences for learners with

different skills and grade levels. This demonstrates that effective resource utilization in multigrade classrooms involves selecting instructional tools that complement teaching strategies and learner needs. These findings corresponded with the study that multigrade teaching requires varied and level-appropriate instructional materials, and using integrative, localized materials helped learners better understand and relate to lessons across subjects (Naparan & Alinsug, 2021). By engaging learners in meaningful and independent learning activities, instructional resources reduce learner downtime, minimize classroom disruptions, and enable teachers to divide instructional attention more effectively across multiple grade levels. Thus, the findings suggest that effective utilization of instructional resources is an essential component of successful multigrade instruction. The strategic combination of traditional materials and technological resources enabled teachers to accommodate diverse learner needs, strengthen learner engagement, support instruction, and maintain an organized and productive classroom environment. These findings highlight that instructional resources are not merely teaching aids but integral components of effective classroom management and instructional delivery in multigrade classrooms.

1.5 Administrative and Professional Support Provided for Multigrade Teachers

Multigrade teachers receive administrative and professional support through technical assistance and continuous training for classroom management.

1.5.1 *Technical assistance from school administrators.* Technical assistance from administrators strengthened teachers' instruction and classroom management.

When asked about the support provided by the school, Participant C verbalized that:

“Technical assistance, syempre pag merong difficulty si teacher o ako, palagi tayong nabibigyan ng chance para ma TA ng ating admin, so that way matutulungan ako as a teacher para mas ma-manage ko ang aking classroom management dito sa paghandle ng multigrade classroom.” [Technical assistance is always available; whenever a teacher, including myself, encounters difficulties, we are given the opportunity to receive TA from our administrators. In this way, it helped me as a teacher to manage

multigrade classrooms and improve my classroom management].

Similarly, Participant D emphasized that technical assistance and open communication are provided to address immediate classroom concerns, stating, *“Usual technical assistance (is given) when the need arises, syempre the teacher consults and somehow deals with the immediate concern through mabuting pag-uusap or within the root cause of the problem so somehow technical assistance and open communication”* [Usual technical assistance (is given) when the need arises, of course, the teacher consults and somehow deals with the immediate concern through good communication or within the root cause of the problem so somehow technical assistance and open communication].

These findings imply that administrative support extends beyond routine supervision and serves as an important mechanism for improving teachers’ instructional practices and classroom management. Through technical assistance, mentoring, and open communication, teachers were able to seek immediate guidance in addressing instructional, behavioral, and organizational challenges commonly experienced in multigrade classrooms. This collaborative support enabled teachers to make informed instructional decisions while increasing their confidence in managing diverse learners across multiple grade levels. Kilag and Sasan (2023) stated that instructional leadership enhances teachers’ professional development by providing feedback, mentoring, and opportunities for collaboration. The study further emphasized that a positive and collegial learning atmosphere enables ongoing teacher growth, fostering improvement of pedagogical practices and better academic achievement. In this study, the multigrade teachers demonstrate that instructional leadership contributes to effective classroom management by providing teachers with practical solutions and ongoing professional guidance for addressing the challenges of multigrade education. The findings correspond with the study of Bumacas & Asuncion (2025), which emphasized that strong instructional leadership and continuous administrative support equip teachers to manage more effectively to different learner concerns and instructional demands. However, this study further develops

previous findings by explaining that administrative support is particularly valuable.

1.5.2 Teacher Training and Professional Development. Teacher training improved the multigrade teachers’ classroom management and lesson delivery.

When asked about the support provided by the school, Participant B stated that *“Sa support and training siguro sufficient naman yung trainings na naattendan ko”* [In terms of support and training, maybe I attended sufficient trainings]. Also, Participant C emphasized that administrators provided opportunities for professional development through training and workshops to support teachers’ continuous improvements, stating, *“In terms of professional growth, binibigyan tayo palagi ng chance na ng mga admin to undergo trainings and different workshops para mas magkaroon ng improvement tayong mga teacher... quarterly or yearly,” pero minsan once in the first quarter (nag-aattend).”* [In terms of professional growth, the admin always gave us chances to undergo trainings and different workshops for further improvement of teachers... quarterly or yearly, but sometimes only once in the first quarter].

In addition, Participant D stated that LAC Sessions, division-led trainings, and mentoring activities are conducted to support teachers’ instructional and development goals, stating: *“So far this school year, we provided LAC Sessions and also let them attend trainings organized by the region or by the division office ... I think we have two trainings (for this school year), but for the common learning areas, we rely on directives from the division office and conduct two LAC Sessions and other mentoring and coaching sessions.”*

These findings indicate that professional development opportunities, including Learning Action Cell (LAC) sessions, workshops, mentoring, coaching, and division-led training, enabled teachers to continuously improve their instructional practices and classroom management skills. These activities provide opportunities for teachers to acquire new teaching strategies, reflect on classroom experiences, share effective approaches with colleagues, and formulate practical steps towards addressing concerns faced in multigrade settings.

The findings are consistent with the concept of Communities of Practice discussed by Graven and Lerman (2003) based on Wenger's (1998) work, which views learning as a dynamic experience of social participation in which individuals develop knowledge and professional competence through active engagement within a community. The LAC sessions, mentoring and coaching, and collaborative training described by the participants reflect a community of practice where teachers share experiences, solve instructional problems collectively, and improve their teaching practices. Through these collaborative learning experiences, teachers strengthen both their professional competence and their confidence in addressing the complex instructional demands of multigrade education. These results are in line with the study of Vigo-Arazola and Moren-Pinillos (2025), who stated that continuous professional development enhances teachers' pedagogical competence, instructional effectiveness, and adaptability in multigrade classrooms. However, the present study further demonstrates that professional development contributes to teaching improvement and teachers' capacity to manage learner diversity, organize instruction across multiple grade levels, and maintain productive classroom environments. The collaborative nature of LAC sessions and mentoring activities likewise strengthens teachers' ability to adapt evidence-based classroom management strategies to the realities of multigrade instruction. Thus, the evidence revealed that sustained professional learning is necessary for effective multigrade education. Through regular training, mentoring and coaching, and collaborative learning opportunities, teachers continuously strengthen their instructional competence, foster better management practices, and develop the adaptability required to provide appropriate support on the different academic and behavioral needs of learners in multigrade classrooms. These findings underscore the need for consistent administrative commitment to professional learning as a means of enhancing both teacher instructional quality and student achievements in multi-level classroom environments.

Consequently, the data revealed that multigrade teachers experience significant challenges in managing instructional complexity, learner behavior, learner engagement, and curriculum implementation while simultaneously teaching multiple grade levels in one classroom. Nevertheless, in these challenges, the multigrade teachers demonstrated adaptability, flexibility, and resourcefulness using differentiated instruction,

individualized instruction, peer teaching, and the jump-jump strategy. A combination of authoritative, democratic, and permissive classroom management styles was employed, as well as traditional and technological resources to enhance teaching and learning. Moreover, technical assistance, administrative support, and professional development opportunities improved their ability in managing multigrade classes. Thus, the findings underscore that effective multigrade classroom management requires a combination of adaptive instructional strategies, responsive classroom management, appropriate instructional resources, and sustained professional support to ensure meaningful learning across different grade levels

Although participants demonstrated classroom management practices, the findings revealed persistent challenges related to instructional complexity, learner behavior challenges, low learner engagement and participation, and curriculum implementation, indicating the need for continuous professional development. These recurring concerns suggest that multigrade teachers require sustained opportunities to strengthen their pedagogical knowledge, classroom management competencies, and instructional decision-making through collaborative learning and professional support. Consequently, the development and implementation of a Learning Action Cell (LAC) Training Workshop on learner engagement methods and classroom management is necessary to address the identified needs of multigrade teachers. The intervention provides a structured venue for mentoring, collaborative problem-solving, sharing of best practices, and capacity building, thereby equipping teachers with practical, evidence-based strategies that can enhance instructional effectiveness, improve classroom management, and promote learner engagement in multigrade classrooms.

2. PROJECT ELEVATE-MG AS AN ACTIONABLE INTERVENTION THROUGH A LEARNING ACTION CELL (LAC) SESSION

Based on the findings of objective one, Project ELEVATE-MG (Enhancing Learner Engagement and Versatile Approaches in Teaching for Effective Multigrade Education) was developed to address the classroom management and instructional challenges. The project was implemented as a training workshop through LAC Session, which served as the delivery platform for the professional development intervention.

The development of Project ELEVATE-MG was informed by the instructional complexity experienced by multigrade teachers. Participant B described the workload associated with lesson planning, stating, "*In a week bawat subject is dalawa yung lesson plan, ngayon nasa fifteen lesson plan in a week.*" [In a week, I create two lesson plans for every subject, so I make a total of fifteen lesson plans in a

week.] She also described the need to adapt instructional materials to learners' varying abilities, stating, "*Napansin ko doon sa activities sa MATATAG medyo challenging siya sa aming learners so kumukuha ako ng medyo simple lang doon sa internet para maibigay sa mga batang medyo mahina pa.*" [I observed that the activities on MATATAG are quite challenging for our learners, so I get simpler ones on the internet to provide to the children who are struggling.]

The findings also identified learner behavior and engagement as areas requiring further attention. Participant D stated, "*Ang nakikita kong concern is paghandle ng mga learners na iba-iba ang ugali.*" [The concern I see is handling learners with different behaviors and personalities.] Participant C further explained the relationship between understanding the lesson and learner behavior, stating, "*...bakit sila nag mi-misbehave ay hindi nila nauunawaan yung lesson so kapag hindi nila nauunawaan ang lesson magmimisbehave sila.*" [...They misbehave because they don't understand the lesson.] Participant C also observed low participation, stating, "*Pupils are not active or not participating.*"

Project ELEVATE-MG was developed in response to persistent challenges related to instructional complexity, learner behavior, low learner engagement and participation, and curriculum implementation. Despite teachers' adaptive practices, further professional development support was needed. The intervention focused on learner engagement and classroom management, consistent with Naparan and Alinsug (2021), who emphasized adaptation, professional learning, and organized classroom management. It followed a systematic development process. Qualitative findings identified concerns experienced by the participants, which guided the training objectives and content. Relevant theories and literature informed the intervention's research foundation. Consultations with teachers, school heads, the public schools district supervisor, and the division multigrade coordinator validated its relevance and contextual appropriateness.

The intervention also built on strategies already practiced by the participating multigrade teachers. Participant A described differentiated instruction as involving varied activities, stating, "*Differentiated Instruction...magkaiba ang activities tapos more on board work, inoobserve ko kung ma-answer...*" [Differentiated Instruction means having different activities...] Participant B described the use of peer teaching, stating, "*Gumagamit ako ng peer teaching, yung medyo advanced na hinahayaan ko sila na turuan yung medyo mahina pa sa klase.*" [I used peer teaching where the more advanced students are allowed to teach those who are still struggling in the class.] C explained the use of individualized instruction, stating, "*Dito sa strategy na ginagamit ko is individualized instruction kasi kailangang i-approach individually and ask questions kung saan sila nahihirapan.*"

[The strategy I used is individualized instruction because learners need to be approached individually and asked about the parts that they are having difficulty.]

The findings also indicated that teachers had access to technical assistance and professional development opportunities. Participant C stated, "*Technical assistance, syempre pag merong difficulty si teacher o ako, palagi tayong nabibigyan ng chance para ma TA ng ating admin, so that way matutulungan ako as a teacher para mas ma-manage ko ang aking classroom management dito sa paghandle ng multigrade classroom.*" [Technical assistance is always available; whenever a teacher, including myself, encounters difficulties we are given the opportunity to receive TA from our administrators. In this way, it helped me as a teacher to manage multigrade classrooms and improve my classroom management]. Participant C further explained that administrators provided opportunities for training and workshops, stating, "*In terms of professional growth, binibigyan tayo palagi ng chance na ng mga admin to undergo trainings and different workshops para mas magkaroon ng improvement tayong mga teacher... quarterly or yearly... pero minsan once in first quarter (nag-aattend).*" [In terms of professional growth, the admin always gave us chances to undergo trainings and different workshops for further improvement of teachers... quarterly or yearly, but sometimes only once in the first quarter].

Participant D further reported that "*So far this school year, we provided LAC Sessions and also let them attend trainings organized by the region or by the division office ... I think we have two trainings (for this school year), but for the common learning areas we rely on directives from the division office and conduct two LAC Sessions and other mentoring and coaching sessions.*"

These reports suggest that technical assistance, training, LAC sessions, mentoring, and coaching were among the professional support mechanisms available to the teachers. Within this context, Project ELEVATE-MG was implemented through a collaborative LAC session designed to address the identified instructional and classroom management needs of the participating multigrade teachers.

The intervention was comprised of two components: learner engagement strategies and classroom management practices. It covered differentiated instruction, interactive storytelling, group work, cooperative learning, task card strategies, learning stations, peer teaching, behavior management, instructional materials utilization, technology integration, curriculum adaptation, and lesson integration. These strategies support diverse learner needs, engagement, instructional flexibility, and effective classroom management. These strategies were grounded in research showing that differentiated instruction, collaborative learning, flexible grouping, and adaptable lesson structures

address diverse learner needs while sustaining engagement and managing instructional demands in multigrade classrooms (Shareefa, 2021; Bunga et al., 2025). Similarly, group work and adjusted instructional pacing support continuous learning and effective classroom management despite instructional complexity (Pedroches, 2025).

Project ELEVATE-MG was implemented through a collaborative LAC session involving orientation, presentation of objectives, sharing of classroom experiences, collaborative discussion, reflective conversation, and workshops. Multigrade teachers shared experiences and explored practical strategies for multigrade challenges. Lesson integration, differentiated instruction, learning stations, cooperative learning, and interactive instructional strategies addressed instructional complexity, while classroom routines, positive reinforcement, and consistent classroom expectations supported behavior management.

The researchers served as the intervention developer, organizer, facilitator, and coordinator of Project ELEVATE-MG. The researcher conducted the needs assessment, developed the intervention and training materials, coordinated the implementation, facilitated the workshop, documented the activities, and collected evaluation data. To minimize the researcher's bias and ensure objectivity, the technical sessions were delivered by a qualified multigrade teacher rather than the researcher. The qualifications for the resource speaker must be being a currently practicing multigrade teacher with experience in multigrade instruction. The speaker has undergone DepEd multigrade training, seminars, mentoring, and coaching programs and demonstrates competence in multigrade instruction and experience in providing professional development to fellow teachers. Project ELEVATE-MG directly addressed the instructional and classroom management challenges of multigrade teachers, demonstrating its relevance, practicality, and applicability as a professional development initiative.

3. IMPLEMENTATION OF PROJECT ELEVATE-MG

Project ELEVATE-MG implementation assessed how the training workshop was delivered through the LAC Session, focusing on planned activities, learning sessions, participant engagement, and intervention evaluation. Project ELEVATE-MG was implemented face-to-face through an approved LAC session attended by multigrade teachers and a school head. A qualified multigrade teacher served as the resource speaker and facilitated the technical sessions, while the researchers coordinated the implementation, documentation, and evaluation of the intervention. Lecture-discussions, collaborative tasks, experience sharing, and lesson plan workshops were completed as scheduled.

The implementation of Project ELEVATE-MG was situated within the existing professional development support

provided to multigrade teachers. As reported in objective one, teachers received technical assistance, training, mentoring, and coaching from school administrators and other education offices. Participant C explained that teachers were given opportunities to receive technical assistance when difficulties arose, particularly in managing multigrade classrooms, stating, *“Technical assistance, syempre pag merong difficulty si teacher o ako, palagi tayong nabibigyan ng chance para ma TA ng ating admin, so that way matutulungan ako as a teacher para mas ma-manage ko ang aking classroom management dito sa paghandle ng multigrade classroom.”* [Technical assistance is always available; whenever a teacher, including myself, encounters difficulties, we are given the opportunity to receive TA from our administrators. In this way, it helped me as a teacher to manage multigrade classrooms and improve my classroom management]. Participant C also reported opportunities for training and workshops, stating, *“In terms of professional growth, binibigyan tayo palagi ng chance na ng mga admin to undergo trainings and different workshops para mas magkaroon ng improvement tayong mga teacher... quarterly or yearly... pero minsan once in the first quarter (nag-aattend).”* [In terms of professional growth, the admin always gave us chances to undergo trainings and different workshops for further improvement of teachers... quarterly or yearly, but sometimes only once in the first quarter]. Participant D further reported that LAC Sessions and other professional development activities were conducted, stating, *“So far this school year, we provided LAC Sessions and also let them attend trainings organized by the region or by the division office ...I think we have two trainings (for this school year), but for the common learning areas we rely on directives from the division office and conduct two LAC Sessions and other mentoring and coaching sessions.”* These accounts provided the professional-development context within which Project ELEVATE-MG was implemented through a collaborative LAC Session.

Participants perceived the intervention positively, considering the topics useful in addressing their instructional and classroom management concerns. Participants were satisfied with the clarity of discussions, resource speaker, facilitation, learning materials, and overall training organization. Successful implementation was evidenced by active participation, collaborative discussions, reflection, and enhanced multigrade lesson plans. The school head and PSDS validation confirmed participants applied the training strategies in instructional planning. The participants actively engaged in the LAC session through experience sharing, collaborative discussions, reflective conversations, and workshop activities. The lesson-plan workshop also provided opportunities for participants to apply the strategies discussed during the technical sessions to their multigrade lesson planning.

Successful implementation was evidenced by active participation, collaborative discussions, reflection, and enhanced multigrade lesson plans. The school head and PSDS validation confirmed participants applied the training strategies in instructional planning.

The implementation findings indicate that Project ELEVATE-MG provided a collaborative and practice-oriented professional learning experience for multigrade teachers. Consistent with Deb (2025), the intervention reflected Adult Learning Theory by connecting learning to teachers' needs and experiences while promoting active participation, collaboration, and practical application. The collaborative activities support Wenger's (1998) Communities of Practice Framework, emphasizing social participation, shared experiences, and developing professional knowledge and competence (Graven & Lerman, 2003).

Similarly, Wijarwadi et al. (2025) emphasized teacher collaboration as a means of strengthening professional learning and instructional improvement. Thus, the implementation findings demonstrate that project ELEVATE-MG was delivered as intended through the Learning Action Cell (LAC) Session. The successful completion of the planned activities, positive participant evaluations, active engagement during the workshop, and production of enhanced multigrade lesson plans indicate that the intervention was implemented and was perceived by the participants as relevant, practical, and helpful in strengthening their instructional and classroom management practices in multigrade classrooms.

4. FEEDBACK ON PROJECT ELEVATE-MG AS AN ACTIONABLE INTERVENTION IN MANAGING MULTIGRADE CLASSROOMS

The intervention was evaluated through participants' qualitative feedback after the LAC session. Participants described the LAC session as relevant, practical, and responsive. They reported improved understanding and perceived the session as helpful in strengthening their differentiated instruction, peer teaching, collaborative learning, instructional complexity, learner engagement concerns, and classroom management strategies.

When asked about the most helpful aspects, participants highlighted classroom management strategies addressing instructional complexity, learner engagement issues, and behavior challenges.

Participant B verbalized that "The LAC session was helpful in improving my understanding of classroom management strategies such as organizing routines, managing behavior, and maintaining a positive learning environment. I plan to apply clear rules, group activities, and positive reinforcement." Participant D emphasized sharing of best

practices, stating, "Sharing of best practices." Participant A emphasized effective classroom strategies, stating, "Differentiated instruction and peer teaching were the best strategies to apply in my class. The discussion of these strategies is very relevant now that the new school year is approaching." Moreover, Participant C highlighted practical strategies, stating, "The LAC session's emphasis on collaboration, adaptability, and learner-centered approaches directly supports the challenges of multigrade teaching. Applying these strategies can make your classroom more manageable and engaging for all learners."

Taken together, participants perceived the LAC session as providing practical strategies and contextually relevant strategies for multigrade teaching. Differentiated instruction and peer teaching supported varied learner needs, while collaborative approaches encouraged engagement. Positive behavior management practices and consistent classroom rules and structured strategies helped address instructional preparation and time management concerns. Thus, the LAC session strengthened teachers' perceived capacity through applicable, contextually relevant strategies. Moreover, the LAC session fostered collaborative professional learning through active participation and experience sharing. Participants described how activities encouraged collaboration:

Participant D explained that "Session was engaging since participants can very much relate to it." In addition, Participant A verbalized that "I was encouraged to participate not just because of the activities, but I wanted to share my experiences and ideas as a longtime multigrade teacher." Participant C highlighted collaboration, stating, "The collaborative atmosphere made teachers feel less isolated and more confident in experimenting with new approaches." Participant B emphasized collaboration and engaging activities, stating, "The activities during the LAC session were designed to be highly participatory, which encouraged collaboration among teachers and made the learning process more engaging."

Participants viewed the LAC session as a supportive collegial learning environment that promoted reflection, peer interaction, and openness to new approaches, supporting shared learning and collaborative responses to multigrade challenges. Taken together, these experiences reflected how collaborative learning opportunities may support teachers in responding to the challenges identified in the study.

Participants viewed differentiated instruction, collaboration, and learner-centered approaches as useful for diverse needs and engagement. Experience sharing also supported classroom management through exchanged behavioral and instructional strategies. Furthermore, the participants valued the instructional materials and resources provided during the session, describing them as practical,

relevant, and applicable to their teaching context. When asked about the materials, resources, and speaker, participants consistently reported positive experiences regarding their helpfulness, applicability, and effectiveness. Participant C verbalized that "the speaker was quite effective in delivering the topics because they combined clear explanations with practical classroom examples, which made the concepts easier to connect to real teaching situations, and the resources were helpful and applicable to my teaching context."

Participant A shared insights into practical and adaptable instruction, stating, "The speaker presented his topics in a clear and practical manner. Questions were answered simply and easily understood, and the materials and instructional resources were helpful, but there should always be room for adjustments and modifications to fit within the needs of the learners with different grade levels and abilities."

Participant B emphasized perceived effectiveness and clear instruction, stating, "The speaker was very effective in delivering the topics clearly and confidently. The explanations were simple, practical, and easy to understand, and the resources made lesson planning easier and supported more effective classroom instruction and learner engagement." In addition, Participant D emphasized the perceived effectiveness and relevance of the speaker's discussion to multigrade teaching, stating, "Very effective. The speaker was able to address the questions clearly, and the material is applicable for the teachers in multigrade classes because it provides insights on how to be effective in teaching in MG." Participants perceived the LAC session as useful for strengthening instructional understanding through practical examples, relevant resources, and applicable strategies to address instructional complexity, behavior management, and learner engagement.

Finally, participants recommended ready-to-use lesson plans and hands-on activities and strengthened collaboration among multigrade teachers. When asked about suggestions for improving future LAC sessions for multigrade teachers, the participants provided the following responses:

Participant D stated to "collaborate with other MG schools and focus on producing lesson plans with effective differentiated activities for the learners." In addition, Participant A suggested co-creating an integrated lesson plan with one topic and multiple grade-level outputs, stating, "I suggest co-creating an integrated lesson plan (one topic, multiple grade-level outputs) showing the use of each strategy." Participant C suggested that future LAC sessions for multigrade teachers be further improved, stating, "For future LAC sessions tailored to multigrade teachers, several improvements could make them even more impactful and supportive." Participant B emphasized practical and collaborative improvements for future LAC sessions, stating,

"Future LAC sessions can be improved by providing more hands-on activities, actual classroom demonstrations, and sample lesson plans for multigrade teaching, and strengthen collaboration among multigrade educators."

These suggestions reflected continuing multigrade challenges, particularly lesson planning and learner engagement. Participants recommended practical professional development through integrated lesson plans, hands-on activities, collaborative planning, cooperative learning, task cards, learning stations, and peer teaching. Thus, participants' feedback indicated that the intervention addressed instructional, behavioral, engagement, and planning challenges, making the LAC Session a meaningful, practical, collaborative, and context-responsive professional development experience.

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study concludes that the multigrade teachers' experiences involve instructional complexity, learner behavior, low learner engagement and participation, and curriculum implementation. Despite these challenges, they employed various instructional approaches, flexible classroom management practices, teaching resources, and available administrative and professional support. Based on these needs, Project ELEVATE-MG was developed and implemented through a Learning Action Cell (LAC) session as a context-responsive intervention for multigrade teachers. Its implementation involved collaborative discussions, workshops, and reflection. Participants perceived the intervention as relevant, practical, and responsive to multigrade teaching, providing applicable strategies for instruction and the classroom. However, the study was limited to describing participants' feedback and did not determine the intervention's effectiveness in improving classroom performance or learner outcomes.

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are proposed: (1) multigrade teachers may engage in regular reflection and documentation of their classroom practices to support instructional and classroom management improvement; (2) schools may establish need-based interventions focusing on classroom management, learner engagement, instructional planning, and curriculum implementation to address the challenges of multigrade teaching; (3) school heads and instructional leaders may provide sustained monitoring, mentoring and coaching, and technical assistance through regular Learning Action Cell (LAC) Sessions to strengthen teachers' professional competence; (4) teacher feedback may be systematically collected after every professional development activity to improve the design, implementation, and relevance of future interventions; (5) future researchers may conduct broader and long-term evaluations of intervention programs to assess their effectiveness beyond participants' initial

reactions and determine their sustained impact on teaching practices.

VII. DISCLOSURE

The authors declare that there are no financial, personal relationships, or other conflicts of interest that could have influenced the conduct, findings, or reporting of the study.

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