

Challenges and Coping Strategies of Multigrade Teachers in Implementing Classroom Instruction

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Abstract

This literature review examined the challenges and coping strategies of multigrade teachers in implementing classroom instruction, with particular relevance to Grades 5 and 6, English instruction, and the educational context of SDO Ifugao. The study synthesized recent Philippine and international literature on multigrade education, focusing on instructional demands, classroom and time management, learner diversity, resource limitations, language-related concerns, teacher workload, and professional support. A structured literature review approach was used to identify, screen, organize, and thematically synthesize relevant studies and official sources published mainly from 2021 to 2026, with selected earlier local evidence included for contextual relevance. The review found that multigrade teachers commonly face simultaneous curriculum requirements, limited instructional time, varied learner needs, insufficient materials, and heavy preparation demands. In response, teachers use differentiated instruction, flexible grouping, peer-assisted learning, advance planning, contextualized materials, technology when available, collaboration, and stakeholder support. The findings also show that teacher resourcefulness alone is not enough to sustain effective multigrade instruction. Stronger institutional support, multigrade-specific professional development, appropriate learning resources, and locally responsive teaching practices are needed. The review concludes that these supports are particularly important for strengthening Grades 5 and 6 English instruction in SDO Ifugao and other geographically isolated multigrade school communities.

Keywords: Multigrade Teaching, Coping Strategies, Classroom Instruction, Teacher Challenges, English Instruction, Grades 5 and 6, SDO Ifugao

1. Introduction

Multigrade education remains an important means of providing basic education in communities where geographic conditions, learner populations, and limited teaching personnel make separate classes for every grade level difficult. In the Philippines, multigrade instruction is particularly relevant in geographically isolated and disadvantaged communities, where teachers are expected to manage different curricula, learning abilities, instructional resources, and classroom demands within a shared learning environment. These conditions require teachers to adopt flexible instructional practices while responding to persistent challenges involving workload, time, resources, learner diversity, language instruction, classroom management, and professional support. This literature review synthesizes existing evidence on these challenges and the coping strategies used by multigrade teachers, with particular relevance to Grades 5 and 6 English instruction and the educational context of SDO Ifugao.

Multigrade education supports access to elementary education in communities where organizing separate classes for each grade level is difficult. The Department of Education (2022) reported that 7,234 multigrade schools were operating in School Year 2017–2018, representing 18.6% of public elementary schools. These figures demonstrate

the continuing importance of multigrade education in extending educational opportunities, particularly in remote communities. Unlike monograde instruction, multigrade teaching requires teachers to address the curricular competencies and learning needs of two or more grade levels within the same instructional period. This requires decisions regarding lesson integration, independent activities, direct instruction, classroom organization, and allocation of instructional time. Naparan and Alinsug (2021) found that teachers manage these demands through classroom management, collaborative learning, differentiated instruction, real-life applications, technology integration, and instructional flexibility. Appropriate teaching resources are also essential because learners of different ages, grade levels, and abilities share the same classroom. Carrete-Marín and Domingo-Peñañiel (2022) emphasized that instructional materials in rural multigrade settings must respond to the varied needs of learners who study together. Similarly, the Department of Education (2021) recognized the importance of supplementary Learning Activity Sheets in English, Science, and Mathematics for multigrade learners.

Multigrade instruction creates interconnected instructional, professional, and contextual challenges. Naparan and Castañeda (2021) identified insufficient preparation, stress, language barriers, classroom management difficulties, limited instructional resources, workload, absenteeism, insufficient stakeholder support, and inadequate training among the concerns experienced by multigrade teachers. Planning and delivering instruction across several grade levels further increases these demands. Dulana et al. (2023) identified difficulties involving curriculum planning and delivery, classroom organization, and the management of instructional materials and resources. Recent literature shows that these issues remain persistent. Rondero and Casupanan (2024) reported challenges involving classroom and time management, learner differences, multiple grade-level responsibilities, and teacher burnout. Ruelan and Ebisa (2025) similarly identified increased workloads, limited time, curriculum alignment concerns, and inadequate instructional materials. Together, these findings demonstrate that time, resources, workload, and learner diversity remain recurring concerns in multigrade education. The demands can become more pronounced in English instruction because teachers must develop reading, writing, speaking, listening, vocabulary, and comprehension skills among learners with different grade-level competencies and language abilities. Bisaya and Ngilangil (2025) identified concerns involving training, scheduling, instructional materials, classroom management, and language barriers among multigrade English as a second language teachers. Their inclusion of teachers handling Grades 5 and 6 makes their findings particularly relevant to the present review. Teachers nevertheless employ various coping and adaptive strategies. Naparan and Castañeda (2021) found that advance preparation, effective time use, research, online resources, and personal adjustment helped teachers respond to classroom difficulties. Naparan and Alinsug (2021) likewise identified differentiated instruction, collaborative learning, classroom management, technology integration, and real-life applications as important practices. Dulana et al. (2023) further emphasized planning, curriculum delivery, and parental involvement, while Rondero and Casupanan (2024) highlighted resourcefulness, resilience, innovation, sensitivity to learner differences, and support systems. Coping, however, is not determined solely by the severity of teachers' challenges. Ruelan and Ebisa (2025) found no significant relationship between the reported level of challenges and teachers' intrinsic or extrinsic coping practices. This finding underscores the possible importance of professional relationships, institutional support, and school environments in helping teachers respond effectively to multigrade classroom demands.

Within SDO Ifugao, multigrade education is particularly relevant because some schools serve geographically isolated communities with dispersed populations and limited resources. Bua and Martin (2020), in Alfonso Lista, Ifugao, identified concerns involving lesson preparation, visual aids, overlapping classroom activities, scheduling, instructional materials, and teacher preparation. They also emphasized cooperative and active learning, appropriate scheduling, adequate resources, and teacher training as important measures for strengthening multigrade instruction. More recent evidence indicates that similar issues continue in other parts of Ifugao. Dampilag (2026), in Tinoc, identified limited instructional time, diverse learning needs, assessment preparation, classroom management, learner discipline, and insufficient resources. Teachers responded through differentiated instruction, flexible grouping, peer teaching, advance preparation, parental involvement, and collaboration with colleagues. Technology also contributes to instructional adaptation. Catama et al. (2026), in Asipulo, Ifugao, found that technology-enhanced learning supported engagement, differentiation, and collaboration, although unstable internet connectivity, limited technological resources, and classroom management concerns restricted its use. Teachers responded through localized digital resources, blended approaches, peer-assisted activities, and alternative instructional plans. Although these studies provide valuable local evidence, findings from Alfonso Lista, Tinoc, and Asipulo cannot automatically represent every multigrade classroom under SDO Ifugao. Conditions may vary according to school location, grade combination, learner characteristics, resources, leadership, connectivity, and community support. The literature review therefore brings together findings from different settings while acknowledging the limitations of directly generalizing individual studies to the entire Schools Division.

The present literature review is not anchored in a single formal theoretical framework. Instead, its conceptual basis centers on the interaction between the challenges experienced by multigrade teachers and the strategies they use to sustain classroom instruction. Difficulties related to curriculum delivery, time, learner diversity, resources,

language instruction, and classroom management are examined alongside responses such as differentiation, collaborative learning, flexible grouping, instructional preparation, resource modification, technology integration, and professional collaboration. Within Grades 5 and 6 English instruction, this relationship is particularly important because teachers must respond simultaneously to grade-level curricular differences and variations in learners' language abilities. Bisaya and Ngilangil (2025) showed that multigrade ESL teachers used resourcefulness, continuous learning, collaboration with colleagues, modification of instructional materials, creativity, and other adaptive practices. Examining challenges together with teachers' responses therefore provides a more complete understanding of how instruction is sustained under multigrade conditions.

Existing studies provide considerable information on multigrade classroom management, teacher workload, curriculum implementation, learner diversity, language barriers, instructional resources, technology, professional preparation, and institutional support. However, these findings remain distributed across different locations, grade combinations, and instructional contexts. Not all available studies specifically address Grades 5 and 6 English instruction or teachers working throughout SDO Ifugao. For this reason, the present study reviews and synthesizes literature on the challenges and coping strategies of multigrade teachers in implementing classroom instruction, with particular relevance to Grades 5 and 6, English instruction, and SDO Ifugao. It examines recurring instructional, classroom management, resource-related, language-related, professional, and contextual challenges and the strategies teachers employ in response. It also considers institutional and professional support identified in the literature as important to effective multigrade instruction. As a literature review, the study does not collect new data from teachers or assume that findings from other locations directly characterize all Grades 5 and 6 multigrade teachers in SDO Ifugao. Rather, it synthesizes available evidence to develop an informed understanding of multigrade classroom instruction that can be interpreted within the Ifugao context.

The study is most directly aligned with Sustainable Development Goal 4: Quality Education, which emphasizes inclusive and equitable quality education and meaningful learning opportunities. Multigrade education contributes to this goal by extending access to schooling in geographically isolated and underserved communities where conventional grade-level arrangements may be difficult to maintain. By examining instructional challenges and coping practices relevant to Grades 5 and 6 English instruction, the review also contributes to understanding how educational quality may be sustained despite limitations involving teacher workload, instructional resources, learner diversity, language difficulties, technology, and geographic conditions. Its emphasis on appropriate teaching strategies, professional support, instructional resources, and responsive classroom practices is therefore consistent with efforts to strengthen accessible and context-sensitive basic education.

The study contributes primarily to educational, institutional, community, and technological sustainability. From an educational perspective, understanding recurring multigrade challenges and adaptive practices can support the continuity and quality of instruction in schools serving remote communities. From an institutional perspective, the synthesis highlights the importance of teacher preparation, professional collaboration, adequate resources, and school-level support in sustaining multigrade programs. The review also has relevance to community sustainability because multigrade schools help maintain access to basic education in geographically isolated areas, while parental and community involvement may strengthen instructional support. Its consideration of technology further connects the study with technological sustainability by recognizing both the educational potential of digital resources and the limitations created by connectivity and resource constraints. By consolidating available evidence rather than assuming that individual local studies represent the whole of SDO Ifugao, the study provides a more balanced basis for instructional improvement, professional development, institutional support, and future research on sustainable multigrade education.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1 Research Design

This study employed a structured literature review design to examine the challenges encountered by multigrade teachers in implementing classroom instruction and the coping strategies they use in response to these challenges. A literature review was considered appropriate because the purpose of the study was not to collect new information from teachers but to bring together findings from existing research and identify recurring patterns across different multigrade educational settings. The review followed a transparent process of searching, selecting, organizing, and synthesizing relevant literature. Principles from the JBI Manual for Evidence Synthesis were considered in organizing the search and selection process because they emphasize clear eligibility criteria, systematic searching, and transparent synthesis of evidence (Aromataris et al., 2024). The reporting principles of PRISMA 2020 were also used as a general guide in maintaining clarity in the identification and screening of sources, although the present study was designed as a literature review rather than a full systematic review or meta-analysis (Page et al., 2021). The review focused particularly on literature relevant to multigrade classroom instruction, teacher challenges, coping strategies, differentiated teaching, classroom management, instructional resources, English or language instruction, professional support, and rural or geographically isolated education. Particular attention was

given to findings that could reasonably inform the context of multigrade teachers handling Grades 5 and 6 in SDO Ifugao.

2.2 Context and Scope of the Review

The Schools Division Office of Ifugao served as the educational context of the study rather than as a physical research site where primary data were collected. No teachers, learners, school heads, or other individuals were recruited as respondents or participants. Instead, research conducted in Ifugao was considered alongside Philippine and international studies on multigrade education to determine how findings from the wider literature may help explain challenges and coping practices relevant to the local setting. The review gave particular consideration to Grades 5 and 6 and English instruction because these were the identified grade-level and subject contexts of the study. However, the review was not limited only to studies that examined Grades 5 and 6 or English classes. Restricting the search to such a narrow combination would exclude useful research on multigrade teaching practices that can be applied across elementary grade levels. Studies involving other multigrade combinations were therefore included when their findings addressed classroom instruction, teacher workload, differentiated teaching, classroom management, instructional resources, learner diversity, or coping practices relevant to the present study.

2.3 Search Strategy and Sources of Literature

Relevant literature was identified through searches of scholarly databases, academic search platforms, journal websites, institutional repositories, and official government sources. Google Scholar, ERIC, Crossref-linked journal records, Directory of Open Access Journals, and publisher or journal websites were considered in locating peer-reviewed studies. Official publications from the Philippine Department of Education were also included when they provided relevant information about multigrade education, learning resources, or educational policy. The search covered literature published from 2020 to October 2026, with greater emphasis on studies published from 2021 to 2026. The 2020 starting point allowed the inclusion of locally relevant research, particularly studies conducted in Ifugao, while still maintaining a largely recent evidence base. Search terms were used individually and in combination. These included multigrade teaching, multigrade teachers, multigrade classroom instruction, challenges of multigrade teachers, coping strategies of multigrade teachers, multigrade education Philippines, multigrade English instruction, ESL multigrade teaching, Grades 5 and 6 multigrade, differentiated instruction in multigrade classrooms, classroom management in multigrade classes, rural multigrade schools, multigrade teaching Ifugao, and multigrade education SDO Ifugao. Boolean operators such as AND and OR were used when appropriate to combine related concepts and improve the relevance of search results. The search process was organized using principles of transparent evidence searching described by Ross-White et al. (2024).

2.4 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Sources were included when they addressed at least one major area related to the purpose of the review. Eligible studies examined multigrade teachers or classrooms; challenges associated with teaching multiple grade levels; instructional, classroom management, resource, language, workload, or professional difficulties; coping strategies and adaptive teaching practices; differentiated or collaborative instruction; professional or institutional support; or educational conditions in rural and geographically isolated schools. Priority was given to peer-reviewed journal articles, scholarly research publications, and official government or institutional documents published in English between 2020 and 2026. Philippine studies were given particular attention because of their direct relevance to the educational system in which SDO Ifugao operates. Studies conducted specifically in Ifugao were considered especially important for establishing the local context. Sources were excluded when they dealt only with monograde classrooms without a meaningful connection to multigrade education, focused on topics unrelated to classroom instruction or teacher coping, lacked sufficient information to determine their relevance, or were duplicate versions of the same publication. Informal webpages, unsupported opinion pieces, commercial materials, and sources without identifiable authorship or institutional responsibility were not used as primary evidence. Older works could be considered only when they were necessary for explaining an established concept, method, or local educational context that could not be adequately represented by more recent literature. This approach helped maintain a current evidence base without excluding sources that had direct significance to the study.

2.5 Screening and Selection of Literature

The literature selection process involved several stages. Titles and available abstracts were first examined to determine whether the source was connected to multigrade education and the main concerns of the study. Potentially relevant publications were then reviewed more closely to determine whether their objectives, participants or educational setting, findings, and conclusions contributed useful evidence concerning teacher challenges, instructional practices, or coping strategies. Preference was given to studies that clearly described their research setting, methodology, and findings. Sources that appeared relevant based only on their titles but did not provide sufficient evidence related to the research focus were not retained. When multiple sources discussed similar issues, studies with clearer methodological descriptions, more recent publication dates, or greater relevance to the Philippine and Ifugao contexts were prioritized. The selection procedure was informed by the

principle of transparent study identification and screening described in PRISMA 2020 (Page et al., 2021). However, because the present research is a literature review rather than a systematic review, the procedure was used to strengthen organization and transparency rather than to claim full compliance with all requirements of a systematic review. Following the screening and selection process, 16 sources directly relevant to multigrade education, teacher challenges, coping strategies, classroom instruction, and the Philippine or Ifugao educational context were retained for the thematic synthesis. Four additional methodological references were used to guide the review process, including the search, screening, evidence synthesis, and thematic analysis procedures.

2.6 Data Extraction and Organization

Information from the selected literature was organized according to the aspects most relevant to the research problem. These included the author and year of publication, study location, educational setting, grade-level context when available, research design, major challenges identified, coping or instructional strategies reported, forms of professional or institutional support, and implications for multigrade classroom instruction. Particular attention was given to findings related to time management, lesson preparation, classroom organization, learner diversity, instructional materials, language-related difficulties, assessment, workload, teacher preparation, differentiated instruction, peer and collaborative learning, technology use, stakeholder involvement, and professional collaboration. These categories were not treated as predetermined findings. Rather, they served as an initial framework for comparing information across sources and identifying areas that repeatedly appeared in the literature. Evidence from studies conducted in Ifugao was marked separately during the review so that local findings could be compared with patterns found in broader Philippine and international literature. This helped prevent findings from other settings from being presented as though they were directly observed among teachers in SDO Ifugao.

2.7 Data Synthesis and Thematic Analysis

The selected literature was synthesized using a thematic approach. Findings from individual studies were read comparatively, and recurring ideas were grouped according to their similarities and differences. The analysis moved from specific findings reported in each source toward broader themes that could explain the experiences and responses of multigrade teachers across different educational settings. Thematic analysis was appropriate because the study aimed to identify patterns across a diverse body of literature rather than calculate a pooled statistical effect. Braun and Clarke (2021) emphasized that thematic analysis involves the careful identification and interpretation of meaningful patterns within qualitative information. In the present review, this approach was adapted to published findings rather than interview transcripts or newly collected qualitative data. The synthesis focused on two broad areas: challenges in implementing multigrade classroom instruction and coping strategies used by multigrade teachers. Within these areas, related findings were further organized into themes such as instructional and curriculum demands, classroom and time management, learner diversity, resource limitations, language-related concerns, teacher workload and preparation, adaptive instructional practices, professional collaboration, stakeholder support, and use of available technology. Similarities and differences among studies were examined rather than presenting each source separately. The final interpretation gave greater attention to themes that appeared repeatedly across several studies while also recognizing findings that were particularly relevant to Grades 5 and 6, English instruction, or the Ifugao context. This approach allowed the review to develop an integrated account of the literature without suggesting that all multigrade classrooms experience exactly the same conditions.

2.8 Review Credibility and Limitations

The credibility of the review was supported by prioritizing peer-reviewed research, official government publications, identifiable academic sources, and studies with clearly described methods. Each source was considered in relation to its relevance to the research problem, methodological clarity, publication source, and contribution to the emerging themes. The review also compared findings across multiple publications instead of relying on a single study to support broad conclusions. Guidance from JBI emphasizes the importance of considering methodological quality and relevance when synthesizing evidence (Aromataris et al., 2024). Consistent with this principle, greater interpretive weight was given to evidence that was clearly supported by the reported findings of the original study. Local studies were used to strengthen contextual relevance, but their findings were not automatically generalized to all schools within SDO Ifugao. Because the study relied entirely on published and publicly available literature, no direct interaction with human participants occurred. Consequently, the methodology involved no recruitment of respondents, administration of questionnaires, interviews, classroom observations, or collection of personally identifiable information. The review was limited by the availability and quality of published literature, particularly studies that specifically examined Grades 5 and 6 English instruction within multigrade classrooms in Ifugao. This limitation was addressed by using broader multigrade literature when its findings were clearly relevant and by distinguishing broader evidence from findings generated specifically within the local context.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Challenges and Adaptive Practices in Multigrade Instruction

3.1.1 Instructional and Curriculum Demands

The reviewed literature showed that multigrade teachers face difficulty addressing different grade-level competencies within the same instructional period. They must determine which competencies can be taught together, which require separate instruction, and which activities learners can complete independently. Naparan and Castañeda (2021) identified workload, inadequate preparation, insufficient resources, and classroom management as recurring difficulties, while Dulana et al. (2023) reported challenges involving curriculum planning, instructional delivery, classroom organization, and learning resources. Curriculum alignment and increased workload also remained evident when teachers had to prepare separate learning activities within limited time (Ruelan & Ebisa, 2025). These findings indicate that instructional difficulty in multigrade classrooms extends beyond individual teacher organization. Ares-Ferreirós et al. (2025) emphasized that multigrade education requires curricular and organizational flexibility, appropriate methodologies, specialized teacher preparation, and supportive policies. For Grades 5 and 6, this means teachers must balance different curricular expectations while maintaining meaningful activities for learners who are not receiving direct instruction at a particular time.

3.1.2 Time Management, Classroom Organization, and Teacher Workload

Time and workload emerged as persistent concerns because multigrade teachers must address several competencies, assessments, activities, and classroom interactions without additional instructional time. Rondero and Casupanan (2024) found difficulties involving classroom and time management, learner diversity, and teacher burnout, while Naparan and Castañeda (2021) likewise identified workload and stress. Bunglay and Cutab (2025) further reported increased workload, learner diversity, and inadequate instructional materials in rural multigrade schools. In Ifugao, Dampilag (2026) identified time constraints, assessment preparation, classroom management, learner discipline, and limited resources among teachers in Tinoc. The recurrence of these concerns suggests that time and workload difficulties are closely related to the structure of multigrade instruction rather than simply to teachers' experience or efficiency. Classroom organization therefore becomes an important instructional response, particularly when independent, collaborative, and peer-supported activities allow one group of learners to remain engaged while the teacher provides direct instruction to another.

3.1.3 Learner Diversity and English Instruction

The literature showed considerable diversity among multigrade learners in age, readiness, language ability, reading level, learning pace, and prior knowledge. Ares-Ferreirós et al. (2025) indicated that multigrade classrooms can encourage cooperative and inclusive learning when teaching approaches respond appropriately to learner differences. In English instruction, Bisaya and Ngilangil (2025) identified scheduling, instructional materials, classroom management, language barriers, and teacher training as major concerns among multigrade ESL teachers, including those handling Grades 5 and 6. Badol (2025) further found that teachers used phonics, interactive activities, multisensory strategies, communicative approaches, and contextualized teaching while encountering difficulties involving resources, pronunciation, phonological development, and learner diversity. These findings show that English instruction in multigrade classrooms requires attention to both grade-level expectations and actual language proficiency. Maynepas and Escote (2024) found that teachers working with Indigenous learners used differentiated instruction, grouping, translation, indigenization, and activity integration while experiencing language barriers and shortages of contextualized materials. Although findings from other Indigenous settings cannot automatically represent learners in Ifugao, they demonstrate the importance of linguistically and culturally responsive teaching in multigrade classrooms.

3.1.4 Differentiated Instruction, Flexible Grouping, and Peer Learning

Differentiated instruction, flexible grouping, and peer learning were among the most consistently identified adaptive practices. Naparan and Alinsug (2021) found that teachers used differentiated instruction, collaborative learning, classroom management strategies, real-life connections, technology, and instructional flexibility. Learners could be grouped according to grade level when separate competencies were required or across grade levels when activities supported collaboration and peer assistance. In Ifugao, Dampilag (2026) similarly found the use of differentiated instruction, flexible grouping, peer teaching, advance preparation, parental involvement, and collaboration with colleagues. These practices allow teachers to maintain distinct grade-level expectations while organizing instruction more efficiently. In Grades 5 and 6 English classes, common topics may be used while varying the complexity of texts, questions, activities, and expected outputs. Peer support and collaborative activities can also help maintain learner participation when the teacher is working directly with another group, provided that such activities complement rather than replace teacher instruction.

3.1.5 Resourcefulness, Contextualization, and Technology

Insufficient instructional resources consistently appeared as a challenge. Naparan and Castañeda (2021), Ruelan and Ebisa (2025), and Bunglay and Cutab (2025) all identified resource-related difficulties among multigrade teachers, particularly when different learning materials were needed simultaneously for different grade levels.

Rondero and Casupanan (2024) identified innovation and resourcefulness as responses to conditions in far-flung schools, while Maynepas and Escote (2024) found that teachers adapted lessons to learners' language, cultural contexts, and available resources. Catama et al. (2026) further found in Asipulo, Ifugao, that technology-supported engagement, differentiation, and collaboration, although unstable connectivity, limited technology, and classroom management difficulties restricted its use. The findings indicate that technology can complement multigrade instruction but cannot serve as the sole response to resource limitations. Localized digital materials, blended approaches, peer-assisted learning, printed materials, contextualized activities, and teacher-created resources remain important where connectivity and devices are limited. Resourcefulness therefore involves adapting both digital and non-digital materials according to actual classroom conditions.

3.1.6 Coping as Professional Adaptation

The literature portrayed coping primarily as professional adaptation rather than simple endurance. Naparan and Castañeda (2021) identified planning, time management, research, online resources, and personal adjustment as coping strategies, while Rondero and Casupanan (2024) emphasized resilience, innovation, sensitivity to learner differences, and support from others. Bunglay and Cutab (2025) also identified stakeholder collaboration, formative assessment, and flexible instructional strategies, while Maynepas and Escote (2024) highlighted time management, stakeholder assistance, language adaptation, and the development of new teaching approaches. However, teachers' ability to cope does not eliminate structural difficulties. Ruelan and Ebisa (2025) found that coping practices were not significantly related to the level of challenges experienced by teachers, suggesting that individual adaptation alone may be insufficient when difficulties arise from workload, curriculum demands, limited resources, or inadequate professional support. Ares-Ferreirós et al. (2025) similarly emphasized the importance of specific teacher preparation and supportive policies. Multigrade instruction is therefore more sustainable when teacher adaptability is reinforced by appropriate institutional support.

3.1.7 Professional Development, Collaboration, and Stakeholder Support

Professional development and stakeholder support emerged as important conditions for effective multigrade instruction. Naparan and Castañeda (2021) identified inadequate training and stakeholder support among teachers' difficulties, while Rondero and Casupanan (2024) emphasized the importance of support systems. For language instruction, Bisaya and Ngilangil (2025) highlighted the need to strengthen teachers' capacity for multigrade ESL teaching, while Badol (2025) identified comprehensive training as important in supporting appropriate language-teaching strategies across diverse classrooms. Collaboration can also reduce the instructional and professional isolation associated with multigrade teaching. Dampilag (2026) identified parental involvement and collaboration with colleagues as coping strategies, while Maynepas and Escote (2024) reported stakeholder assistance in addressing instructional and resource difficulties. For SDO Ifugao, professional development is therefore most relevant when it addresses actual multigrade demands such as simultaneous lesson delivery, flexible grouping, multilevel assessment, contextualization, language diversity, and efficient use of instructional time.

3.2 Synthesis of Findings in the Context of SDO Ifugao

The overall findings show that multigrade instruction involves continuing challenges related to curriculum implementation, time, learner diversity, classroom management, assessment, instructional materials, language differences, technology, and teacher workload. At the same time, the literature indicates that multigrade classrooms can support effective learning when appropriate strategies and institutional conditions are present. Ares-Ferreirós et al. (2025) found that multigrade environments can promote cooperative learning, curricular contextualization, and educational inclusion, while Naparan and Alinsug (2021) showed that differentiated, collaborative, flexible, and context-based approaches help teachers respond to diverse learning needs. Local evidence from Ifugao similarly identified challenges involving time, resources, learner diversity, classroom management, assessment, connectivity, and technology, together with strategies such as differentiation, peer assistance, flexible grouping, localized resources, collaboration, and advance preparation (Catama et al., 2026; Dampilag, 2026). These findings suggest that Grades 5 and 6 English instruction in multigrade settings requires a balance between distinct grade-level competencies and flexible classroom organization. Differentiated activities, collaborative learning, contextualized materials, peer support, purposeful independent work, and careful scheduling can help teachers manage instruction across the two grade levels. However, coping strategies alone cannot address all structural challenges. Adequate resources, multigrade-specific professional development, supportive school leadership, teacher collaboration, stakeholder involvement, and context-sensitive approaches remain necessary. The synthesis provides an evidence-based understanding that is contextually relevant to SDO Ifugao while recognizing that the reviewed studies do not establish that every multigrade classroom in the division experiences identical conditions.

4. Conclusion & Recommendations

The literature reviewed in this study shows that multigrade teachers commonly experience challenges related to curriculum delivery, limited instructional time, classroom management, learner diversity, insufficient learning resources, language-related difficulties, teacher workload, and limited access to specialized professional support.

These concerns become particularly important in Grades 5 and 6 English instruction, where teachers must address different grade-level competencies and varying levels of language proficiency within the same classroom. At the same time, the literature demonstrates that multigrade teachers respond through differentiated instruction, flexible grouping, peer-assisted learning, advance lesson preparation, contextualized materials, technology integration when available, professional collaboration, and stakeholder support. Studies conducted in Ifugao further indicate that several of these challenges and coping practices are relevant to the local educational context. Overall, the review suggests that effective multigrade instruction depends not only on teachers' adaptability and resourcefulness but also on appropriate instructional resources, professional preparation, school support, and teaching approaches that respond to the realities of multilevel classrooms.

Based on the findings of the literature review, schools and education administrators are encouraged to strengthen support for multigrade teachers through professional development specifically designed for simultaneous grade-level instruction, differentiated teaching, classroom and time management, multilevel assessment, and contextualized English instruction. Within SDO Ifugao, the findings suggest that teachers handling Grades 5 and 6 in multigrade settings may benefit from greater access to suitable instructional materials, opportunities for collaboration with other multigrade teachers, and locally appropriate learning resources that can reduce the burden of preparing separate lessons and activities. Flexible grouping, peer-supported learning, contextualized materials, and purposeful independent activities may also be further developed to maximize instructional time. School leaders and other stakeholders should likewise provide sustained support rather than relying primarily on the personal resilience of teachers. Future studies may build on this review by examining the actual experiences and instructional practices of Grades 5 and 6 multigrade teachers in different schools within SDO Ifugao.

The study is limited by its reliance on published and publicly accessible literature and therefore reflects the scope, quality, and availability of existing research. Although several studies conducted in Ifugao were included, the available literature does not represent all schools, districts, or multigrade teachers within SDO Ifugao, and relatively few studies focus specifically on the combination of Grades 5 and 6 English instruction. Findings from studies conducted in other Philippine and international settings were therefore included when they were relevant to the research problem, but differences in educational conditions, learner characteristics, resources, and local contexts must be considered when interpreting their applicability to Ifugao. Since no primary data were collected, the conclusions of this review should be understood as a synthesis of existing evidence rather than a direct description of the experiences of all multigrade teachers in SDO Ifugao.

5. Compliance with Ethical Standards

The study was conducted as a literature review using published and publicly available sources. No teachers, learners, school heads, or other individuals were recruited as participants, and no questionnaires, interviews, classroom observations, or personally identifiable information were collected.

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