

Help for the Multigrade Teacher

Question: 1. How can I budget my time effectively as the only teacher in a multigrade school situation, in order to provide my 18 students with adequate exposure and supervision in a subject area at three grade levels during a 45-minute period?

2. Do you know of any successful method for teaching reading on four different levels during the same class period?

3. Would you recommend the use of student teachers in the same grade levels? Why? How?

4. How can I maintain classroom control when teaching more than one level of material in a single classroom?

Note: These questions come from a teacher-principal who is responsible for instruction in the upper grades, and for supervision of some high-school correspondence subjects for other students.

This group of questions, which reflects several parts of one problem, was sent to several teachers-in-service for their responses. The replies have been incorporated here. My thanks to the respondents, who advised independent student work on meaningful assignments, student-to-student helping, and purposeful and varied student activities to lessen the temptation for time-wasting and class-disruptive activities—all these to supplement a staggered instructional program that gives the teacher access to students for a sufficient length of time to complete a given teaching task. The comments were detailed and specific, and can be adapted to all grade levels.—Dr. Margaret Hafner.

Answer: 1. To care for 18 students at three grade levels the teacher must plan for a substantial amount of work to be done by children working in groups or individually without direct teacher attention. Devoted as we are to our jobs, we are still only one person, with no magic except organization.

The organization and provision of bona fide work for students is the greatest part of the teacher's responsibility. Almost anyone can present instruction or tell stories, but providing learning strategies, learning materials, and learning settings is the hallmark of the fine teacher.

The typical 45-minute time period for a subject sticks with us, not just because it fills out the required subject hours in a

week, but because it allows the teacher time to present, illustrate, and review new lesson materials and assign practice. It allows the students time to understand, practice, and assimilate information or skills. The portion of this class period needed by individual students will vary according to the amount and quality of previous information and length of assimilation time and memory for practice. In the usual school setting, some students will have time to help others with their lessons. The teacher thus has a built-in and willing corps of teacher assistants who know the methods and purposes, and who can reinforce teacher instruction.

Below is a three-section, three-day cycle instruction-learning plan that can be adapted to any subject. Each day the teacher instructs two groups in that subject and supervises four other groups in varied prepared assignments in the same subject. Since this is a three-day cycle, the next day is not the "same old thing" for the students. A chart on the wall or in their notebooks will soon acclimate them to the plan.

Section 2 may not always be limited to the subject the teacher is instructing if the students have accomplished enough or if they need additional work in some other subject. For instance, spelling study and testing might be a section 3 activity when competent helpers are available. The same is true of penmanship, oral reading practice, arithmetic combination drill, assignment correcting, memory-work learning, and

vocabulary practice, to name a few. Learning centers may have tapes or records, manipulative material, or learning games. Students might record a story for another group, or record a reading exercise for the teacher to check for fluency and vocabulary. Students might help others with vocabulary and meaning, or with compilation of vocabulary study lists during assignment reading.

The above list is a suggested rotation. You may need other rotations that consider the unique characteristics of the groups. Students beginning the subject on any day with section 2 or 3 will need to learn to carry over the assignments from the previous day. To coordinate this smoothly, the teacher must have all preparations in the lesson plans before the section 1 instruction begins.

Answer: 2. Assuming that your class period is only 45 minutes long, the time allotted hardly seems sufficient. Considering the number of children, probably as many as four typical reading groups would not meet the needs of all of the students. Perhaps you should augment the reading group instruction at another time. A helpful suggestion might be to conduct a special reading help time for students whose reading performance is not at "grade level."

If a 45-minute period is all the time you have for reading, part of the instruction of the older students needs to be oriented toward critical and

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	M	T	W	TH
Section 1: Instruction or lesson presentation				
Teacher here for 20 min. each gr.	5-6	7-8	9	start over
silent reading	9	5-6	7-8	
teacher discussion				
student responses				
assignment (previous) check				
Section 2: Assignment work—20 min. each gr.	7-8	9	5-6	
Workbooks	5-6	7-8	9	
Assignments				
Supplementary reading				
Section 3: Learning Centers and Auxiliary assign.				
reports—20 min. each gr.	9	5-6	7-8	
research	7-8	9	5-6	
projects				
experiments				
library time				
committee work				

Available for helping in section 2
There is a 5-minute change period in which teacher gets sections 2 and 3 settled down and then returns to section 1.

At appropriate times in section 1 the teacher can walk toward or through the other sections as a passive reminder that they are under supervision.

“Of the almost 10,000 persons who die in fires each year and the hundreds of thousands more who suffer serious injury, nearly 25 percent are children under 13 years of age,” explains Charles S. Morgan, NFPA president. “Our purpose in developing this curriculum is to reduce these tragic statistics and help children to grow into safety-conscious adults.”

Adventist schools are urged to adopt this program. The life you save might well be that of one of your students, his family or friends, or even your own!

For more information concerning this curriculum contact GENCON Risk Management Service, Loss Control Department, 6930 Carroll Avenue, Takoma Park, Maryland 20012, or call (202) 723-0800.

Solving School Problems

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creative comprehension skills. These skills will help make them discerning readers in academy and college. The Record of Progress, mentioned previously in this column, and available from your union education office, identifies the various categories of comprehension and details the specific skills for each. See The Language Arts—Reading: II. Comprehension; E and F. Reading assignments in social studies

COMING EVENTS

DECEMBER, 1980-MARCH, 1981

NAD Elementary Reading Steering Committee (Loma Linda University, Riverside, California)	December 2-5
NAD Curriculum Committee (Loma Linda University, Riverside, California)	December 7-10
NAD Education Task Force Steering Committee (Portland, Oregon)	December 11-15
NAD Board of Higher Education (Loma Linda University, Loma Linda, California)	January 7
NAD Board of Education, K-12 (Loma Linda University, Loma Linda, California)	January 8
NAD Elementary Health-Science Steering Committee (Loma Linda University, Loma Linda, California)	February 3-6
NAD Elementary Bible Steering Committee (Loma Linda University, Loma Linda, California)	February 8-11
NAD Secondary Bible Steering Committee (Loma Linda University, Loma Linda, California)	February 11-16
American Association of School Administrators (Atlanta, Georgia)	February 13-16
Association of SDA School Administrators (Atlanta, Georgia)	February 17-20
American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (Detroit, Michigan)	February 17-20
National Association of Secondary School Principals (Atlanta, Georgia)	February 20-24
Christian Home Week	February 21-28
American Association for Higher Education (Washington Hilton, Washington, D.C.)	March 4-7
Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (St. Louis, Missouri)	March 7-11

and science, and instructional pages for mathematics are rich in materials that help to develop and reinforce these comprehension skills. The teacher should point out applications of comprehension skills needed in these subjects, as this (1) helps tie together the entire educational experience and (2) extends the "reading period." Skills taught during the reading class can be emphasized and studied in the content subject classes, and portions of the reading-class time can be used to work on skill application in the content material.

Some attention may need to be paid to the vocabulary skills of the older students. Large-group sessions in word structure, pronunciation, meaning, and origins might profit a large portion of the group. Application of these skills can be made in the vocabulary of the social studies, science, and mathematics reading assignments. The Record of Progress lists advanced word skills under The Language Arts—Reading: III. Decoding; B. Word Analysis, starting at about item 60.

Fifth- and sixth-grade students typically need more concentrated reading instruction in the usual directed reading activity format than do the older students. However, attention to the needs of these students can be worked into a four-day practice cycle using an arrangement similar to the 3-section plan above. Each group sees the teacher five times a week for a 15-minute session. Then they rotate through 15-minute study, practice, and other activity sessions. Special group characteristics may require changes in some of the scheduling, but a general plan such as this will help the teacher to meet the needs of the students.

The chart below schedules section 1 with the teacher. Section 2 is study and assignment preparation time, and section 3 is student-to-student help, free reading, and learning-center time. Catch-up work and corrections can take

place in either of these sections, but appear here only once for each group. Students in any group not requiring special help can work on other assignments or learning-center activities, or can serve as a helper. Student-to-student help is follow-up work assigned by the teacher in the special-help sessions.

Answer: 3. As you can see from the responses to questions 1 and 2, we recommend the use of student teachers in the same grade level. The students are usually good friends and have a helping attitude. Evidence of a superior attitude would automatically disqualify that student as a helper. The same-grade student is closer to the information needed by the learner than is a student in a higher grade, and the methods used by the teacher are familiar.

The teacher instructs the special-help student with needed material and skills. As the instructional session is ending, the teacher can call the helper for a brief explanation of the help required.

Student helpers do not need to be the brightest in the class. They may be, but others who understand the skill or information to be learned can function just as well. Disability in a certain subject should not disqualify a student from helping in a subject he or she handles adequately. Higher-grade students should also be used.

Children who want to be helpers (and most do) sometimes rush through their own work and become careless. Helping is a reward, and they must be counseled about being good workers. No child should help others during the time he should be doing his own work. When there is a freedom to request help, certain students will be "bothered" more than others. They should be protected by a quiet suggestion from the teacher.

For a refreshing review of the blessings to teacher and students in classrooms where student helpers function, read again the recommendations Ellen White makes in her writings.

Answer: 4. Classroom control is very much a matter of busy students. You know—idle hands, et cetera? The movement and change of activity built into the plans suggested in this column will also help alleviate the control problem. The teacher must be certain to have her plans thoroughly worked out, activities provided for in advance, and materials ready for use.

Let me quote from the respondents:

"The children know that the teacher loves them, trusts them, and expects suitable behavior at all times. They know what they are to be doing and how to do it. The teacher must know what is supposed to be going on in the room, must have flexible plans, and must prepare her children so they know that there is always something interesting to learn and to do in the classroom. The idea of, 'I'm done! Now I can fool around!' doesn't belong in the thinking of the teacher or child. If there is always a goal to be reached, and the teacher and child have planned together for that goal, there need be no worry about classroom control. Keep the children busy. Let them in on the planning. Be generous in praise for a task well done, and you need not worry about classroom control."

"I find that if you keep the students busy they don't keep you busy. If every student understands what he should do, and when, then many problems can be avoided. I have found that putting the day's assignments on the board every morning eliminates many questions and problems. Very briefly in opening exercises we run down the assignments for the day. I tell them when each assignment is due and which ones they may have difficulty with unless they wait for instructions. After lunch, we go down the list again and say which ones should be done. This seems to encourage those who might be a little slow in producing work or goofing off. This is a good time to remind them of deadlines.

"For the benefit of those who have difficulty getting work in, I check the baskets provided for assignments before recess and lunch. It doesn't take long for them to get the message. Most children, if they understand what is expected, will produce the work on time. Study each child, his problems and needs, and fulfill the needs as best you can. Above all, try to be fair, kind, and loving."

When I work with children, I have four stock comments for misbehavior that seem to cover most circumstances:

"That is not acceptable behavior."

"You are building my comments at the parent conference."

"I will never embarrass you unless you make me do it."

"You know what we expect."

And then I follow through. I will never accept (let pass) any behavior I

Section 1: Teacher Here	M	T	W	TH
Directed Reading Activities				
Special Help	DRA 9	VI 7-9	CI 7-9	DRA 9
Vocabulary Instruction	DRA 5-6	OR-AC 5-6	DRA 5-6	DRA 7-8
Comprehension Instruction	DRA 7-8	SH 5-6	SH 7-9	OR-AC 5-6
Oral Reading & Assign. Check				
Section 2				
Assignment Study				
Student-to-Student Help	AS 7-8	SSH 5-6	—	C&C 5-6
Vocabulary Study	AS 9	VS 7-9	CS 7-9	AS 9
Comprehension Study	AS 5-6	5-6	AS 5-6	AS 7-8
Corrections & Catch-up				
Section 3				
Learning Center Activity	LC 5-6	—	LC 5-6	C&C or FR 7-8
Student-to-Student Help	SSH 7-8	—	—	FR 5-6
Free Reading	SSH 9	FR 7-9	LC 7-9	C&C or FR 9
Corrections & Catch-up				

have termed unacceptable. I include behavioral comments at parent conferences, and I treat children with respect as I quietly correct their behavior. But when they persist, I tell them in front of their classmates that they are embarrassing me so I have no choice but to mention their misbehavior out loud. Explanations of what is expected may need to be built gradually during whole group talks. Then the above reminder is usually enough.

Children want to be respected. If the teacher guides their academic progress in a way that improves their self-respect, and if their social environment is comfortable, they will usually act in a respectable way.—Dr. Margaret S. Hafner.

Sexism in Readers

(Continued from page 15)

to support accusations of impartial sexism, nor was a position taken on the virtues of traditional feminine roles. Specific categories were defined for an objective frequency count of the representations of male and female characters. When illustrations with two or more children were surveyed, further analysis was made of the relative sizes of males and females in the pictures, and the centrality of each sex was also studied.

Of 345 stories analyzed, 149 dealt with boy characters only, while 72 stories contained girl characters only. In 124 stories, boys and girls were presented together. Hence, the data given in the accompanying tables are for both sexes present (Table 1) and for only one sex present (Table 2). Each table presents percentages for appropriate categories within illustrations and narrations.

Table 1 reveals that when boys and girls appeared together, girls predominated significantly in illustrations portraying negative situations such as being Helpless/Afraid, Incompetent/Mishaps, and Passive/Watching. When boys had mishaps, they were often shown as being more adept in the situations and their errors came through as good-fun, rough-

Table 1. Percentage of Occurrence in Illustrations and Narrations with Both Sexes Present.

Trait Represented	Total Occurrence	Males %	Females %
<i>Illustrations</i>			
Helpless/Afraid	147	44	56**
Incompetent/Mishaps	104	36	64*
Passive/Watching	190	37	63*
Altruism	21	38	62
Receiving Help	68	41	59**
Giving Help	101	70*	30
Problem Solving	111	77*	23
Routine Helpfulness	80	38	62*
Inventive/Creative	72	74*	26
Involved in Sports	48	95*	5
Larger in Size	202	60*	40
Central in Position	1126	67	33
<i>Narrations</i>			
Helpless/Afraid	8	12	88*
Incompetent/Mishaps	23	30	70*
Victimized/Humiliated	11	0	100*
Altruism	15	40	60
Receiving Help	12	8	92*
Giving Help	21	76*	24
Problem Solving	38	71*	29
Routine Helpfulness	27	44	56
Inventive/Creative	12	66	34
Bravery/Heroism	7	42	58
Working/Earning Money	4	50	50
Feeling/Expressing Emotions	13	53	47

*Sig. .05 **Sig. .10

Table 2. Percentage of Occurrence in Illustrations and Narrations with Only One Sex Present.

Trait Represented	Total Occurrence	Males %	Females %
<i>Illustrations</i>			
Inventive/Creative	13	76*	24
Involved in Sports	8	100*	0
Bravery/Heroism	28	75*	25
Working/Earning Money	12	91*	9
Feeling/Expressing Emotions	65	64*	36
<i>Narrations</i>			
Helpless/Afraid	3	33	67
Incompetent/Mishaps	26	73*	37
Victimized/Humiliated	5	40	60
Altruism	20	25	75*
Receiving Help	15	73**	27
Giving Help	37	78*	22
Problem Solving	74	81*	19
Routine Helpfulness	18	44	56

*Sig. .05 **Sig. .10