



Using Multi-Grade Teaching in Strengthening Students' Character Post-FTF Learning

Wasehudin¹, Kharisul Wathoni², Razali Bin Hassan³, Irfan Anshori⁴, Muhammad Faisal Akbar⁵

¹Universitas Islam Negeri SMH Banten, Indonesia

²Institut Agama Islam Negeri Ponorogo, Indonesia

³Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia UTHM, Malaysia

⁴STIT Ad-Da'wah Rangkasbitung Lebak Banten, Indonesia

⁵Program Pascasarjana Universitas Islam Negeri SMH Banten, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

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This research aims to learn multigrade teaching techniques to strengthen students' character values. Research methods include descriptive research through a qualitative approach. Researchers collect data through interviews, observation, and documentation. Qualitative data analysis is the collection, simplification, presentation of data, and conclusion. The results of this study describe that multi-grade teaching is closely related to strengthening the character values of post-face-to-face learning students. The process includes combining several grade levels with a maximum number of 25 students and then being given material by one teacher who emphasizes the learning process for students. The technique provides opportunities for students to improve the character values they have obtained. This technique encourages students to grow in learning effectively and efficiently and strengthens the character of students after the last 2 years, and students rarely meet with teachers. Some of the values obtained through multi-grade teaching: are independence, ethics, and cohesiveness.

Corresponding Author:

Wasehudin

Email: wasehudian@uinbanten.ac.id

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INTRODUCTION

Equivalent learning is a process that is produced by completing the learning requirements that should be carried out in schools in the form of suggestions for infrastructure, educators, students, and curriculum to be taught.¹ Learning will run systematically and smoothly if the institution optimizes the entire learning component. Learning activity is excellent and efficient if the teacher can master learning methods.² In addition, teachers can adjust the character and personality of students³ because if the educator or teacher does not have this soul, teaching and learning activities will not walk effectively.

Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia (KBBI) explains that a concept is a picture that includes objects, processes, understandings, and predetermined systems. In essence, the concept is something abstract from a mature idea. Kant made a theory by Harifudin Cawidu, a view common or abstract in everything. Multigrade Teaching is a learning method that combines several students who are members of several classes into 1 room. The process of teaching and learning activities is carried out with 1 teacher who is competent in their field at once.⁴ Multigrade Teaching is also a scenario of teaching and learning activities with patterns revealing the reality of learning and teaching.⁵ Multigrade Teaching is a system that prioritizes students. These students are centralized in 1 room and command or carry out independent learning.⁶ So that the teacher only needs to teach quietly in the same place and not necessarily go around to another class; it's just studying different material in 1 place. Multigrade teaching is a face of learning that requires educators to simultaneously provide learning in 1 or more places and visit different grade levels.

Samsul Maarif defines several notions of value: 1) value is empirical knowledge that is not only defined, but with the knowledge gained from the object, we can review and explore it. That way, value is not limited to subjective judgments but the existence of a substance in particular objects. 2) the value of the object contained in the fact or view. 3) the values are a particular appreciation, and that value is a state of life.

From the description above, multi-grade teaching in the fulfillment of character values is a learning concept in which there is a combination of several classes and only there is one teacher. The teacher focus on factors that help students to develop their character of these students, as well as strengthen their character to change for the better continuously.

Model learning is a means that the public has determined as an effort to improve

¹ Waspada, "Pengaruh Model Pembelajaran Discovery Learning Terhadap Hasil Belajar Pendidikan Kewarganegaraan Pada Kelas XI Madrasah Aliyah (MA) Al Nahdlah Islamic Boarding School Bojongsari Depok Jawa Barat," *JTA: Jurnal Tunas Aswaja* 1, no. 1 (2022): 9–18.

² Yendri Hamima, "Penggunaan Metode Modeling The Way Dalam Pembelajaran Kosakata Bahasa Inggris Untuk Meningkatkan Hasil Belajar Kelas VIII-3 SMP Negeri 2 Tembilahan Tahun Pelajaran 2019/2020," *Jurnal Pendidikan Tambusai* 6, no. 2 (2022): 9531–43.

³ Risbon Sianturi et al., "Status Profesi Guru Bimbingan Dan Konseling di Sekolah," *Journal of Education Research* 3, no. 2 (2022): 42–47.

⁴ Marsini Astuti, "Multigrade Dimasa Pandemi," *Jurnal Pedagogy: Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Pendidikan* 8, no. 1 (2021): 34–37.

⁵ Rustom A Velasco, Allan O Ramos, and Ranec Azarias, "BADANGAM: An Indigenized Multi-Grade Teaching Model," *International Journal of Research Studies in Education* 11, no. 2 (2022): 27–42.

⁶ Putriaji Hendikawati, "Multigrade Teaching: Upaya Mengatasi Masalah Pendistribusian Guru yang tidak Merata di Indonesia," *Jurnal LIK: Lembaran Ilmu Kependidikan* 37, no. 1 (2008): 55–61.

science, insight, and expertise.⁷ In addition, some students think that school is a means of exciting activities and can communicate with one another.

The school can foster creativity, skills, and awareness of the socialization of students.⁸ Sekolah is a place to interact between students and teachers to improve their intelligence, skills, and sense of thinking between each other.⁹ But for now, schools are disrupted by the Covid-19 disaster.¹⁰ The impact is enormous in the world of education. Moreover, in Indonesia, there are many facts that the schools can produce products to grow per economy in the world.¹¹

PTM is a learning process where teachers and students face each other so that the material presented can be understood easily. Face-to-face learning is a level formed to help the learning process of students by paying attention to events that affect the personality of students. Learning activities must be designed and applied effectively and efficiently to achieve the competency process to get proud results.¹² Optimal learning activities include face-to-face, structured, and independent but unstructured activities.

The concept of multi-grade teaching is held because there are several influencing factors, such as the shortage of teachers, the location of schools that are difficult to reach, limited space, and the students which are minimal.¹³ Incidents like this are sometimes the reason a teacher feels bored with the minimal number of students. At the same time, the learning curriculum must be carried out like large classes. Even a teacher always serves students to learn optimally in any condition.¹⁴ But for situations like this that allow multi-grade teaching-learning to be held, it is very beneficial for all students and parents because since the pandemic, learning in schools does not run effectively, so many learning targets are not met.

In addition to some factors lagging behind the achievement of the learning system, with this multi-grade teaching-learning concept, a teacher must be able to improve the character of the participant's students so that students are not too affected by this modern era. However, students must be able to coexist with this era because often, the learners already feel comfortable with this pandemic situation, so even when it's time for school, they

⁷ Rizqon Halal Syah Aji, "Dampak Covid-19 Pada Penelitian Di Indonesia: Sekolah, Keterampilan, Dan Proses Pembelajaran," *Salam: Jurnal Sosial Dan Budaya Syar-i* 7, no. 2 (2020): 395–402.

⁸ Octia Hasviani, Tutut Handayani, and Izza Fitri, "Strategi Guru Paud Dalam Meningkatkan Kemampuan Bersosialisasi Peserta Didik Di TK Negeri Pulau Beringin," *JIIP: Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Pendidikan* 5, no. 5 (2022): 1458–66.

⁹ Safuri Musa et al., "Upaya Dan Tantangan Kepala Sekolah PAUD Dalam Mengembangkan Lembaga Dan Memotivasi Guru Untuk Mengikuti Program Sekolah Penggerak," *Jurnal Obsesi: Jurnal Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini* 6, no. 5 (2022): 4239–54.

¹⁰ Sugeng Purwanto, Memen Akbar, and Ardianto Wibowo, "Penguatan Metode Pengajaran Kepada Guru-Guru SMA/SMK Sederajat Se-Kota Pekanbaru Dalam Rangka Mitigasi Bencana Pandemi Covid-19," *JUAR4: Jurnal Wahana Abdimas Sejahtera* 2, no. 2 (2021): 161–77.

¹¹ Roziana Baharin et al., "Impact of Human Resource Investment on Labor Productivity in Indonesia," *Iranian Journal of Management Studies* 13, no. 1 (2020): 139–64.

¹² Alwiyah and Sayyida, "Penerapan E-Learning Untuk Meningkatkan Inovasi Creativepreneur Mahasiswa," *ABDI JURNAL: ADI Bisnis Digital Interdisiplin Jurnal* 1, no. 1 (2020): 35–40.

¹³ Eeva Kaisa Hyry-Beihammer and Tina Hascher, "Multi-Grade Teaching Practices in Austrian and Finnish Primary Schools," *International Journal of Educational Research* 74, no. 2 (2015): 104–13.

¹⁴ Muh. Zein, "Peran Guru Dalam Pengembangan Pembelajaran," *Jurnal Inspiratif Pendidikan* 5, no. 2 (2016): 274–85.

do not want to leave, so it's not uncommon for parents to feel upset and angry towards children. Hopefully, with this multi-grade teaching lesson, teachers can restore learning motivation and can strengthen the character of students after face-to-face learning so that when it's time for face-to-face learning to be carried out, students are as excited as they used to be and know how important it is to seek knowledge. Thus, this study aims to describe the nature of multigrade teaching and to strengthen the character values of students in face-to-face learning at MTs Daar Et-Taqwa, Serang Regency.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research employed a qualitative method. It explores the subject of understudies, such as deeds, behaviors, motivations, and impressions. It also investigates particular natural languages and provides. This method is used to obtain relevant information and theories of understanding the subject under study. This study's subjects are the school's principal, teachers, and Learners. The techniques used to collect this data are interviews, observation, and documentation. Observations were made to observe field conditions. Interviews were conducted with all 8 teachers and most of the students. Documentation is done to support the data in completing this research. This qualitative data analysis technique includes collecting, simplifying, presenting data, and drawing data conclusions.

This research was implemented in MTs Daar Et-Taqwa, Cigodeg, Petir, and Serang Banten. This research was carried out for 2 months, from February to March 2022. The time for researchers to carry out this study is calculated within one week from the date of research approval, and data processing includes the submission of proposal forms and guidance processes.

This research uses 2 triangulation techniques, including source and technique. Researchers use source triangulation to explore the validity of information regarding implementing the multi-grade teaching concept. The supporting data sources are the principal and teachers who have mastered the concept of multi-grade teaching. Triangulation techniques are used to find out the efficacy of the multi-grade teaching concept in strengthening the character of face-to-face learners in MTs Daar Et-Taqwa then, data is analyzed to produce conclusions. This study will focus on the concept of multi-grade teaching in strengthening students' character after face-to-face learning.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Multi-Grade Teaching

Learning that combines more than one class is referred to as teaching that references all students in the same group.¹⁵ By combining more than one class, this learning pattern is found in schools geographically located in rural areas.¹⁶ Therefore, a teacher must be highly proficient in managing and organizing teaching and learning activities in the classroom. In addition, teachers must provide a solution to give birth to a learning innovation toward

¹⁵ Angela Little, *Multi-Grade Teaching: A Review of Research and Practice*, Education Research, Department for International Development (London, 1995).

¹⁶ M.J. Taole, "Identifying the Professional Knowledge Base for Multi-Grade Teaching," *Gender and Behaviour* 15, no. 4 (2017).

effective and efficient learning activities.¹⁷ This learning model is widely found in all corners of the world, even learning models by combining more than one class are found in many developed countries, not only developing countries.¹⁸ At least, the things underlying the occurrence of this dual class teaching are caused as follows: first, multigrade is often correlated with school institutions that have a relatively small scope and are geographically located in remote places; second, multigrade teaching occurs in the city due to the high number of absenteeism of teachers in teaching and learning activities; third, the problem of multigrade teaching can be described as a conscious response to the problem of education.¹⁹

Multi-grade Teaching Concept

Several terms emerged along with the birth of the concept of learning various classes, such as Class of Different Levels, Single School Level, Class of Age Variety, and Small Elementary School. Classes of different levels are learning patterns that are found in elementary schools.²⁰ Age-varietal classes are generally widely used as a term for education. In existence, this type of learning groups all students regardless of age, which is then united into a particular subgroup. A single-level school is also referred to as a school that has a variety of students in terms of age and ability.²¹ Small primary schools have fewer teachers than the minimum required number.²²

Character/Moral Values

KBBI explains that value means price. Furthermore, what is meant by price is a price that contains many benefits for the soul. A character essentially contains values in forming and giving birth to quality people to become a generation based on religion.²³ Through the character, education can grow ideally—identical character education with a perfect soul, morality, and health education. In addition, character education can provide positive value in managing daily life.²⁴ The discussion of character means that we are discussing something ingrained in us. The character can be summed up with two positive and negative variants. To understand the character, we must understand in depth what the character is. Character education is similar to moral education. Morals can be categorized as a trait that is embedded

¹⁷ Jehudin, "Penerapan Pembelajaran Kelas Rangkap Di SD Negeri 012 Tanjung Palas Menggunakan Metode Ceramah Materi Pendidikan Agama Islam Tahun Pelajaran 2016/2017," *JIME: Jurnal Ilmiah Mandala Education* 2, no. 2 (2016): 26–34.

¹⁸ Sudirman Siahaan, "Pembelajaran Ragam Kelas/Tingkatan (Multigrade Teaching) Di Sekolah Dasar (SD): Konsep Dan Penerapannya," *Jurnal Teknodik* 8, no. 15 (2004): 43–67.

¹⁹ Chris Berry, "Multigrade Teaching: A Discussion Document," 2004.

²⁰ Jia Lin et al., "Impact of COVID-19 Public Health Protocols on Teachers Instructing Children and Adolescents During an In-Person Simulation," *Journal of the Canadian Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry = Journal de l'Académie Canadienne de Psychiatrie de l'enfant et de l'adolescent* 31, no. 2 (2022): 52–63.

²¹ Dyah Ayu Megawaty et al., "Aplikasi Permainan Sebagai Media Pembelajaran Peta Dan Budaya Sumatera Untuk Siswa Sekolah Dasar," *Jurnal Komputasi* 9, no. 1 (2021): 58–66.

²² Sumarni, Abduh H. Harun, and Imran, "Penerapan Metode Diskusi Untuk Meningkatkan Hasil Belajar Siswa Kelas IV Sekolah Dasar Kecil Toraranga Pada Mata Pelajaran PKn Pokok Bahasan Sistem Pemerintahan Kabupaten, Kota Dan Provinsi," *Jurnal Kreatif Online (JKO)* 3, no. 4 (2015): 13–22.

²³ Dianto, "Character Building In New Normal Islamic Education," in *Proceeding International Seminar on Islamic Studies (INSIS)*, vol. 2, 2021, 264–69.

²⁴ Imam Tabroni et al., "Forming Character With Morals Prophet Muhammad SAW," *EAJMR: East Asian Journal of Multidisciplinary Research* 1, no. 1 (2022): 41–48.

in a person.²⁵ With it, a good and bad character is born without considering many thoughts. The purpose of *akblab* is to achieve happiness in human life, both in the world and in the hereafter. In the Qur'an, it has been described that morals are performed against Allah, parents, and others.²⁶

Face-to-Face (FTF) Learning

Face-to-face learning is face-to-face learning that presents the teacher as a teacher in the classroom.²⁷ Face-to-face learning orientation is on a teacher who can directly transfuse learning material.²⁸ Anggrawan defines face-to-face learning as a classroom teaching and learning process that relies on a teacher's presence to teach.²⁹ Face-to-face learning is also referred to as classical learning. It is because the learning pattern applies a communication interaction between teachers and students in the same room.³⁰ Thus, face-to-face learning can be concluded as being carried out directly and face-to-face between teachers and students without virtual media as an intermediary.

Application of multigrade teaching in MTs Daar El-Taqwa Serang runs optimally. In the process, several new things include the teaching and learning process according to the existing schedule. The entire class follows the teaching and learning process until no empty classrooms are found. Therefore, multigrade teaching becomes very important, especially for educational institutions where the number of teachers is far less than the number of classes available.

At Daar El-Taqwa Serang, the use of multi-grade teaching is well applied. It is done as a form of character strengthening for students after face-to-face learning is repeated, post-pandemic, requiring learning to be carried out online. It was done because it was identified that several problems occurred after online learning. Among the problems found in these students is the loss of a sense of desire to learn and not being on time until it is identified that there is a declining student personality character in learning. In addition, the problems identified by other students are the relatively small number of students, making it possible to use multigrade teaching in the teaching and learning process. Another problem arises from the condition of relatively few teachers due to inequality in their distribution, including what happened in MTs Daar El-Taqwa Serang.

²⁵ Miftah Anugrah Nasution, Syaokani, and Mesiono, "Model Pendidikan Akhlak Di MTs Al-Wasliyah 63 Punggulan Air Joman Kabupaten Asahan," *EDU-RILIGLA: Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan Islam Dan Keagamaan* 1, no. 1 (2017): 74–89.

²⁶ La Iba, "Konsep Pendidikan Akhlak Dalam Al-Qur'an (Kajian Tafsir Surat Luqman Ayat 12-19)," *Al-Iltizam: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam* 2, no. 2 (2017): 138–55.

²⁷ Anthony Anggrawan, "Analisis Deskriptif Hasil Belajar Pembelajaran Tatap Muka Dan Pembelajaran Daring Menurut Gaya Belajar Mahasiswa," *Matrik: Jurnal Manajemen, Teknik Informatika & Rekayasa Komputer* 18, no. 2 (2019): 339–46.

²⁸ Michael Simonson, Susan M. Zvacek, and Sharon Smaldino, *Teaching and Learning at a Distance: Foundations of Distance Education* (USA: IAP-Information Age Publishing, 2019).

²⁹ Nevly Wisano Powa, Witarsa Tambunan, and Mesta Limbong, "Analisis Persetujuan Orang Tua Terhadap Rencana Pembelajaran Tatap Muka Terbatas Di SMK Santa Maria Jakarta," *Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan* 10, no. 2 (2021): 100–111.

³⁰ Siti Faizatun Nissa and Akhmad Haryanto, "Implementasi Pembelajaran Tatap Muka Di Masa Pandemi Covid-19," *Jurnal IKA PGSD (Ikatan Alumni PGSD) UNARS* 8, no. 2 (2020): 402–9.

Multigrade Teaching Techniques to Strengthen Students' Character Values

Application of multigrade teaching in MTs Daar El-Taqwa Serang Banten has been going on for quite a long time and is not new for all parties. Multigrade teaching is implemented to use time much more effectively. In his interview, Mr. Luthfi, S.Pd, the principal of the Daar El-Taqwa school, explained that applying multigrade teaching is a strategy in the learning process to produce more optimal learning outcomes.³¹ In addition, learning by using multigrade teaching is much more different because it can improve the excellent character of students together. In addition, the learning process using multigrade teaching is beneficial for teachers.

At MTs Daar El-Taqwa Serang Banten, as explained by Mrs. Julaha, S.Pd, in her interview, explained that the teaching and learning process using multigrade teaching is constructive for teachers in carrying out their profession as teachers. It can also provide character strengthening to students together at the same time.³² In addition, learning using multigrade teaching can foster independence values for students and train cohesiveness among students. Ahmad Hidayat, one of the MTs students of Daar El-Taqwa Serang Banten, in his interview, said that learning using multigrade teaching is very fun³³ because the condition of the class becomes crowded and can foster a sense of enthusiasm in learning.

Below are some of the reasons for implementing multi-grade teaching-learning, namely:

Table 1. The Reasons for Implementing Multi-Grade Teaching-Learning

Demographic Reasons	This kind of situation is that teachers teach a small number of students, especially in residential areas, which allows this learning to be carried out.
Geographical Reasons	The location is difficult to reach, the lack of transportation, the settlements are constantly moving around, and particular jobs support the use of multi-grade teaching
Limited Classrooms	Although the number of students is above average, the number of classes that do not meet the requirements, one way to anticipate this problem is to use a multi-grade model of disambiguation teaching
Lack of Teachers	Although the number of teachers is vast, getting teachers willing to teach in certain areas is difficult. The effectiveness of teacher allocation that is not following the target, tools, and information media is one factor that teachers cannot afford, especially the burden of needs a relatively high daily staple does not match the income of the teacher, plus the accuracy of the payday, which is

³¹ Interview with Mr. Luthi, S.Pd.I (Headmaster) on February 9, 2022.

³² Interview with Mrs. Julaha, S.Pd. (Teacher) on February 9, 2022.

³³ Interview with Ahmad Hidayat (Student) on February 13, 2022.

	sometimes late. Suffice the teacher's interest in teaching in the venue
Absent Teachers	This reason does apply in not only to remote areas but also to the city. There are also a lot of teachers who are not present, perhaps in terms of situations and conditions that make the reason for not the presence of a teacher.

The development of this multi-grade teaching learning pattern has several concepts that can be improved. A teacher can lead three or more classes in a separate or one room. The samples developed are adjusted to the situation and conditions of the school. From the information above, the concept of multigrade teaching has objectives and benefits, which are discussed in several points, including:

Table 2. Objectives and Benefits of Multigrade Teaching

Number and Equalization	Multigrade Teaching requires us to balance the aspects of number and equity, namely by maximizing existing natural resources or human resources
Economical	Suppose you use this multi-grade teaching-learning system and the budget that the government and the community bear for the benefit of the school becomes light. In addition, we can donate unused education budgets and the evaluation of education to rural areas that are difficult to reach and remote.
Pedagogical	After a long time, education has not been able to create independent graduates or human resources. After scrutiny from the experiences of several countries that apply multi-grade teaching-learning, it proves that this multi-grade teaching concept can add independent students.
Security	From this concept of learning, the state can build several educational facilities in a place that is affordable for students. Parents' vigilance about something undesirable in their child is reduced with these safety reasons.

From the explanation mentioned in detail, it is identified that this multi-class teaching learning pattern has advantages and disadvantages. The following are the advantages and disadvantages of the multi-grade learning model:

Table 3. Advantages and Disadvantages of Multi-Grade Teaching

Advantages	Disadvantages
The teacher can manage students	limited learning resources to support the

from 2 different classes	implementation of learning which includes books, and other teaching facilities
This kind of learning concept is more conducive if the number of students combined in the class is not more than 25 students	The ineffectiveness of learning if the student has a capacity of 25 students, then the learning must be grouped into 2 classes
The teacher can combine 2 lessons using the same topic	Not every teacher can manage students in such

The Use of Multigrade Learning in Strengthening Students' Character Values

The information gathered by the researchers revealed that the concept of multigrade teaching was properly applied at MTs Daar Et-Taqwa Serang. In its implementation, it is explained that multigrade teaching at MTs Daar Et-Taqwa aims to increase students' character values and strengths in character education. In addition, the value of cohesiveness among students can grow along with implementing the teaching and learning process using multigrade teaching. The principal of MTs, Daar Et-Taqwa Serang, explained that using multigrade teaching in the learning process helps teachers to provide character strengthening directly, in one time and one space.

In the learning process using multigrade teaching, the student character-strengthening process is carried out by the teacher who fills the class. The process is a transfer of knowledge that allows students to accept it. The technique used by a teacher in strengthening the character of students is to convey divine reinforcements. The more routine a teacher provides character-strengthening values, the more character values grow in students. In addition, implementing learning using multigrade teaching can foster ethical values and cohesiveness in students.

The value of character education applied by the teacher in learning using multigrade teaching includes the value of students' attitudes in respecting someone more mature above him and younger below him. It is a significant value in assessing a person's personality. Thus, students who are the main object are expected to grow by having good character values that can be applied in their empirical life.

Furthermore, with this multi-grade teaching concept, students start the learning process by asking questions to provoke other students to remember the material teachers have delivered in previous meetings. Students must know the attitude towards someone more mature and younger because it is one of the characteristics someone should be aware of. Then make the learner the main object so that the good character can be applied to his personal life. The concept of multi-grade teaching in strengthening character has many benefits for students. One is respecting each other towards their peers, fostering a sense of cohesiveness, and creating more innovative class conditions.

The sample proves that multi-grade teaching significantly strengthens students' character through their daily lives in the school environment by optimizing activities development, description, practice, and practice. Furthermore, the role of multi-grade teaching in strengthening character is evidenced by the increasing behavior of students who

are getting better every day. Through this concept, teachers must be more active and innovative in using the model to grow and strengthen students' personalities. Multigrade teaching presents an excellent opportunity to improve moral values that encourage the achievement of the goal of strengthening moral values, especially in post-FTF learning, by improving character independence, ethics, and cohesiveness.

Based on this description, the researcher concluded that the concept of multi-grade teaching in strengthening the character of students after face-to-face learning is very supportive of educators in improving and strengthening the character of learners after so far learning has been hampered by situations that do not allow them to be active in learning. Multigrade teaching provides an excellent opportunity to strengthen character and achieve desired goals after this FTF learning. One of the main values of strengthening character values is developing an aspect of personality through multi-grade teaching, including independence, ethics, and cohesiveness.

CONCLUSION

The use of multigrade teaching in strengthening the character values of students after face-to-face learning is very supportive of educators in improving and strengthening students' character. Multigrade teaching provides an excellent opportunity to strengthen moral character and achieve desired goals after face-to-face learning. One of the main values of character strengthening is the development of personality through the concept of multi-grade teaching, which includes independence, ethics, and cohesiveness that are intertwined in students, both within the school environment and their family environment.

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