

UNDERSTANDING THE EFFECTS OF COVID 19 IN ORAL READING FLUENCY

by:

Sarahlly M. Baluyot

Teacher I, Salian Elementary School

For the past two years, people have been accustomed to living under the “new normal” proceeding with our daily lives with masks, face shields, alcohol, social distancing, and the likes. We have already learned how to adapt to changes we may have never imagined happening in our lifetime.

The Philippine education, like all schools all over the globe had to design learning delivery modalities that would suit the needs of the times. Thus, the implementation of distance learning was implemented just to ensure that education continues despite the pandemic.

As the Department of Education started distance learning, so much effort, time and resources have been devoted to providing all the necessary learning materials to proceed with teaching and learning while learners stay at home.

For two years, schools did not have much choice but distance learning due to all health and safety limitations.

However, as educational gears started to shift from distance learning to back-to-school learning, we are now starting to see learning gaps as products of this pandemic learning.

Oral reading fluency has been greatly affected since classroom teachers did not have the physical time to teach reading in schools – especially beginning reading in Kinder and Grade 1 even up until Grade 3.

Understanding the effects of the pandemic in oral reading fluency can be complex since there are variables which can be very difficult to accurately study.

For one, many of our old assessment tools for oral reading and fluency require one-on-one administration by the teacher. In this case, since we have just started easing the health and safety protocols, distance between teachers and learners to the administration of such reading assessment tools can still be challenging.

In a study by Benjamin W. Dominique of Stanford University, he stated that studying learning loss can be difficult. He identified two key issues on this matter, one of which is the selection – as to which learners or set of learners would be observed to reflect the true of reading gaps. Also, identifying the resources to be used for the assessment can be an issue – do we have to assess those under modular learning or those in the online learning platforms or those who participate in the limited face-to-face instruction.

According to the study, another issue is that from the many standardized educational outcomes, studied have been conducted to older learners – thus it may leave essential results for the younger learners who are the beginning readers.

However, no matter how we put things into different perspectives, reality is that there are reading gaps – oral reading fluency issues – which need to be addressed the soonest so it will not further hamper the learning of other subject areas, as reading is the basic skill needed in studying other learning areas.

Reading and oral reading fluency - whether in English or Filipino - are very important skills which cannot wait, otherwise, we may end up facing greater learning challenges as learners move up to higher grade levels. Measures for intervention and remediation need to be crafted to bridge these reading gaps slowly but surely.

References:

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