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## UNIT 7 MANAGEMENT OF MULTI-GRADE AND MULTI-LEVEL SITUATIONS

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### 7.0 INTRODUCTION

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We have already discussed many aspects of classroom management at the elementary school level in **Unit-5** and **Unit-6**. The issues and strategies of classroom management discussed in these Units are relevant only in the context of 'mono-grade situation' i.e. one teacher teaching children of a single class at a time. In this unit let us find out about different aspects of 'Multi-grade situation' in which one teacher is required to teach the children of two or more classes simultaneously. Multi-grade situation at the primary school level is still prevailing in almost all countries in the world. In developing countries, most of the primary schools particularly up to class five, have multi-grade situations with single teacher or two teachers. India has the largest number of multi-grade primary schools in the world. According to the Seventh All India Educational Survey, more than 80% of primary schools in India have four or less than four teachers to manage five classes. Hence, multi-grade situation at the primary school level in India is a



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significant phenomenon and a genuine reality. The phenomenon of multi-grade situation poses serious challenges to most of the teachers at the primary school level who are found to be incapable to handle the multi-grade situation properly. Moreover, the nature and types of multi-grade situation differ from school to school. It is, therefore, necessary that the teachers working at the primary school level must acquire the required managerial skills for handling the multi-grade situation.

While managing teaching-learning activities in mono-grade as well multi-grade situations we observe that each student demonstrates his/her individual identity quite differently from others in terms of mental ability, interest, personality, rate of learning etc. In view of learning ability the students may be considered as good, average and poor students. In view of learning rate they may be considered as fast students, medium-pace students and slow students. In other words, multilevel students are found in mono-grade as well as multi-grade situations/classes. Thus, a teacher is always faced with multi-level classroom situation to handle.

In this unit let us understand the problems of multi-grade and multi-level classroom situations and how to address these problems by employing appropriate management strategies and skills in this Unit for which you may need approximately *14 study hours*.

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## 7.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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After completing this unit you will be able to:

- Explain the need to teach in multi-grade and multi-level situations.
- Identify different issues related to multi-grade and multi-level situations.
- Devise and use different strategies and skills to manage teaching-learning of
  - (i) *the same subject in all grades in multi-grade situation;*
  - (ii) *different subjects in different grades in multi-grade situation*
- Manage multi-level situations effectively by using different strategies.

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## 7.2 MULTI-GRADE SITUATION

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Let us start with an activity.



**ACTIVITY - 1**

*Collect data on existence of multi-grade primary schools in your area and calculate the percentage of such schools.*

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Many of you might not be very familiar with ‘Multi-Grade Situations’ (MGS) and ‘Multi-Grade Teaching’ (MGT). However, you may be familiar with the activities meant by these terms. You might have observed/experienced that in some primary schools a single teacher is teaching students of two or three classes simultaneously in one room. Such a multi class situation is called as *Multi-Grade Situation (MGS)* and the teaching strategy, a teacher adopts in a Multi-Grade Situation, is known as *Multi-Grade Teaching (MGT)*. Such a situation is very common in remote and rural areas with low population and small number of students in schools. The need for MGS/MGT can arise due to various reasons. The important reasons are as follows:

- **Enrolment- based teacher recruitment policy:** In almost all states in the country, the state norm for teacher recruitment at primary school level is based on the pupil-teacher ratio (PTR) of nearly 40 (i.e. one teacher for 40 students) and not on the number of classes or sections of classes in the school. In addition to this, as per the provisions of the Operation Blackboard Scheme, a school should have at least two teachers irrespective of less number of children enrolled. If there are 80 or less number of children enrolled in a primary school, then there would be 2 teachers as per the above stipulations while if the school has 120 children on the rolls then there would be 3 teachers. However, the number of teachers engaged in the two schools is less than the number of classes. Consequently, in these schools a teacher has to manage more than one class simultaneously.

Although in the RTE, 2009, the PTR is decreased to 30(in primary sections) and 35 (in upper primary sections), it has not recommended for one teacher per class/section. The norms for provision of teachers in the RTE 2009 are given in the box below:

**Norm for Provision of Teachers in the RTE, 2009**

*(As per the Sl. No. 1 of the Schedule read with Sections 19 and 25 of the Act)*

(a) For Class I to V

Admitted Children	No. of Teachers
Up to 60	Two
Between 61 to 90	Three
Between 91 to 120	Four
Between 121 to 200	Five
Above 150 children	Five + 1 Head teacher
Above 200 children	Pupil-Teacher Ratio shall not exceed 40 (excluding Head teacher).



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## (b) For Class VI to VIII

- (1) At least one teacher per class so that there shall be at least one teacher each for –
  - (i) Science and Mathematics;
  - (ii) Social Studies;
  - (iii) Languages.
- (2) At least one teacher for every thirty-five children.
- (3) Where admission of children is above 100 –
  - (i) a full time head teacher;
  - (ii) part time instructors for –
    - (a) Art Education;
    - (b) Health and Physical Education;
    - (c) Work Education.

Hence, it is evident that in most of the schools, multi-grade situation shall continue to prevail.

- **Shortage of required number of classrooms in schools:** There are schools where the number of classrooms is less than the actual requirement. Even there are schools with one or two classrooms. As a result, in one room the students of two or more than two classes are compelled to sit. In that situation it becomes inconvenient for more than one teacher to manage instruction. Hence, despite physical presence of required number of teachers in the school, due to shortage of classrooms multi-grade situation / multi-grade teaching becomes unavoidable.
- **Unwillingness of teachers to serve in schools in remote areas:** In majority of the states in our country, there are many schools in the remote rural and/or tribal areas. Most teachers placed in these schools do not like to serve there, may be, due to lack of proper communication system, want of residential accommodation for the teachers etc. It is observed that in the whole year less than actual number of teachers posted in these schools is found to be present physically. As a result, multi-grade situation / multi-grade teaching become an obvious necessity in these schools.
- **Teacher Absenteeism:** The absence of teachers in the school due to prolonged leave on personal/health grounds or their engagement in some other non-academic work outside the school creates a MGS/MGT in the school.



- **Running of special intervention programmes in the school:** At present many ongoing intervention programmes like Bridge Course for never-enrolled and dropout children, Special Education Centres for girls and Education Centres for the migrant children are running simultaneously in many elementary schools. For this, special arrangements have been made for 20-40 children of different age-groups and ability in these schools. While handling these different types of students the teachers face the multi-grade situation.
- **Delay in teacher appointment:** Sometimes due to delay in teacher recruitment/posting in the vacant posts in a school, one or two teachers are compelled to handle all classes. This becomes an automatic situation for adopting MGT in the school.

In view of these reasons multi-grade situation is now accepted as a normal phenomenon and a genuine reality in our primary schools. Hence, you need to be well aware of the problems/issues related to multi-grade situation/multi-grade teaching and acquire appropriate pedagogical and managerial skills and competencies in order to address these issues thereby making teaching-learning effective.

### 7.2.1 Problems /Issues in MGT

Multi-grade teaching poses a very challenging task for any teacher. However, if you have a clear understanding of the critical issues of multi-grade teaching, you may be able to handle the situation better. Let us consider the issues.

- Multi-grade teaching increases the workload of the teachers who are engaged in it. Apart from classroom transaction, a teacher is required to prepare daily lesson notes, prepare and collect TLMs, undertake correction work of students' home assignments etc. for several grades. While carrying out all these, he / she may face difficulties and as a result, the teaching-learning activities may not be so effective to yield desired learning outcomes.
- In multi-grade situation, since the students are from different grades with differing learning abilities, it becomes difficult for the teacher to prepare a plan considering all these variations.
- Due to heavy work load of the teachers in multi-grade situation, it is not possible on their part to provide individual attention to the students and motivate them for learning.
- In majority of schools in remote rural and tribal areas, there is shortage of classrooms. Hence, conduct of teaching-learning activities for the students of more than one grade in one room becomes very inconvenient.
- At the primary school stage, generally the curriculum and textbooks are prepared keeping in view the mono-grade teaching context. Hence, completion of the



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prescribed course contents within a stipulated period of time in MGS becomes very difficult.

- All of us are acquainted with fixed time and period schedule followed in mono-grade situation. But the preparation of time table for MGS is altogether a different task and requires intensive thinking keeping all the variations in mind.
- In a MGS a teacher finds less time to teach in each grade/class. As a result, his/her relationship with the students is less and he/she fails to provide proper support to the students.
- In MGS the teaching-learning activities in one class affects / disturbs the activities of other classes. For example, when a story is told or a recitation is undertaken in one class, the students of other classes either get disturbed by it, or they are attracted towards it, and leave their own activities.
- Usually each and every student inside the class can get meaningful experience if he/she is engaged individually in some kind of learning activities. But in MGS it is found to be difficult to provide learning activities to each individual student.
- If there is single multi-grade teacher in the school, the whole school will be closed when he/she remains absent in the school. The teaching in all grades under his / her control gets neglected.



**ACTIVITY-2**

*As a teacher you might have experienced multi-grade situation or your colleagues may have. Based on your experience, or discussing with your colleagues, prepare a list of issues of multi-grade situation other than those discussed above.*

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All these issues of MGS/MGT could be effectively addressed if we follow a set of well-planned classroom management strategies and pedagogic skills appropriate for the MGS.

**7.2.2 Strategies for Management of Multi-grade Teaching**

One of the reasons for considering MGT to be quite difficult is that we try to manage the multi-grade situations with the familiar strategies of mono-grade classes. But, mono-grade and multi-grade are the two different classroom contexts and hence, we need to



adopt very different kinds of pedagogical and managerial skills and strategies to facilitate effective teaching-learning for each of these two situations. It largely depends on how competent we are in using different pedagogical and managerial skills efficiently in different classroom contexts. The belief that management of a multi-grade class is more difficult than management of a mono-grade class is not based on any sound reason. Whatever may be the classroom context, be it mono-grade or multi-grade, the most important thing is that we need to give emphasis on how each and every student can learn effectively and in that context learning-centered approach is considered more suitable and effective for management of MGT than the traditional teaching-centered approach.

While managing MGT (as well as multi-level teaching) through learning-centered approach, the following four important aspects of teaching-learning process are to be taken care of.

- classroom organization
- grouping of students
- provision of learning materials
- planning for learning situation.

**Classroom organization:** As you know from your experience that proper classroom organization is one of the important factors that help to improve the effectiveness of teaching and learning. This is particularly more important in case of the multi-grade situation.

From your experience of classroom teaching, recollect and try to answer the following:

- How do you use the space available in the class for facilitating effective learning?
- How do you create a healthy environment in the classroom for students' interaction?
- What are the materials you use in the classroom for facilitating students' learning?

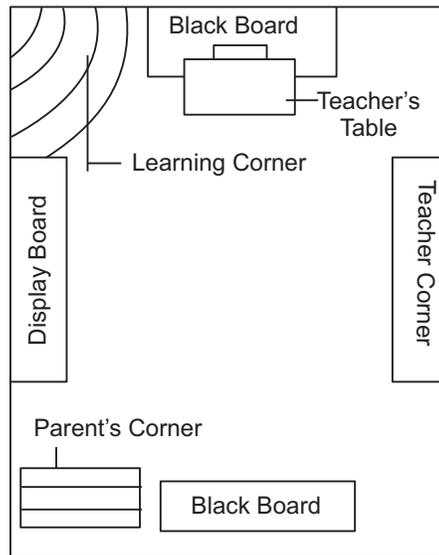
Well your answers to all these questions would be all related to utilization of space available in the classroom, suitable seating arrangements of children, proper placing of blackboard and teacher's table and chair, displaying of learning materials, displaying of students' creative work, making provision / facilities for students' activities (both individual and group), i.e. all related to classroom organization. No matter how well you prepare your lessons but a badly organized classroom will make your teaching much less effective. Let us see how the following important aspects of classroom organization in MGS could be taken care of.

**Space Management:** Space management is of utmost importance in a multi-grade classroom. Whatever space is available in the class have to be used for learning corner,



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activity corner, question corner, parents' corner, students' seating, teacher's movement, keeping black board and display boards etc. A sample pictorial presentation of space management in a classroom for different activities / purposes is given in Fig 1. Observe the picture.



**Fig 1:** Suggestive space management in a MGS classroom for different activities / purposes.

While making space management in the multi-grade classroom, you should ensure the following.

- Students sit comfortably in groups without disturbing each other.
- Proper light and ventilation in the classroom are not blocked due to covering of windows with display materials / boards.
- There is adequate space available for free movement of the teacher as well as the students (between the groups) when required.
- The students are able to reach the blackboard (s) and TLM corners easily and use these facilities with ease.
- The learning corner, parents' corner, question corner etc. are easily accessible to students for their use.
- *Seating Arrangement:* Generally during teaching-learning in mono-grade classroom situation you make different types/patterns of seating arrangement for students in order to facilitate the conduct of group work, self-study and other learning activities. The nature and type of seating arrangement in mono-grade situation may vary depending upon the need of different learning activities. But



the seating arrangement in multi-grade situation has to be different from the one in mono-grade situation. In multi-grade situation, appropriate seating arrangement is the primary requirement not only to minimize distractions (among students) caused due to seating of different classes in the same room but also to create a climate suitable for effective teaching-learning in terms of organizing different activities in different grades simultaneously.

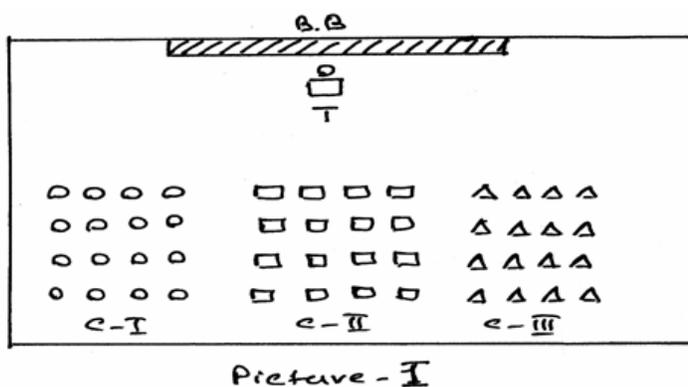
Seating arrangements in a multi-grade classroom may also vary depending on the need of different learning activities that you plan to undertake. In some situation you may plan learning activities common to all grades that you handle. In some other situation you may plan separate activities for individual grades or you may plan activities which could be carried out in small groups. Hence, you need to make seating arrangements in multi-grade situation very carefully and judiciously.

Let us observe a few patterns of seating arrangement for students in multi-grade situation in the following figures.

Look at the picture (Fig. 2) and observe the pattern of seating arrangement for students. In this pattern:

- The students are sitting in rows separately according to their grades (here Classes I, II and III) and facing towards the single blackboard.
- The blackboard is placed in front of them in such a manner that all can see it.
- The teacher may stand and teach in front of each grade when required.
- It is convenient to have face-to-face interaction between the teacher and the students.

Although, the students of the three classes could be adjusted within a classroom, for all purposes of teaching-learning activities this arrangement retains the characters of mono-grade situation. It is not a convenient arrangement for pupil-to-pupil interaction within and between grades.

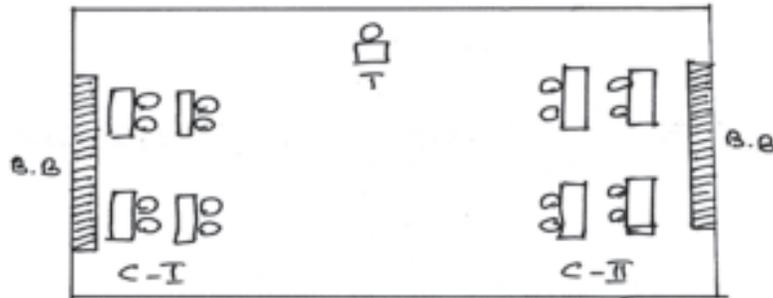


Picture - I  
Fig 2: The pattern of seating arrangement



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Fig 3 shows another type of classroom seating arrangements for students in multi-grade situation in which there are provisions of as many black boards as the number of classes. Students of each class sit facing away from each other and towards separate black board as shown in the figure.

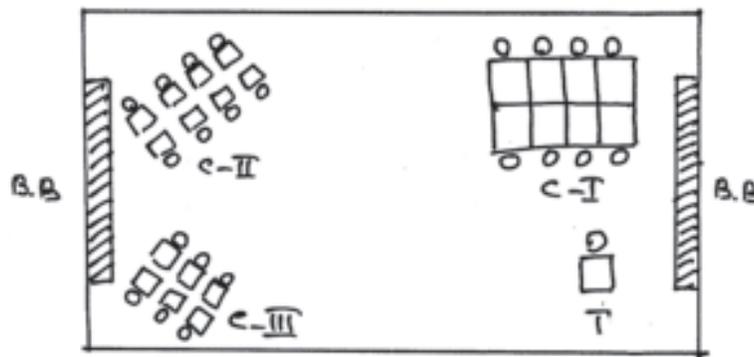


**Fig. 3:** Classroom seating arrangements

In this type of seating arrangements in the class:

- The students of different grades may be kept engaged in different learning activities.
- While the teacher is teaching in one grade, the students in other grades may be kept engaged in different self-learning activities or group activities.
- Conduct of oral work particularly language learning becomes easy and convenient.

Fig. 4 is similar arrangement accommodating three classes.



**Fig. 4:** Type of Seating arrangement

Fig 5 presents another type of seating arrangement where the students of three classes sit in a semi-circle facing the teacher and the black board. Such an arrangement helps you in conducting common activities for all the assembled classes like demonstrating some interesting pictures or models, telling a story, conducting simple games and learning activities.





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The above patterns of seating arrangement for students in multi-grade situation are suggestive examples which have been experimented elsewhere in different multi-grade situations. You may organize the seating arrangements on multi-grade situation according to the learning activities that you plan for multi-grade situation.

As one school situation is different from another school situation, you are free to arrange the class as per the need of the activity and the space available. While making innovative seating arrangements try to be imaginative and you may arrange space for seats outside the classroom to work comfortably. For example: children making a wooden model or painting or writing an essay might be less disturbing to the rest of class and may be made to sit in the verandah or in the space available outside the classroom. If you have an overcrowded class, you can send the small reading group to sit outside a mango tree and practice their activities. Considering your local context, the levels of learning and learning needs of your students, available space and learning materials, the learning strategy you are employing, you may adopt suitable seating arrangements.

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E1 . State the classroom conditions that you need to take into account while planning for a particular seating arrangement.

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- *Grouping of Students:* Like appropriate seating arrangement, grouping of students is a very effective strategy for the management of multi-grade teaching. Students learn better and progress well when they work in group. Apart from learning group learning helps in developing social skills such as working in cooperation with others, taking collective decisions, accepting and sharing others' ideas and views, respecting and assuming leadership roles etc. Peer learning also gets strengthened while working in groups. In view of this, multi-grade teaching can be made more effective, if imparted in groups.

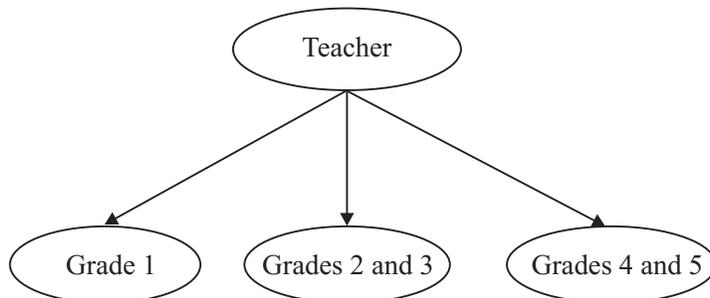
Various types of groups can be formed in multi-grade situation. The two main types of grouping viz. Grade-based and Ability-based are discussed here.

- (i) *Grade-based Grouping:* The very name indicates that grouping of students in a multi-grade situation is made considering the grade as the basis (i.e. single grade as a single group or combined grades as one group). This is a common form of grouping in multi-grade situation. Such grouping is based on the assumption that the same age-group of children makes progress more or less at the same pace.

As a multi-grade teacher, you can manage maximum three groups at a time in a multi-grade class. In view of this, you can combine two adjacent grades to form one group during multi-grade teaching, if required. The following examples illustrate the methods of combining grades to form groups.



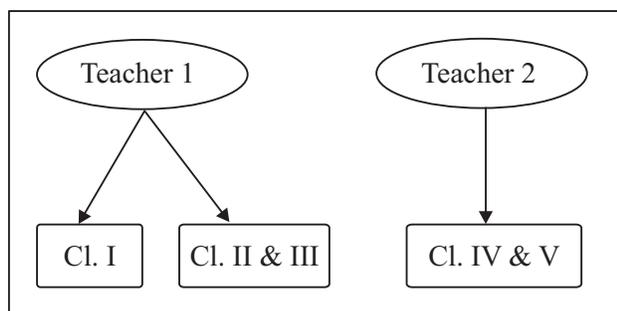
**Example 1:** In a school with five grades and a single teacher, grades 2 and 3 may be combined to have one group, grades 5 and 4 may be combined to form another group and Grade I may be kept as one group, as indicated in the Fig 7 below.



**Fig. 7:** Grade-based Grouping

Since the children of Grade 1 are the new comers to the school, they need special attention and care. For this reasons, Grade 1 is taken as a separate group. Combined grades 2 and 3, and 4 and 5 form separate groups as these are adjacent grades. There is near similarity in their course contents which facilitates peer learning, self-learning, remedial learning and cooperative learning more effectively in these adjacent grades.

**Example 2:** In a school with five grades and two teachers the following types of grouping may be made and kept under the control of the respective teachers as indicated in the Fig 8 below.



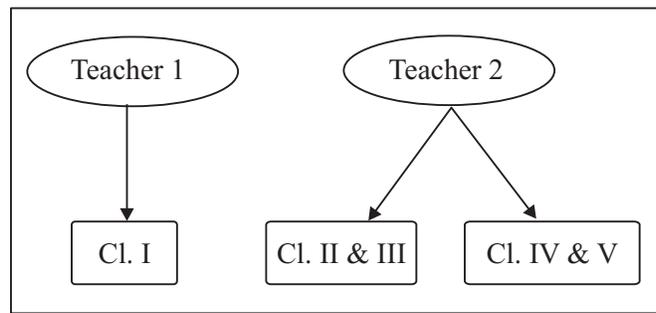
**Fig 8:** Type of Grade-based grouping

In Fig 8, the students of Grade 1 are kept in one group and Grades 2 and 3 in another group. Both the groups are kept under the control of one teacher. Grades 4 and 5 are kept in separate groups and under the control of the other teacher.

In Fig 9, the students of Grade 1 are kept in one group and under the control of one teacher. The students of Grades 2 & 3 form one group and Grades 4 & 5 another group. Both the groups are kept under the control of the other teacher.



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**Fig 9:** Type of Grade-based grouping

It is apparent from Fig 9 that more emphasis is given on Grade 1 and is kept exclusively under the control of one teacher.

Grade-based grouping becomes more convenient if there are three or more than three teachers physically present in a five-grade primary school. While forming grade-based grouping you need to consider the following aspects.

- Grade 1 should be kept as a separate group to give more attention.
- Adjacent grades should be combined to form one group since by such combination teaching-learning becomes more effective.
- When the number of students in each adjacent grade is more than 40, adjacent grades should not be combined to form one group as by their combination the students' strength in the group will be unusually large which may not be convenient for effective teaching-learning.
- When you are required to manage two groups, as far as possible you should form the groups of adjacent grades.

(ii) *Ability-based Grouping:* Generally, the children acquire a large range of learning experiences through group learning particularly in small groups. Whether it is mono-grade or multi-grade situation, group learning contributes a lot to individual learning. Irrespective of grades when small groups are formed according to children's different abilities in different subject areas, it is called *ability-based grouping*.

In this context, the term ability refers to mean both learning capacity and rate of learning of the students. In terms of learning capacity those who can acquire more learning experiences in a subject are to be considered as high ability students and those who are capable of acquiring less learning experiences in a subject are to be considered as low ability students. In terms of rate of learning those who



learn things fast they are named as fast students and those who are slow in learning things are termed as slow students. The high ability students are usually found to be the fast students as well as high achievers. On the contrary the low ability students are found to be the slow students as well as low achievers.

Hence, in view of the ability of the students two types of ability groups can be formed among the students.

- *Similar ability*: i.e. homogenous group having similar ability level (high ability group, average ability group and low ability group).
- *Mixed ability* i.e. heterogeneous group having different ability level (both high and low ability students in one group)
- Such ability grouping can be different for different subjects. While forming such ability groups in a subject among different grade students, you have to first identify/determine the student's level of learning achievement. To do this, you can make use of assessment reports of the students in the past years, you can administer a test to assess their abilities and / or you can use your own experiences about the students by direct observation.
- *Similar Ability Group*: When you form similar ability group, you need to prepare lessons and supporting teaching-learning activities suitable for each group as per their ability and undertake the same accordingly. For example, for the low achiever group you are required to give more stress on acquisition of minimum competencies in a subject whereas for the high achiever group you need to emphasize on their enrichment learning in the subject. With the change of subject, you need to change the grouping. Because a student who is included in the high achiever group in Mathematics may be included in the low achiever group in language and / or other subjects.

The important advantages of similar ability grouping are:

- The students can study in their own pace because they are of the same ability level.
- It is effective for group activities in subjects like Mathematics and Language.
- The students cooperate more with each other in the group and become contended with their similar progress.
- It is quite appropriate for designing remedial lessons for slow students and enrichment lessons for fast students.

The great disadvantage is:

- In such grouping, there is no reduction of ability gap between the groups even after learning is undertaken. As a result, the high achievers continue to remain as



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high achievers and the low achievers remain as low achievers. The low achievers once labeled as such, lose their self-confidence, interest and motivation for further learning.

*Mixed Ability Group:* When the students of different ability levels form one group, it is called mixed ability group. You can group students of advanced, average and low ability levels together to form such a mixed group. In such grouping there is no need to change the groups frequently with the change of subjects as in the case of similar ability grouping. Because in one subject there may be students of different ability levels and in other subjects there may be different students with different ability levels.

The benefit of mixed ability grouping is that the students of different ability levels discuss with each other, learn from each other, give peer support to low achievers. Apart from this, such grouping is beneficial for project work, organization of different co-curricular activities and creating scope for better learning achievement.

Thus, the two types of ability grouping of the students in a multi-grade situation help for effective teaching-learning. However, mixed ability grouping is considered comparatively better than the similar ability grouping to manage a multi-grade situation effectively. The following points are to be kept in mind while making any kind of grouping during multi-grade teaching.

- A group should be small having 4 – 5 students
- Interaction among the students becomes more in small groups than in big groups
- Various types of groups may be formed as and when required
- Students should be allowed to move from one group to another as per their interest and need.
- Labeling of students as slow students should be avoided completely.
- Group and individual learning activities should be made lively, stimulating and varied.
- Conducive learning environment ought to be created for the students falling behind.
- The teacher should observe the student's group activities instead of involving himself/herself in these activities.
- The participation of all students in the group need to be ensured.

### **Provision of Teaching-Learning Materials (TLMs)**

We all know the need and importance of various TLMs in teaching-learning process. Particularly in activity-based teaching-learning situation there is necessity of large number and varieties of TLMs to support group work and self-learning. As teacher, our main



task is to assist the students to learn. For that we have to provide them appropriate learning situations so that they would get themselves involved in effective learning activities and thereby learn things meaningfully. Whether, it is a mono-grade or multi-grade class appropriate learning situation can be provided to a large extent by the use of right kind of TLMs. In multi-grade situation the use of appropriate TLMs helps the teacher in the effective management of teaching-learning in different grades at a time.



**ACTIVITY - 4**

*You as a teacher might have used varieties of TLMs during your classroom transaction. Could you name some of these? How do you procure these? Do you ever prepare some of the TLMs yourself? Write down the names of some TLMs under different categories and state their procurement in the table given below.*

<i>Categories</i>	<i>Name of the TLMs</i>	<i>Procurement (Purchase Collection/Preparation)</i>
<i>Standard TLM</i>		
<i>Low Cost and No Cost TLM</i>		
<i>Plenty available TLM</i>		

Some benefits of using TLM in multi-grade teaching situation are as follows:

- Since the students in primary grades (both mono and multi-grade contexts) understand concepts in association with concrete objects, the TLMs help them to understand difficult concepts.
- TLMs in multi-grade situation keep all students meaningfully involved and engaged for some time in the absence of the multi-grade teacher in the class.
- TLMs facilitate group learning and self-learning activities.
- TLMs help the multi-grade teacher reduce his/her excessive talking.
- TLMs create the desired context for stimulating discussions among the groups.
- TLMs attract students' attention towards the lesson.
- TLMs help the multi-grade teacher save his / her own energy and minimize fatigue in teaching.
- TLMs facilitate introduction, practice, reinforcement and evaluation activities of the multi-grade teacher during different phases of teaching-learning.



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The kind of TLMs used in multi-grade teaching are dice, picture cards, flash cards, assignment cards, letter cards, number cards, story cards, song cards, posters, leaflets, reading cards, story books, dictionary, models, charts etc. Apart from these, worksheets are also prepared and used in each class in multi-grade situation even in the absence of multi-grade teacher.

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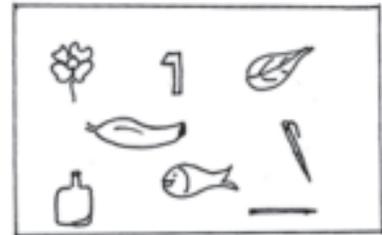
**E2.** Explain two advantages of TLMs in multi-grade teaching.
 

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The way you can use the TLMs in multi-grade teaching context is demonstrated in the following example.

**Example :** In a multi-grade situation comprising of Grades I, II and III, the multi-grade teacher shows some objects like shells, seeds, fruits, household items, school items, photographs etc. kept in a basket to the students (as shown in the picture).

After three minutes, she covers the objects in the basket with a piece of cloth. Then she asks the students of Grade 1 to recall the objects that they have seen and tell their names. She asks the students of Grade II to write the name of the objects in their notebook and the students of Grade III to write the use of these objects in daily life.



After 20 minutes, the teacher forms mixed ability groups, taking the students of all the three grades, distributes some objects to each group and ask every individual group to write different uses of each object in day-to-day life. Then each group presents its group report and the same is shared by all.

From the above example you can infer how the TLMs are used to stimulate group work as well as individual work in multi-grade teaching situation and keep all the grades engaged in meaningful learning activities.

**Planning for Learning Situation:** You have already learnt to develop plans for teaching-learning (planning lessons) in mono-grade situation. However, prior to preparation of plans for teaching-learning in multi-grade situation, you need to organize the classroom, make desired grouping of the students, and create conducive learning environment since these are essential requirements to facilitate subject teaching-learning in multi-grade situation. For this reason, the plans for multi-grade teaching are called as the 'Plans for Learning Situation' instead of 'Teaching-Learning Plans' (or Lesson Plans). The multi-grade teacher has to perform the following activities to plan for the learning situation. He/she will have to:

- ensure first which grade (s) to be included in the multi-grade teaching class.
- understand what type of grouping is needed to facilitate multi-grade teaching.



- prepare weekly or monthly scheme of lessons in which indication will be made about which subjects to be taught in which group / group at the same time.
- ensure proper seating arrangement of different grade students in the same classroom.
- prepare/collect required TLMs in adequate number and keep them at the TLM corner.
- prepare daily lesson plan indicating therein the objectives, method of transaction, learning activities, evaluation strategies etc.
- form small groups as per the requirements of the lesson.
- earmark the TLMs for group and individual activities.
- specify activities for introduction, practice, reinforcement and evaluation.
- determine the amount of time to be spent on each activity.
- determine teaching time for each group / group.
- ensure that the bright children help the children falling behind, as well as the child of upper grades help the children of lower grades.
- assign projects to each group after a suitable time gap.
- ensure conduct of individual activities.
- devise evaluation strategies for assessing learner performance.

Thus, the planning for multi-grade teaching calls upon the teacher to take care of all the assigned grades at the same time, to ensure proper time management and to make his/her presence felt in the grades/groups.

### 7.2.3 Planning Time Schedule for Multi-grade Teaching

In most occasions you are required to teach all subjects in a grade. However in a multi-grade teaching situation, ideally you may choose one core content and some selected activities. As you are always under the pressure of time in multi-grade situation, it is important to plan a time schedule to make the maximum use of available time. When you are required to handle three grades simultaneously, you have to depend upon monitors or some bright students, activities, learning materials, self-study materials etc. How you will utilize the monitor's assistance or use powerful learning activities or self-study materials all depends on your thoughtful planning. If one hour time is there, it could be planned as follows where the time distribution is suggestive.

<i>Distribution of 1 Grade III</i>	<i>hour time</i>	<i>Grade I</i>	<i>Grade II</i>
First 20 minutes	Teacher	Monitor	Self-study
Second 20 minutes	Self-study	Teacher	Monitor
Last 20 minutes	Monitor	Self-study	Teacher



## Notes

In planning your instruction for multi-grade teaching having three grades, you have to always bear in mind that while teaching in one class you have to keep a supervisory eye on other two classes engaged with the monitor or in self-study.

### *Teaching-learning of the same subject in different grades*

It has been mentioned earlier that if you are required to teach in two or three grades at the same time you should better take the adjacent grades, because there is a similarity and continuity in the contents of the adjacent grades which makes it convenient to manage multi-grade teaching effectively.

Let us consider the teaching of 'Numbers' in Mathematics in Grades I, II and III at the same time. As prescribed in the mathematics syllabus, the students are to master the competency of counting the numbers from 1 – 100 in Grade I, to find the place value of the digits in numbers 10 – 99 and comparing the small and big numbers in Grade II, and to find the place value of the digits in numbers up to 1000 thereby comparing the small and big numbers in Grade III. Now it is your concern as to how to teach 'Numbers' in all the three grades simultaneously so as to enable the students acquire their prescribed competencies.

The following example shows how the content is taught to three different grade students simultaneously.

- The teacher first draws a matrix in the blackboard as shown in the right and writes the numbers from 1 to 9 therein in the small boxes.
- The teacher asks the students to find out the relationship among the numbers. The students study the matrix, participate in the discussion and conclude that if they add three numbers vertically or horizontally, it will be 15.
- Then he/she continue the discussion for 10 minutes and explains the students what to do next. by assigning the following activities to the respective grades.

1	6	8
5	7	3
9	2	4

*Grade I :* To write two digit numbers as many as possible by using the digits in the matrix (students work for 15 minutes).

*Grade II :* To write two digit numbers as many as possible by using the digits in adjacent boxes in the matrix and to arrange them in ascending order (small to big).

To write the place value of 10 two digit numbers (students work for 20 minutes).

*Grade III :* To write three digit numbers as many as possible using the digits from the matrix and to arrange them in descending order (big to small).

To write the place value of 10 three digit numbers (students work for 20 minutes).



Thus it is possible to teach the same subject in multi-grade situation. In such a situation, you start teaching using one common activity with common materials and then assign grade-wise different activities. There are some advantages of teaching the same subject in a multi-grade situation which are as below.

- The teacher can determine easily how much help he/she can render to which grade and at what time during the teaching-learning process.
- Since the same subject is taught in all the assigned grades, most of the time common TLMs can be used by the teacher in all the grades.
- A high achiever student of one grade / group can help the low achievers of that group or the other group and may act as a monitor in the other group.
- The teaching-learning activities of one group also facilitate activities of the other grades.
- Simultaneous teaching-learning of the same subject in all the grades make it appear as if the students of one grade are performing different activities with mutual close cooperation and participation.

### *Teaching-learning of different subjects in different Grades:*

At times in multi-grade situation different subjects may be taught to different grades. For example, a multi-grade teacher may teach a lesson in Environmental Studies (say, occupation of different people) in grade I, a lesson in Language (say, identification of compound letter and their use) in Grade II and a lesson in Mathematics (say multiplication of three digit numbers) in grade III simultaneously. The management of multi-grade teaching in these situation is totally different from the one discussed earlier. A multi-grade teacher is required to do the following in order to manage the situation efficiently.

- In the beginning of the period a common warm-up activity may be undertaken for all grade students in order to create a learning atmosphere in the class.
- Then in each grade a monitor may be selected/appointed and be given the responsibility to maintain discipline in the class.
- The seating arrangements for each grade students may be made separately keeping in view the learning activities to be undertaken during the teaching-learning process.
- While teaching is imparted in one grade, the other grades are to be engaged in made meaningful learning activities relating to the subject/topic planned to be transacted. Alternatively teaching and assigning of learning activities are to be made in the grades.
- When required the teacher should supervise the activities in the grades and provide due feedback. Besides, in order to remove learning difficulties of the students the teacher may teach directly.
- When teaching is required for the three grades, the teacher should teach a new topic in one grade and give practice activities in other two grades. By doing this, the teacher can teach well in the grade concerned and meaningfully engage the



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other grades. Teaching of new topic in all the grades would definitely be inconvenient for both the teacher and the students and appropriate use of the time cannot be ensured.

Thus a multi-grade teacher can manage multi-grade teaching by adopting this approach. But to make it effective, he / she has to do a lot planning, arrange and prepare adequate TLMs for practice work and to ensure coordinated group work and individual work. However, this approach has some inherent *disadvantages* which are as follows:

- Interaction takes place within the students of one grade only and may disturb the activities of other grades.
- Since different subjects are taught in different grades, adequate and varied TLMs are required to facilitate teaching-learning in each grade. Practically, it becomes difficult on the part of the teachers to arrange such huge number of TLMs.
- It is not always possible on the part of the students of one grade to help the students of other grades.



**ACTIVITY - 5**

*Having known the different aspects of multi-grade teaching, issues involved in it, it's planning and management, think of a multi-grade situation and try to compare it with a mono-grade situation in different aspects. List the differences between the two situations.*

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Compare your list with the ones given below:

Mono-grade	Multi-grade
One teacher for one Class	One teacher for several classes.
One Classroom for each grade.	One room accommodating more than one grade.
Co-operation and interaction between children is less.	Co-operation and interaction among children is high.
Variety of experiences of children is limited within their group. So only limited experiences are shared.	Variety of experiences of children is unlimited as they are in multi-groups. So experience sharing is high.



<p>There is a feeling of children that teacher will help them at any time. So there is a scope to take help from the teacher at the time of facing a problem. As a result teacher dependency syndrome develops.</p>	<p>Students help themselves. There is some body (Students of higher grade / student of the same grade with higher ability) to help lower age group children in the presence of the teacher. Hence, teacher dependency syndrome gets reduced.</p>
<p>Mostly the situation is formal.</p>	<p>The situation is totally informal.</p>
<p>The classroom situation is likely to be teacher dominated.</p>	<p>The classroom is mostly managed by students. So teacher domination is the least.</p>
<p>There is a belief that three levels of students are in class i.e. above average, average and below average.</p>	<p>There is no level like above average, average, and below average students. Even grade feeling is not there. All children feel as if they are of the same grade or group</p>
<p>No scope for friendship between higher and lower age/grade children.</p>	<p>More scope for friendship between higher age/grade children with lower grade children.</p>
<p>More emphasis on level wise grouping</p>	<p>More emphasis or scope for social grouping.</p>
<p>Teacher is bound to remain present in the class for all times. So there is a structured learning.</p>	<p>There is a scope for self-learning as the teacher is not present fully in a class. In spite of that learning takes place.</p>

### 7.3 MULTI-LEVEL SITUATION

As a teacher, you are familiar and accustomed with mono-grade situation and mono-grade teaching and have gained varied experience of organizing and managing mono-grade teaching effectively. You might have noticed that the students in each grade, whether in mono-grade situation or multi-grade situation, differ from each other in respect of their learning need, learning capacity, interest, attitude, motivation etc. For example, you might have observed the following:

- One student takes less time to learn a topic / subject while another student takes more time to learn the same topic / subject.
- One student may have high learning achievement while the other may have low learning achievement.

In other words each student is unique in all these aspects each one is found to have a different pace of learning and a different level of learning achievement, compared to



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others. Hence, in a class you will find different levels of students. The presence of different ability level students (e.g. High, Average, and Low) in a class refers to a *multi-level situation*.

Consider the following example:

A teacher took a class with three ability groups (High, Average and Low) in a multi-level situation. He/she had planned his/her lesson keeping the average students in consideration. The high achievers completed their task quickly before the scheduled time and waited for the teacher's instruction as to what to do next. The slow students on the other hand waited for the teacher to provide extra time since the scheduled time limit was over to complete the task. It is evident that the teacher neither planned extra learning activities for high achievers nor extra time for the slow students. He/she did no planning for time management in this situation. As a teacher managing time to control a multi-level situation to meet the needs of the high achievers and low achievers irrespective of the ability group they belong to is very important.

There are many crucial issues of a multi-level situation. Let us consider them and learn the strategies to address them.

Multi-level situation and multi-level teaching arises due to the following:

- When you are required to divide the students in a class (in mono-grade situation) into a number of similar ability groups in order to facilitate effective teaching-learning.

For *example*, there are 30–40 students in a class. You may divide them at least into three groups / levels based on their learning ability. You can keep all the fast students in the first group, all the average students in the second group and all the slow students in the third group. Here the students of the first group acquire learning experiences more quickly than the students of the third group and always progress faster. Such a class can be considered as the combination of similar ability oriented three small classes. In other words, in each mono-grade class there is presence of multi-level situation. Apart from this a teacher may find students with different subject learning ability, competency, attitude, interest etc. which may give rise to a multi-grade situation.

- When you are managing a multi-grade situation, multi-level situation may also arise. For *example*, you are managing teaching-learning in three grades (i.e. grades 1, 2 and 3) simultaneously. In view of grades, there are three types / level of students before you to handle (fast students, average students and slow students) and in all the three grades there may be three levels of students. So you are facing a multi-level multi-grade situation. In fact, each multi-grade situation is always a multi-level situation.



Thus, multi-level situation is always present in both mono-grade and multi-grade situation. However, a teacher gets more scope in mono-grade situation to deal with the multi-level students than in multi-grade situation in which he/she is to handle different grade students and may be constraint to use time and resources appropriately.

### **7.3.1 Issues of Multi-level Situation**

As we know, a multi-grade situation arises mostly due to shortage of required number of teachers and classrooms. But a multi-level situation is always present in mono-grade as well as multi-grade situation. Given below are a few crucial issues with respect to multi-level situation.

- In a class, majority of the students are of average learning ability and comparatively few students are of high and low learning abilities. Usually planning and implementation of all learning activities and instruction relating to prescribed curricular contents are made keeping in view the ability of the average students. As a result, the high and low ability group students are not benefited and their learning gets affected. Hence, how to address the learning needs of these two levels of students along with the average level students simultaneously during teaching-learning is a challenging task for the teachers.
- Grouping of students by the teachers based on overall / global assessment of student's ability (homogenous group) does not help them learn at their own pace in order to acquire mastery in learning competencies. Since in high ability groups the students may not feel comfortable (in view of their choice, interest, attitude, liking etc.) to participate in the teaching-learning activities in the respective groups as it is imposed on them.
- Using common textbooks as the centre of instruction does not benefit the students of different learning levels in a multi-level situation.
- Addressing the learning needs of the different level students of different grades simultaneously is definitely a hard task on the part of a multi-grade teacher.
- Preparing appropriate teaching-learning materials and other resource materials adequately for a multi-level situation is no doubt a daunting task for the teachers.

### **7.3.2 Strategies for Management of Multi-level Situation**

Some of the strategies to adopt to manage multi-level situations are as follow:

- Individual student's needs are to be identified before imparting teaching-learning in the class.
- All children, irrespective of levels, allowed learning at their own pace.
- Allowing student's liking and voluntary participation in the group.



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- Student's choice remaining in a group allowed but no grouping imposed on them.
- Heterogeneous grouping found suitable to facilitate individual pace of learning is undertaken.
- Peer learning allowed to facilitate individual learning.
- Time is effectively managed for each level.

Effective management of multi-level situation can be ensured by adoption of following activities:

### ***Making heterogeneous grouping***

While managing multi-level situation (both in mono-grade and multi-grade) heterogeneous grouping (mixed ability group) should be formed for transaction of teaching-learning activities. However, after completion of teaching and evaluation of a topic similar ability grouping may be formed and remedial lessons and materials may be arranged for low achievers and enrichment lessons for high achievers. Of course, teachers handling multi-level situation should have adequate preparation for this in advance.

### ***Acquisition of mastery in learning competencies through group and individual learning***

The most crucial issue of multi-grade teaching and multi-level teaching is how to help individual students to acquire mastery in learning competency at their own pace in the remaining group. An innovative study has been developed and used in this regard by the Rishi Valley Institute of Educational Resources (RIVER), Andhra Pradesh since 1993 which is popularly known as *Rishi Valley approach*. The significance of this approach is to design activities in order to make the students capable of acquiring mastery in learning competencies through both group and individual learning. The details of the procedure are presented, in brief, below.

- At first, a list of learning competencies prescribed in each subject for each class is prepared after due analysis and arranged in a particular sequence.
- Each competency, arranged in sequence, is taken as a milestone. On acquisition of a competency a student reaches that milestone and proceeds to the next milestone to acquire the next competency.
- All competencies or milestones, so arranged in a particular order, taken together constitute a learning continuum in a subject for a grade.
- After acquisition of one competency by the students, a number of learning activities are planned to help them to acquire the next competency. For this, the teacher first undertakes an initiation activity in the whole class. It is totally teacher managed.



After the initiation activity, arrangements for group and individual activities like practice activities, reinforcement activities, evaluation activities are made in a sequence to follow in this approach. Instructions are clearly given as to which activity should be undertaken at what time with full teacher participation, with partial teacher participation, with peer participation and without assistance of anybody. The sequential arrangement of such activities from one milestone to next milestone is called as a *learning ladder*. All learning ladders when arranged in a continuous sequence formed a learning continuum of a subject for a class or level.

- Such learning continuum sheets in each subject are kept in each classroom. The learning activities which are to be undertaken in sequence between two adjacent milestones are indicated by logo in the learning continuum.

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## 7.4 LET US SUM UP

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- Multi-grade Teaching is a situation where a single teacher teaches several classes at a time.
- Multi-grade Teaching is a necessity due to various reasons .One is due to lack of teacher and classrooms.
- Multi-grade teaching is not confined in India. But it seen in the developed as well as in the underdeveloped countries.
- The teacher who is involved in multi-grade teaching has to face many challenges.
- Special attention is given on four aspects for MGT i.e. classroom organization, pupils grouping, use of learning materials and proper planning.
- Multi-grade teaching is more effective by the appropriate sitting arrangement.
- Multi-level teaching is related with Mono-grade situation.
- Four aspects like grouping of pupil , selecting materials and appropriate use, activities and student involvement and classroom organization are the main important strategies in multi-level teaching.
- Some learning activities need to be planned to be applied to high achiever, medium achiever and slow achiever students.
- Lessons need to be planned that every child will get involved in some learning activities.
- There should be opportunities for children to learn from each other.
- If a multi-grade, multi-level teacher is innovative in teaching, with knowledge of his/her task and proper planning and management skills, successful results can be achieved through this system.



## 7.5 MODEL ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

E1. Following are the classroom conditions-

- Students sit comfortably in groups without disturbing each other.
- Proper light and ventilation in the classroom are not blocked due to covering of windows with display materials / boards.
- There need to be adequate space available for free movement of the teacher as well as the students (between the groups) when required.
- The students need to reach the blackboard (s) and TLM corners easily and use these facilities with ease.
- The learning corner, parents' corner, question corner etc. need be easily accessible to students for their use.

E2. Any two advantage discussed in the text and/or from the classroom experiences of the teacher need to be stated.

## 7.6 SUGGESTED READINGS AND REFERENCES

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## 7.7 UNIT-END EXERCISES

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1. Discuss the issues of your multi-level teaching classes you face in your work place.
2. Give a plan of your multi-grade class teaching you deal with in your school.

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