



ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

Education

**EXTENDED LEARNING OPPORTUNITY:
GAUGING THE POTENTIAL FOR PGES
LEARNERS LEARNING RECOVERY
INTERVENTION PROGRAM**

KEY WORDS: Extended Learning Opportunity, below grade learners, grade level ready, learning recovery

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ABSTRACT

The study determined the effectiveness of the Extended Learning Opportunity (ELO) Reading Intervention Program in bridging the reading ability of learners from being below grade learners to grade level ready. The intervention was taken by 25 grade four learners in Pedro Guevara Elementary School, Manila. It employed Quasi Experimental One Group Design. The intervention lasted for 12 weeks. The first four weeks were focused on phonemic and phonological awareness which include both the short and long vowel sounds. The next two weeks were focused on word analysis and spelling, the next two weeks were on fluency, another two weeks for instructional reading and the last two weeks were focused on the reading and writing connection. The results show that there is a significant difference in the Phil-IRI pre and post-tests. It means that there is a significant improvement in the scores of children in word reading and in comprehension tests. Hence, ELO is recommended to be used by Pedro Guevara Elementary School in its Learning Recovery Program.

INTRODUCTION

Before the pandemic hit the world, issues in the quality of basic education were raised as the Philippines ranked the lowest in the regional and international learning assessments. Even before the pandemic the UNESCO reported that there were children who are unable to read, and this gap will continue if children increase if children will not be exposed to effective instruction (p.5)

Before the pandemic, an estimated 15 million children in the region between the ages of 5-14 were out of school and nearly two-thirds of children in the region were unable to read with proficiency. An additional 10 million children were at risk of dropping out of school, due to poverty, social marginalization, displacement, and disruption caused by conflict. In 2020, on top of the pre-pandemic estimates, UNESCO estimated that a further 1.31 million children and youths were at risk of dropping out of school due to the COVID-19 crisis, noting that these children were unlikely to return to their education institution.

During the pandemic, the Department of Education decided to launch its Basic Education Learning Continuity Plan to ensure that learners were given access to education despite the circumstances. In Metro Manila, most schools shifted to blended learning modality. Online platforms were offered in most schools in the metro. Pedro Guevara Elementary School, located at the heart of Manila, specifically in San Nicolas district, is one of the 107 schools in the division of Manila which offers blended learning where most families of learners were provided with tablets by the LGU. Along with the tablets is free data for internet usage. Though the data is limited, it was still a big help to most families. However, screen time was limited to an hour a day. Each subject was only given 30 minutes synchronous time each week. All the other activities were asynchronous. Some children had problems attending their synchronous classes as their place was on the dead spot and did not have a network signal. Children identified as homeless were even having problems charging for their tablets. Hence, these children were supplied modules which they can study with the help of their parents and other key people at home. Children with several siblings have problems attending synchronous classes and turning in their asynchronous activity outputs, leading them to rely on the modules given to them. With parents who need to make ends meet, some of them were quarantined in different facilities, some children were left on their own devices, coping with their academic and family situations. With these situations the learning gaps grew even wider.

As the schools in the Philippines reopened their doors to in person classes DepEd identified learning losses and learning

gaps among the children. The department then created and initiated the Learning Continuity Recovery Program. The Department of Education (DepEd) has adopted a National Learning Recovery Program (NLRP) to address the learning gaps among students that were heightened by school closures and disruption due to the COVID-19 pandemic (DO 013, S. 2023). DepEd -National Capital Region on the other hand has initiated its Learning Continuity Recovery Program since June 22 and this was disseminated through the Regional Memo No. 372 S. 2022. All schools in the region were mandated to create their own intervention programs to mitigate the learning gaps and losses of the children.

Grade 4 is the start of Key Stage 2, where every pupil is expected to read with comprehension after completing the key stage 1. However, the result of the Phil-IRI Group Screening Test for SY 2022-2023 in Pedro Guevara Elementary School showed that out of 912 pupils who took the test, only 66 were identified as independent readers, 306 were instructional readers, 347 were under frustration level which means that they can read but have poor comprehension level, 192 were identified as nonreaders which means that they could not read the words in the passages intended for grade 4. After a series of oral reading tests, from 192 non-readers, 94 were identified as below grade learners which means that they are in grade four, but their reading level is either grade 2 or grade 1. Hence, they could not read the grade passages. Upon further tests, it was found out that they have only mastered their alphabet knowledge and could not distinguish the short and long vowel sounds. With this result, these pupils will surely lag compared to their classmates who are grade ready. Teachers needed to create an intervention program to recover these pupils and make these children "grade level ready" which means that they are reading in the level that are in.

Allensworth and Schwartz (2020) emphasized that "learning losses are likely to show up differently across grades and subjects, with intensive recovery needs concentrated in the early grades and among already struggling students Supportive school environments and strong teacher-student relationships speed recovery from learning loss. High-dosage tutoring that is directly tied to classroom content -- helping students succeed in their coursework -- can substantially accelerate learning in both math and reading for the most struggling students". According to Rivkin, S.G. and J.C. (2013), "a certain amount of extended school time improves student academic performance". Extended Learning Opportunity (ELO), a reading intervention program that will run for 12 weeks, was conceptualized by the researcher to help these children recover from the learning loss and improve their reading performance. The intervention program covered Phonological / Phonemic Awareness, Word

Analysis/ Spelling, Fluency, Instructional Reading and Reading and Writing Connections.

The purpose of this study was to gauge the potential of the program, to assess if the program will work for below grade learners. The researcher would specifically want to determine the following:

1. Is there a significant difference between the pretest scores and the post test results?
2. Is ELO effective in bridging the gap between the status from being below grade learners to grade level ready.

METHODOLOGY

Out of the 94 pupils identified as below grade learners, the researcher randomly selected 25 pupils to undergo Extended Learning Opportunity (ELO) for 12 weeks. These pupils came from the 20 sections of grade 4 in Pedro Guevara Elementary School. The intervention program was conducted in 60 minutes daily. The Phil-IRI results were utilized by the researcher. Since in the Group Screening Test, these children were identified as Non-Readers, there was no use to administer the Silent Reading Test where speed and accuracy are measured. Only the Oral Reading Test was administered.

The first four weeks of the intervention program were used to develop the phonemic and phonological awareness of children, distinguishing between short and long vowel sounds, learning about blends, digraphs, and diphthongs. Goswami, Thomson, Richardson, Stainthorp, Hughes, Rosen, Scott (2002) suggested that “a sequence of phonological awareness development is universal across languages. Evidence of this lies in phonological skills such as syllable segmentation, initial phoneme identification, and rhyme recognition, which begin before developing literacy skills”. In the case of children who are below grade learners, a scaffold must be laid first before they can climb to the next level. While they can read three-letter words, they need to learn and master the difference between short and long vowel sounds, the sound of two consonants when blended, the unusual sounds of digraphs and diphthongs so that they can easily manipulate more words. Alongside this, word analysis and spelling were being developed. Phonological Awareness enables children to make sense of the grapheme-phoneme correspondences they are learning and to deploy that knowledge effectively for reading and spelling of orthographically unfamiliar words (Pritchard et al., 2012; Seidenberg and McClelland, 1989).

The next four weeks were spent developing fluency, one week for reading accuracy, one for speed reading, and one week for automaticity and another week for reading with expression or prosody. According to Pikulski and Chard (2005) “Fluency is the bridge between decoding and comprehension”. Hence, it is necessary to master this skill so that children comprehend what they read. The last 2 weeks were used to develop comprehension and the reading and writing connection. According to Sawchuk (2023), “reading and writing are intimately connected”. Domico (1993) and Richgels (1995) theorized that “the ability to read words is tied to their ability to write words in a somewhat reciprocal relationship. The more opportunities children must write, the greater the likelihood that they will reproduce spellings of words they have seen and heard”. The researcher used teacher-made materials which are content validated by the School Learning Resource Management System team in developing all the skills. Pupils under the Extended Learning Opportunity (ELO) reading intervention program were given the post Phil-IRI Post Test after 12 weeks.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data gathered to address the questions raised in this study are presented as follows:

Table 1. PHIL-IRI Oral Reading Pre-test Results

Pupils	Word Reading (No. of Words= 59)	Reading Comprehension 7 items		Reading Profile
		Raw	Percentage	
1	16%	1	14%	Frustration
2	20%	1	14%	Frustration
3	25%	2	29%	Frustration
4	30%	1	14%	Frustration
5	20%	1	14%	Frustration
6	16%	1	14%	Frustration
7	25%	2	29%	Frustration
8	30%	3	43%	Frustration
9	20%	1	14%	Frustration
10	20%	1	14%	Frustration
11	20%	1	14%	Frustration
12	8%	0	0	Frustration
13	20%	1	14%	Frustration
14	16%	1	14%	Frustration
15	16%	2	29%	Frustration
16	14%	0	0	Frustration
17	20%	2	29%	Frustration
18	25%	2	29%	Frustration
19	8%	0	0	Frustration
20	19%	0	0	Frustration
21	20%	1	14%	Frustration
22	25%	1	29%	Frustration
23	8%	0	0	Frustration
24	16%	1	14%	Frustration
25	25%	2	29%	Frustration

The table shows that 3 of the learners were reading only 8% of the 59 words in the selection, 1 was reading 14% of the text, 5 were reading 16% of the words, 1 was reading 19% of the text, 8 were reading 20% of the words in the passage, 5 were reading 25% of the words in the selection and only read 30% of the words in the text given for grade 4 pupils. High frequency words were included in the selection hence these children were able to read those. However, it won't be enough for them to understand the passage thus the results garnered in the comprehension test were very low as all 25 pupils were under frustration level.

Table 2. PHIL-IRI Oral Reading Post-test Results

Pupils	Word Reading (No. of Words= 59)	Reading Comprehension 7 items		Reading Profile
		Raw	Percentage	
1	70%	5	71%	Frustration
2	75%	5	71%	Frustration
3	76%	6	86%	Instructional
4	76%	5	71%	Frustration
5	75%	5	71%	Frustration
6	70%	5	71%	Frustration
7	76%	6	86%	Instructional
8	79%	6	86%	Instructional
9	67%	5	71%	Frustration
10	70%	5	71%	Frustration
11	75%	6	86%	Instructional
12	67%	4	57%	Frustration
13	70%	6	86%	Instructional
14	67%	5	71%	Frustration
15	70%	6	86%	Instructional
16	70%	4	57%	Frustration
17	76%	6	86%	Instructional
18	76%	5	71%	Instructional
19	67%	4	57%	Frustration
20	70%	4	57%	Frustration
21	70%	5	71%	Frustration
22	76%	6	86%	Instructional
23	70%	4	57%	Frustration

24	76%	6	86%	Instructional
25	79%	6	86%	Instructional

After 12 weeks, the children under Extended Learning Opportunity Intervention showed progress in terms of the percentage of words that they can read and their scores in the comprehension test are better compared to the pre- test scores. The T- test was used to see if there is a significant difference between the percentage scores in the word reading before and after the Extended Learning Opportunity Intervention Program. The computed t- value is at 12.93 while the tabular value is 2.64 at 0.05 level of significance.

This means that there is a significant difference between the pretest and post test scores in word reading.

In the comprehension test, only 11 got a score of 6 which is equivalent to 86%, 10 got a score of 5 equivalent to 71% and 4 got a score of 4 equivalent to 57%. Compared to the pretest, scores in the post test were higher. The t-test was employed to see if there was a significant difference between the pretest and the post test scores. The computed t-test was 5.52 which is higher than the tabular value of 2.64 at 0.05 level of significance which means that in a period of 14 weeks, there is a significant difference in the comprehension test scores of the children under the Extended Learning Opportunity (ELO) Reading Intervention Program.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study's main purpose was to determine if Extended Learning Opportunity (ELO) will be effective in bridging the gap from being below grade learners to grade level ready. It may not have produced independent readers in 12 weeks, the program showed promise in increasing the reading level of the children. Though most were still in frustration level in the Phil-IRI, the significant difference in the scores means that the program works for the children who are below grade learners. It has achieved what normal classroom instruction failed to do for the last two years. Hence, ELO (Extended Learning Opportunity) is recommended to be used by Pedro Cueva Elementary School learners in its recovery program.

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