

MULTIGRADING CLASSES APPLICATION AND TEACHER'S PREPARATION IN LOW ENROLMENT SCHOOLS IN MALAYSIA

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ABSTRACT---*This study was designed and aimed at identifying the possibilities of implementing multi-graded teaching in low enrolment primary schools in Malaysia. This study is an attempt to introduce the multi-graded teaching to the teachers in low enrolment schools in Malaysia to overcome the issues of: limited class, teacher and student shortage, teacher's absentness, lack of teaching materials or schools with lack of teachers with a huge number of students. The researcher found that multi-graded teaching has a unique teaching method which had been proven effective by many scholars. The multi-graded teaching was different form mono-graded teaching wherein for multi-graded classes the teacher will teach a two or three-grade students in the same class but the mono-grade teacher will only teach one grade student at one time. Many scholars has proven that after implementing the multi-graded teaching in their classes, the performance of the students were improved in terms of: academic, social and behaviours. Thus, this study encouraged the multi-graded teaching to all Malaysian low enrolment primary schools and in order to persuade the low enrolment school teachers to adopt and adapt this new pedagogy system which will be cost effective and time saving. The finding of this study found that almost all low enrolment teachers gave positive perceptions and responses toward the implementation of multi-grades teaching in low enrolment primary schools. Meanwhile, the researcher found that few low enrolment teachers did not have wide knowledge about multi-graded education thus they thought that to implement successful multi-graded teaching in low enrolment school need specific teaching tool, proper guidance and infrastructures. Thus, multi grading classes was most suitable to apply in Malaysia especially low enrolment school which has low student or low teacher's problems. The research outcome was expressed that multi grading classes will give positive impact on student learning performance. However, from teachers' point of view who worked in low enrolment school given positive feedback on applying multi grading teaching in low enrolment school. Thus, this research urge multi grading teaching will be a new approach that must to be followed by problematic school which has low number of teacher and students which can be used multi grading classes as alternative teaching that could replace the existing teaching method that widely applied in many low enrolment schools*

Keywords--- multi-graded teaching, Tamil language, low enrolment schools

I. INTRODUCTION

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This paper was intended to highlight on how low enrolment school teachers could use the multi-grading teaching strategy as an alternative method in order to manage classes in low enrolment school (LES) in Malaysia. The multi-graded teaching refers to a process of teaching of students from different age groups, grades and abilities to study together in the same class. In order to obtain more complete and realistic picture of multi-graded class setting it is important to measure a teacher's role in low enrolment student's school in Malaysia (3, 5). The reason for the researcher to choose (LES) teachers in using the multi-graded teaching method/model/system was because it will make it easy for (LES) teachers to handle two or three groups of students in the same classroom by using the multi-graded teaching model. Multi-graded teaching is not a new idea and in fact, it has been implemented in Malaysia since British Colonization Era. The history of multi-graded class, started since British colonization began in the country and it was known as Multiple Class Teaching. Multiple class teaching was conducted in the lower primary school due to minimal number of teachers and lack of basic facilities such as classrooms and board (28, 29).

The purpose of the study: to highlight on how low enrolment school teachers could use the multi-grading teaching strategy as an alternative method in order to manage classes in low enrolment school (LES) in Malaysia.

I. LOW ENROLMENT SCHOOLS

The Low Enrolment School (LES) or "Sekolah kurang Murid" (SKM) in Malaysia is referred to a school that only have little number of students or little number of teachers. It may also be a school with few teachers and a great number of students. According to official statistic under "Pelan Induk Pembangunan Pendidikan 2006-2010" the number of schools with enrolment of less than 150 was 2,529 or 33.3 per cent of total primary schools in 2005. From this data 89.4 percent of which were located in rural areas. According to the Yayasan Strategik Sosial (2000) the majority of (LES) is located in rural areas such as farms and small towns. In addition, based on the current statistic released by Malaysia Education Development Plan or "Pelan Pembangunan Pendidikan Malaysia in 2013, 34% of primary schools were categorised as (LES) (23, 6-10).

II. ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

The Malaysian Education Ministry has stated that there are four factors behind poor academic achievement among students who studied in low enrolment school (LES) as follows:

- Almost 73% of low enrolment schools were located in sparsely populated areas and the challenges of demographic structures. This factor makes parents who live far from schools face difficulty in arranging transports to their children and at the same time many of the teachers are not showing interest to work in these type of schools.
- The size of the schools is mostly was too small which hinder teachers in conducting curriculum activities and lack of contribution from government to maintain the school such the availability of fund to the needed facilities.
- The students who lived in rural area has low socioeconomic status that make parents financially not stable to provide basic needs for their children (e.g. school uniform, bag, transportation, tuition).
- Failure to master the (3M) "Membaca, Menulis, Mengira" is an identifiable cause and is an accumulative deficit. This situation has affected the academic achievement among students.

- Meanwhile Malaysian Ministry of Education has made a concrete plan to maintain the low enrolment schools for the areas mentioned above. The problem is that these schools are too costly to operate.

III. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Sawi et al., (2010) (32); Noh, (2010) stated that the majority of teachers who are sent to rural areas are not actually interested to teach there. Most of them just wanted the extra allowance given by the government. In supporting this, Abu Bakar & Harish (2011) found that there were also a few teachers whose only duty was just to spend time in the areas and they did not understand the inner meaning of teaching. Therefore, the government should only select qualified teachers to teach in such areas. Moreover, (1, 12, 13, 16, 33,) stated that the distribution of qualified teachers is still uneven in Malaysian (LES). Their placement was not based on the equality between LES to promote and improve the quality of education in remote areas as stated in education laws. The classes also had to be implemented together not only because of the low number of students but also because of low number of teachers.

On the other hand, in many instances, the clerical and office duties at these schools also become one of the tasks which had to be done by teachers. In the real scenario, the major constraint of Malaysian (LES) is the increase workloads of teachers. According to Abu Bakar & Buang (2008) most teachers in (LES) have to teach in a high amount of time and high amount of energy by running from one class to another. In many cases, the school principals had also to teach or work of a total extra time of 930 minutes a week. Meanwhile, the assistant principal had to work for extra 1290 minutes per week, while a teacher had to work for extra 1320 minutes a week. On top of being the burdens with administrative work of the schools, the high number of teaching and administrative hours had made it difficult the principals, the deputy principals and teachers to maintain the quality of teaching and learning in Malaysian (LES). Omar Salleh (2005) (21) supported the findings and stated that high workload would diverse the focus of teachers in preparing teaching plan which indirectly affect the quality of teaching.

Abu Bakar & Haridas (2011) (2) argued that academic achievement of the students is a very important factor and often emphasized and influenced by the school institution. This is because the effectiveness of teaching and learning is measured through academic achievement of students, proper management of a school and the availability of facilities at a school. In addition, Roscigno, & Crowle, (2001) (31) found that that rural students had fewer facilities and school resources and claimed that these situations were the roots that cause academic failures and poor educational outcomes among students, especially in LES in Malaysia.

Biggs, & Tang (2011) asserted that in the process of teaching and learning, teachers need to plan a fun learning process, creating interest and curiosity of students to start their desire to acquire new knowledge and skills. In addition, they also mentioned that teachers need to introduce new skills to help students acquire new knowledge. Meanwhile, Taole & Mncube, (2012) (34) asserted that there was need to develop positive attitude to teacher, parents and education ministry that multi-graded teaching is not an inferior and cheap options in improving the quality of education.

Previous investigations conducted by Ball & Garton (2005) explained that most teachers did not know how to apply higher-order thinking skills or “Kemahiran berfikir aras tinggi “ to students while some were not willing to do so when teaching in LES. This clearly showed that the lack of teaching higher-order thinking skills (HOTS)

in the field of education (37), not only at LES but also in normal schools. Thus, the students in low enrolment school could face the problem of having low thinking skills and required that there should be clear guidelines on the application of thinking skills in the learning process at LES. Therefore, this study urged that multi-graded teaching practices must also include or encourage the teachers to prepare HOTS materials in teaching at LES.

IV. RESEARCH QUESTION

- (1) Can multi-graded system be implemented at low-enrolment schools in Malaysia?
- (2) Can multi-graded schooling system be managed/ administered effectively by (LES) teachers? If it can, how?
- (3) How the minimum resources available at the (LES) schools be utilized to achieve better quality at multi-graded education for the students of the schools?
- (4) How to design the curricula and teaching materials for the multi-graded classes?
- (5) How to design evaluation tools for multi-graded education?

V. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The scope of the study was Malaysian (LES) schools which the researcher specifically focused on (LES) primary schools. The reason why this issue was giving serious concern because the researcher also faced the same problems when conducting classes in SJK (T) Bukit Rotan Baru (primary school) in Kuala Selangor district which is also categorized as (LES). The researcher expected that by implementing multi-graded class in primary schools, it could be time saving and could maximise the uses of minimum resource available in (LES) in Malaysia (17, 18, 19). Thus, by conducting research based on the implementation of multi-graded system at (LES) the researcher wanted to identify the current situations that occur in (LES) in Malaysia, especially in primary schools. At the same time the researchers would like to explore on the use of this system at her own school. The researcher also wanted to identify the problems faced by (LES) teachers at the selected schools and from the teachers teaching at the schools. This was because that many inexperienced teachers who faced problems in implementing this system are mostly those who were not aware of the problems and benefits of implementing the system at their LES.

VI. RESEARCH METHOD

In the framework of qualitative approach, there are five ways (or traditions) of research design which have been applied by many researchers, they are: Ethnography, Field Research, Phenomenology, Grounded Theory and Case Study. However, in this study the most relevant source of gathering data is by conducting case study (interview) since this method is an appropriate tool to extract respondent's opinion which will assist to answer the research questions. The case study approach, according to Yin (1989) is a statement of "contemporary investigation in the context of real life, where the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly defined".

In this study the education phenomena were related to the implementation of multi-grade education in low enrolment primary school (LES) in Malaysia. It must be noted that the multi-grade teaching was not officially practiced in Malaysia (LES), however, they are existed everywhere, even in Malaysian Peninsula or Western

Malaysia. Therefore, the researcher would like to persuade the Malaysian Education Ministry to highlight the importance of multi-grade education by inserting course in teacher training or by providing complete packages of training to pre-service and in-service teachers. The participants who participated in this study are (LES) teachers and principals (4, 20-22).

Case study (interview) will be the appropriate research method to answer these research questions. In supporting this, Lincoln and Guba (2002) (15) stated that the thick rich descriptions of events in a qualitative case study will assist a researcher to develop the context and describe the situations. It will allow the reader and scholar to understand the current phenomena in Malaysia in regards to the objective of research. Case study research may be adopted in a single case or multiple cases designs. However, in this study the researcher has elected the single case study in order to investigate the phenomena in depth to provide rich description on the possibilities and boundaries that could influence the implementation of the multi-grade schooling in Malaysian (LES). According to many scholars (36, 38) the element of analysis for a case study can range from a single, to a group of people, to a process or relationships. Hence, this research mainly concentrates on the (LES) teachers and principals.

VII. INSTRUMENT

Basically, there are multiple instruments that are widely used by researchers to collect data such as in-depth interview, documents and archive records (audio recording). Yin (1994) has stated that although not all instruments are studied in each case study, it is essential to use more than one instruments in data collection to obtain reliable research outcome or well-established study. Using multiple instruments to collect data by using triangulation method is called evidence of triangulation which will assist to increase the reliability of the collected data. In the area of data collection, the triangulation will confirm the data collected from other instruments. This will support to create a case study database and maintain a chain of evidence which will help to organize the collected data to improve the reliability of the research (24-27).

VIII. INTERVIEW

Interviewing is not an easy task and the standardization of the data collection is one of the concerns in an interview. The procedures as proposed by many experts will help the researchers in increasing the credibility (Fowler, 2002). The data gathering was conducted based on interview guide (refer Appendix A) to ensure that there were no errors during the interviewing process. These procedures had assisted the researcher when conducting the interview and would ensure more productive interviews. There are three kind of information that are needed for most qualitative study that should be answered by the participants during interview; the contextual, the demographic and the perceptual.

Contextual: Contextual refers to the participants within the context of this study. It describes the cultural and environmental settings, either as an organization or an institution. This key information is the work culture or environment which may affect the behaviour (14). In this research the context refers to the (LES) teachers and principals. The information given by the participant such as the review would provide in-depth knowledge on their overall backgrounds and other relevant information.

Demographic Information: This refers to the extraction of the participant's backgrounds, education and personnel information such as age, gender and years of working experience. The individual demographic information may help to explain the perception of the information or more specifically, parallels or cognitive differences between the participants. Demographic information typically collected by asking the participants to complete a personal data sheet.

Perceptual Information: This refers to the participant's perceptions to the specific topic of the research. It is critical to analyse the contents of the interviews which will help to explain how experiences affect the decisions when applying multi-grade teaching in LES. Perceptions are not facts but what people considers as facts. They are neither right nor wrong but explains the logic of the participants' beliefs on certain things, which may be true or false. These views are rooted in the long-held assumptions and one's own world view or frames of references.

IX. POPULATION AND SAMPLING

The population for this research was identified from four low enrolment primary schools who were carefully selected from rural area in Malaysia. Meanwhile, the researcher had also ensured that these schools have teachers and students shortage problems. As many as four participants from each school were interviewed (a total of 16 participants). Thereafter, the researcher cautiously selected the senior participants from each school based on their teaching experience. The experienced teachers were the priority in this study since they will have more ideas that could be shared with the researchers during the interview and their valuable answers would be keys to the improvement or establishment of multi-grade teaching in (LES).

In addition, the researcher also interviewed the principal of the each school in order to obtain fresh opinions on multi-grading teaching in (LES) at his/her school. Although untrained teachers or "Guru Sandaran Tidak Terlatih" (GSTT) were not compulsory to be interviewed but the researcher also interviewed them as well to explore the experience and perception of the untrained teachers in (LES) school. This would give a clear picture that this study has explored all angles in order to achieve the research objectives. Two untrained teachers were interviewed by the researcher (30, 37, 39).

X. VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY IN DATA ANALYSIS

This study involved a multiple case study, the findings and the information gathered from the multiple case studies would be triangulated which was strategic between them in order to confirm the validity of the findings. To address concerns about the validity of the content, the confirmation of the research methodology (case study) was carried out as a pilot study. This ensured that the interview questions and the data collected was really to answer the research questions. Further, thick and rich descriptions come from in-depth interviews. The interviews were transcript and returned to the participant of survey to confirm the validity and accuracy of the content. There was also a friendly teamwork of survey participants by giving information and their opinions on multi-grading education at (LES) as a whole.

Revisions of peer-to-peer or reliability between appraiser feedbacks were gathered to ensure clarity of understanding. To address concerns about the validity of the research procedures about "Malaysian low enrolment primary school education survey" the data was collected from those who were relevant to the topics of the research;

teachers, principals, school management and who were willing to share the environment and cultures of the education institution at which they had been with for quite sometimes.

As for reliability, one of the arguments against the qualitative research approach was that it is difficult to determine credibility. This is partly due to the element of subjectivity of qualitative research of data collection since it depends almost entirely on the interviewer. The objective of quantitative research is obviously synonymous with good, reliable research and the inherent lack of objectivity. On the other hand, the qualitative research is synonymous with sloppy and unreliable research (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994).

XI. LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

Every study has its limitation. The primary limitation of this research was the number of participants interviewed. With limited time available to accomplish the study, the researcher has no option but to limit only 16 participants as respondent to this research. In addition to that from more than 30 respondents invited only 16 turned up to be ready to be interviewed.

XII. DISCUSSION

Most of the low enrolment primary schools in Malaysia are using single-graded (mono-graded) teaching. The results of analyzed data indicated that most (LES) teachers still view that the multi-graded teaching is an inferior form of education. However, Mason & Burns (1996) found that multi-grade classrooms will reduce the teacher's burdens. Furthermore, they also asserted that multi-graded classroom will motivate teachers to systematically manage the multi-graded classroom which is better than the mono-graded classroom.

The researcher had attempted to convince the (LES) teachers to implement the multi-graded education in their school due to the low enrolment issues. However, many of the (LES) teachers were confident that mono-graded classroom had the same cognitive advantage comparing to multi-graded classroom. Thus, the researcher assumed that many of the (LES) teachers are still unaware of the benefits of multi-graded classroom. The researcher observed that most teachers do not have appropriate knowledge on multi-grading education. Meanwhile, the results from analyzed data (based on respondent's perception) in fact it is partially supporting the benefits on the implementation of multi-grade education in Malaysian (LES). Thus, this study concludes that that multi-graded classroom provides unique academic advantages beyond what can be achieved by employing mono-graded teaching.

It may be concluded that if mono-graded programs are correctly addressed in Malaysian (LES), the students may attain higher achievements and improve their academic and social skills. Sadly, many of the teachers in at Malaysian (LES) fail to adopt effectively the pedagogical techniques of multi-graded teaching and hence they still prefer the single-graded school systems. In order to overcome these phenomena, the teachers in Malaysian low enrolment primary school shall master the skills of implementing the multi-graded teaching as effectively as the mono-graded system.

Teaching children of different ages are fun and develop sound maturity. This was supported by Katz (1995) that stated that "mixed-age groups can provide a therapeutic environment for children who are socially immature.

Younger children will less quickly rebuff an older immature child than the child's playing with same-age mates.
Younger children will allow an older child to be unsophisticated longer than his or her age peers.

XIII. RECOMMENDATION

Although this study gave concrete evidence based on the reviews of literatures on the success of implementing the multi-graded education in other countries, in order to create the best possible setting for multi-graded classroom or teaching in Malaysia the following recommendation should be considered.

- Increase awareness on Malaysian education policy makers and curriculum designers especially “Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia” (KPM) on the multi-graded system. The KPM is responsible in designing the pedagogy which can be used by all schools in Malaysia, including the LES. Surprisingly the KPM is unaware of the need for multi-graded education to the problematic schools with poor academic achievement among students.

- From the results of analyzed data it can be concluded that the implementation of successful multi-grade education in Malaysian (LES) requires much thought and planning.

- The (LES) teachers need more material and training programmes.

- Approach on mixed grade teaching in low enrolment primary schools in Malaysia require much more than the basic strategy provided under mono-graded teaching.

- The (LES) teachers need to be provided with proper guidelines or instructional strategies that work best in a multi-graded teaching classroom and home-based activities to support the learning of students.

- From the interviews, some evidences suggested that the (LES) teachers were afraid to try new pedagogy in their teaching practices. This is due to their doubts on the new pedagogy which they think will take a long time to understand, learn and try. Thus, it is necessary that seminars on multi-graded teaching for the (LES) teachers should be regularly conducted to give positive perceptions on multi-grade education.

XIV. WAYS TO EXPAND AND ENRICH MULTI-GRADE TEACHING

This study suggested short term and long-term strategies to expand the multi-graded teaching in Malaysia in order to develop and enrich the multi-graded teaching implementation among the (LES) teachers in this country.

1.1 SHORT TERM STRATEGY

1) Improving the quality of (LES) in Malaysia by providing necessary resources on empowering the multi-graded teaching.

One of the barriers to the development and enrichment of multi-graded teaching to (LES) Malaysia is lack of resources available in LES such as; no online support from (KPM) web-site specifically designed for (LES), lack of resources in Malaysian (LES) such as internet infrastructure, library, and teaching equipment. The research statistic relating to Malaysia (LES) showed that there were few phenomena such as teacher's shortage and student's shortage, overloaded works to the (LES) teachers, few classes with many students and of these will lead to the extent of multi-graded classroom implementation.

I any low enrolment primary school in Malaysia is willing to implement multi-graded teaching in their schools, the said school shall be labelled as “multi-graded school” by the (KPM) and provide special incentive for

their willingness to practice the multi-graded system in improving the quality of instructional delivery. The small schools which has small number of teachers, big numbers of students and lack of classrooms can take advantage of multi-graded teaching in rural area/ remote area/ islands in Malaysia. The principals and the teachers of the schools should be rewarded as it has been practicing by Indonesia by providing the highest awards from the President of Indonesia for teachers who had successfully implemented multi-graded system in these areas.

Develop richer description on how to implement the Multi-Graded System.

The qualitative and quantitative researches based on the importance of multi-graded teaching in Malaysia is very rare that makes the (LES) teachers to be unaware on the concepts and the definition of the multi-graded teaching. To overcome the lack of awareness among the Malaysian (LES) teachers, a clear description of qualitative and quantitative researches by using statistical analysis by qualified academicians on various approaches of multi-grades teaching in classroom, how to manage the system, how to implement it should be regularly conducted. KPM should come out with a guidebook on the definition, description and techniques of implementing the system.

Develop more explicit policy, more comprehensive guidance on the implementation and regulations on multi-grading system in Malaysia.

The multi-graded classes can be implemented in Malaysian low enrolment schools which are mostly located in rural areas or remote districts by the involvement or the support of Malaysian Education Ministry or (KPM) by providing proper guidelines provided by the academicians in Malaysia and other experts of other countries based on real experiences in implementing the system. These can be possible if Malaysian Education Ministry invites experts from neighbour countries such as Indonesia, Thailand, India, Japan, and Australia who had successfully organized multi-graded classes in their countries and share their experiences with Malaysian Education Ministry, and it could be used as an ultimate solution for practicing multi-graded classes in Malaysian (LES).

The government should provide policies, guidance and regulations on how to implement it based on success stories of other countries, designed and written by the academicians who have conducted researches and been shared experiences from their colleagues from other countries.

1.2 LONG TERM STRATEGY

1) Insert the concept into the Teacher Training Curricula.

Successful multi-graded classes' implementation would depend on the capacity of (LES) teachers (knowledge, skills, and attitudes). It is important to assure that all (LES) teachers who now works in remote areas learn on how to implement good multi-grade teaching practices through teacher training, using distance learning modes or normal or regular modes. The teacher can learn these new approaches through online or books available at university or IPG libraries. It is proposed that KPM start designing special programs that train would-be teachers on how to plan, design and implement multi-grades classes and multi-graded teaching as an additional teaching program that train the teachers.

2) *Set up Curricula, Prepare textbooks and teaching materials for Malaysian multi-graded schools.*

The multi-graded teaching must be built and a part of the national curriculum and the textbooks for the system should be specific.

- Training materials should be provided to help the (LES) teachers to apply multi-graded teaching successfully in their schools and train the principals who will manage the school professionally.
- Adaptation of multi-graded teaching approach will develop a thematic approach in the teaching and learning. It is not based on the grade level but to be shared between different graders.
- The use of existing teaching materials such as used plastic bottles, natural ingredients and recycled items will be “the better made at school with low cost”.

3) *Promote the Support and Increase Participation from the Society.*

A small (LES) that implements a multi-graded teaching is most likely will play a very important role in the life of the surrounding community. Moreover, if the teachers from the LES speak the local language, especially in an areas with ethnic minority, then the school will have a close relationship to the people and parents. The teachers will tend know parents outside the school context; classroom may also be used for the multi-graded education and community gathering. This will enhance social relation among the students and learning experiences will considered useful for students in their later life. Society will feel that school as a "part of" the community. This will increase the support from the community and increase their participation

4) *Ensure the use of school approaches thoroughly in the planning and management of Low Enrolment Schools.*

The multi-graded teaching could be more widely implemented in the (LES) after and if it is officially and formally approved by Malaysian Education Ministry or (KPM). It will take more than just an ability to carry out multi-graded classes for teachers and schools. The low enrolment primary school have been facing some challenges in planning and managing the teaching schedule due to teacher shortages, the absence of teacher, the influx of students and issues of the lack of budget from the (KPM). In many cases, the LES is located in districts that are located far away from schools that make parents afraid of and tired from traveling long distances from home to school.

5) *Establish a clear regulatory for multi-graded school to serve the community.*

It should be noted here that there is no regulatory frameworks that accommodate the operation of multi-graded teaching by (KPM). Nevertheless, the existing Plan that introduced by Malaysian Education Ministry or (KPM) under “Pelan Pembangunan Pendiidkan Malaysia 2013-2025” (PPPM) has not clearly described what are the solutions to be applied in overcoming the problems in low enrolment schools. This can be seen and evaluated from the statement from the Education Ministry that states in (PPPM) that “The Ministry will carefully analyse the possible strategy to be implemented on Low enrolment school in Wave 2 by obtaining the public feedback and National Dialogues”. However, the researcher feels that more explicit regulatory framework is still required in order to establish the multi-graded teaching in Malaysian (LES). Therefore, it is suggested that the (KPM) should form a team to collect the complaints and suggestions from (LES) teachers and other education stakeholders in

LES in order to overcome the problems of basic infrastructure for implementing multi-graded teaching that will lead to the successful implementation of multi-graded teaching for long term without boundaries.

Multi-graded classes, school budgets and remuneration for teachers.

Another challenge facing by the Malaysia education system is financial limitation for the implementation of the multi-graded teaching. Although the (LES) teachers work in isolated and remote areas, they are only provided with a small amount of additional incentive. But the researcher found that most Malaysian (LES) schools faces challenges in providing additional infra-structure due to limited fund provided by (KPM). If Malaysian (LES) provides appropriate training and technical assistances for the implementing the system it can be boost the multi-graded teaching in the (LES) and motivate the (LES) teachers to practice the multi-graded teaching in their classes

XV. CONCLUSION

Multi-graded teaching is very important and suitable for a variety of contexts in Malaysia, particularly in low enrolment schools in remote and rural areas with limited number of teachers and, in many cases with big or small numbers of students in LES areas. In fact, multi-graded is worth to be the "first choice" for many low enrolments in Malaysia. Given the focus on the learning towards child-centered with high interaction and participation and with high collaborative and cooperative atmospheres in the classroom will enable different ages and grade levels of students to learn, and hence, multi-graded teaching can be adopted and adapted to different cultural contexts and schools. The implementation of multi-graded teaching could be cost efficient in creating a good student-teacher ratio and it is also potential in creating better linkages between and students and even the community.

Fun learning experience for students needs to be excavated by the teachers in order to avoid negative consequences in implementing multi-graded teaching. It is very important to evaluate learning experience of the multi-graded teaching by assessing the level of achievement of the students that participate in the system. On other hand it is not easy for teachers to search and experience the system especially when there are no supports from the authority. It must be adjusted to the conditions of the student. Multi-graded education requires that teachers use different strategies in teaching that many be compromising to the students in achieving the best academic performances.

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