

State of Multigrade Teacher Training in South African Universities

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[https://doi.org/10.35609/gcbssproceeding.2025.1\(134\)](https://doi.org/10.35609/gcbssproceeding.2025.1(134))

ABSTRACT

This reflective paper argues the point for the training of multigrade teacher trainees. Multigrade teaching affords learners from deep rural areas, hard to reach and war-torn areas chance to access education. Multigrade classes are often the only chance they have, to access quality and relevant education as espoused by the United Nations (UN). Universities have the responsibility to train and equip teachers to teach and prepare each country's learners, including those in rural areas. UN's Sustainable Development Goal (UNSDG's) number four (4) commits to 'ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and to promote lifelong learning opportunities for all'. The importance of universities on teacher training and development is emphasised further by DBE 'universities serve as the skills conveyer belt in SA and are key components of the country's entire education system. Specifically, education faculties are crucial in the provision of the nation's new teachers. Important observation is that 'the education system is directly linked to the quality of teacher education. SA has about 26 universities (public and private), none of these universities has a fully-fledged multigrade qualification. Only one university has a centre dedicated to multigrade teachers training in country that had 11 252 schools with multigrade classes. To support and emphasise my assertion we consulted some recent studies, Pele (2024:73) 'it has been found that both pre and in service opportunities of teacher training on multigrade teaching are non-existent in South Africa. The author also posits that 'many teachers do not receive training during their initial teacher education in preparation for multigrade classes' (Pele; 2023:74). Mnyandu (2020:64), states, 'teacher training in South Africa is based on single grade teaching and multigrade teachers are not equipped with the didactic skills required in multigrade'. Lack of training for multigrade teachers is supported by Taole (2022:1) when she states that, 'training and support provided to multigrade teachers are the same for both multigrade teachers and monograde teachers. This paper is part of my study on multigrade teaching in the foundation phase.

JEL Codes:

Keywords: *multigrade, SA universities, teacher training*