

Multi-grade Teaching and Quality of Education in South African Rural Schools: Educators' Experiences

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KEYWORDS Multi-grade Teaching. Quality Education. Teacher Training. Rural Schools

ABSTRACT This paper reports on an investigation into the experiences of educators in Multi-grade teaching in rural schools. The study employed the qualitative approach of data collection, using observations and interviews. The findings suggest that in South Africa there is no curriculum differentiation between multi-grade and mono-grade classes, as such all learners use similar textbooks regardless. In addition, the national curriculum is graded and lacks both flexibility and integration. Absence of training of multi-grade teaching educators was another problem identified: only mono-grade educators are currently receiving attention with an assumption that such educators will automatically be able to teach in multi-grade schools. Further, educators believe that the lack of human and physical resources compromises the delivery of quality education. Also, the lack of support for educators seems to be the main problem in the implementation of the multi-grade strategy in classrooms. Multi-grade teaching is also hampered by the fact that many educators do not like to live and work in rural areas, where multi-grade teaching is mainly practiced. The study recommends the implementation of policies that recognises and supports multi-grade teaching in different contexts so that multi-grade pedagogy is understood and accepted by all.