MULTI-GRADE CLASSES IN THE PHILIPPINE EDUCATION

by:

Maria Emma B. Susi
Master Teacher I, Pandatung Elementary School

It has been a practice that when a new teacher assumes his permanent status, he is assigned to a far-flung barrio to handle combination or multi grade classes. A multi grade class is defined as a class composed of two or more grades under one teacher in a complete or incomplete elementary school. But when was this technique introduced within the Philippines setting? The System has been implemented since 1920's. It has always been covered by policies on monograde class organization which resulted in multi grade classes.

The Multi grade System has been with us for quite a while but it's very obvious that we've not regarded it as a really viable alternative delivery system to provide access to basic education also as quality education by providing complete grade levels altogether public elementary schools. While DECS (now DepEd officials then had always recognized the existence of multi grade classes, it had been only under the leadership of Secretary Armand Fabella ( 1993-1994) that the Multi grade program was launched as a scientific and viable means of meeting the goal and providing education for all.

From then on, multi-grade classes became truly a neighborhood of our academic system. At present, a number of these multi grade classes were already converted to monograde classes thanks to the rise of enrolment while other areas of our country are just starting to put up multi grade classes. Some multi-grade teachers are encountering problems regarding the retention rate of the pupils enrolled in the Multi grade classes. It is because the parents of the pupils prefer to transfer their children to other schools once they are informed that only one teacher handles two or more grades.'
The effectiveness of multi-grade teaching is also questioned by the parents. The teachings of the Multi grade teachers have been questioned by the school clientele, most especially the parents. It happened when the teacher grouped the pupils according to their grade level. Parents complained immediately to the teacher upon knowing that their son, a grade two pupil belonged to the group of other grade one pupils who had difficulty in adding numbers with regrouping.

The multi grade teachers were given orientation regarding the teaching of multi grade classes. It has been noted that multi grade teaching involves a set of educational strategies and techniques that will enable a teacher to provide effective instruction to a heterogeneous group of pupils or a group of pupils with different ages, abilities, and skills. As teachers, we must keep in mind that every child is unique because of his or her genetic make-up and previous life experiences or the environment in which he is growing up.

References: