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EDTC805 - Cross-Discipline Studies

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Task

To write a research-based article about the loss in students' literacy skills due to COVID-19's impact on the education system. This article will be thoroughly researched and submitted for publication consideration to [The Reading Teacher](#), one of the prominent publications from The International Literacy Association.

Objective

To research, analyze, reflect upon, and come up with a solution for the issue at hand. The issue being discussed is to look into the regression in literacy skills for students from Spring 2020 to the current (2021-2022) school year due to the shift to virtual and hybrid learning.

Rationale And Supporting Research

As a middle school English Language Arts teacher, I have observed regression in the majority of students' literacy. This varies by particular student, of course, based on their work ethic and general educational ability. However, the overall regression observed has been overwhelming. This regression is also not limited to those students who were exclusively remote. Even students in the hybrid setting or even in the "regular" classroom setting have regressed, for the most part.

Despite schools' initiatives for the 2020-2021 school year trying to get everything back to its pre-COVID pandemic norm, it still was not quite the same. Teachers were still bound to their desks, in both the literal and figurative way, and could not conduct a classroom in the manner in which they were used to. Long were the days of face-to-face small group instruction to differentiate content or even the simple act of circling the room to field questions, address struggles, and check for comprehension.

Students, in most schools, were separated into three different categories: In-school group A, In-school Group B, and All-virtual. Such grouping not only made instruction more challenging for educators, but also for students. "The students learning virtually were clearly not as

engaged. once locked in, students remove themselves from the academic screen, stretch their legs out, and allow their minds to wander from assigned prerecorded lessons and academic chore lists. Additionally, live streaming and independent work are much more passive than interactions students typically experience in the classroom” (Doele, 2021). Students learning virtually were simply not engaged on the content and had their minds and motivations shift elsewhere. That can be common in a traditional classroom setting, of course, but this issue was amplified during remote learning.

Experts and government agencies not even affiliated with education were drawing conclusions about remote learning’s impact on students. “Data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention also suggested that virtual learning ‘might present more risks than in-person instruction related to child and parental mental and emotional health and some health-supporting behaviors’” (Dickler, 2021). Given how important Social Emotional Learning (SEL) is to schools and students, this is a factor that even goes beyond academics. Students have regressed significantly in general social skills and group collaboration, two immensely valuable skills for education and their professional ventures, but the lockdowns deeply negated any progress. To collaborate with others and have general communication with peers, students will not only learn more but also build valuable learning skills such as problem-solving, questioning, collaborative learning, and setting/achieving goals.

As educators have experienced students coming back to the classroom in person, the regression has been noticeable. “Nearly all — more than 97% — of educators reported seeing some learning loss in their students over the past year when compared with children in previous years” (Dickler, 2021). As previously stated, the consensus among educators is that students naturally have a learning regression when school is out for the summer. However, the overwhelming majority of teachers are seeing it now with their own students. That number has never been so high. To add it to, that 97% of students includes the high-performing students,

many of which are still doing academic work (by choice) while not in school in hopes they do not fall behind.

Further, more in-depth research will be conducted for my article.

Qualitative Data

The use of qualitative data is essential in this article and discussion. Educators can look at the test scores and assessments given in class, but just getting the feel of how students are doing through informal teachers' observations will be very valuable. Sending out a survey on potential student regression will allow me, the researcher, to have data from another end of the spectrum that will support the idea of virtual learning leading to a regression in literacy. This survey would also be given to teachers in all grade levels so as not to be targeted to a particular age group.

Proposed Solution

The proposed solution, which will need to be supported by other educators' initiatives, is to find a way to differentiate instruction and curriculum to meet the needs of learners. That could vary between reteaching potentially "lost" content, tying in previous knowledge into new material more than usual, or rewriting the curriculum. The latter is, of course, not the ideal solution, but might need to be something to address to get students back on their educational path.

References

- Dickler, J. (2021, March 30). *Virtual school resulted in 'significant' academic learning loss, study finds*. CNBC.
<https://www.cnbc.com/2021/03/30/learning-loss-from-virtual-school-due-to-covid-is-significant-.html>
- Doele, K. (2021, March 3). *Student engagement is often missing during online learning*. CSA Education.
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