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EDTC809 - Assessment and Evaluation

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Research Questions:

1. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and in turn, virtual instruction, has there been significant regression in literacy skills development from Spring 2020 to now?
2. Is there a correlation between students' growth in literacy depending on whether they had in-person versus mostly, if not all, virtual instruction?
3. To what degree are students identifying and reflecting upon any changes in their literacy development due to the year-and-a-half shift to virtual instruction?

This study will be analyzing and measure the literacy loss among middle school students due to the shift to remote learning from Spring 2020 - Fall 2021. When all students were in the virtual learning environment at the end of the 2019-2020 school year and many in the entire 2020-2021 school year, how much, if any literacy loss was there? The research is clear about general learning loss, "students who spent the least amount of time learning remotely during the 2020-21 school year missed the equivalent of seven to 10 weeks of math learning" (Turner, 2022). What about literacy specifically?

Now that schools are back to in-person setting and assessment data, both formal and informal, can be analyzed, one can see where students are with their literacy development vs. where they should be under normal circumstances. Identifying the correlation between expected student performance and where they are will help stakeholders adapt the curriculum accordingly.

This will be a qualitative study where data will be collected through a survey using the Likert scale as well as interviews. A qualitative study will be used as it gives a unique, personal perspective from both teachers and students and how they feel they

have developed over the last 2+ years. The teachers can provide first-hand insight as to what they see in the classroom. This does mirror quantitative data in a way because they likely will be mentioning what see in both formative and summative assessments. The students can reflect upon how their ideas of school and literacy may have changed since the initial shift to virtual learning. Middle school students are old enough that self-evaluation is a skill that they possess.

One could argue that a mixed methods model would be best where the researcher can compare the qualitative data (survey and interview results) to the quantitative data (standardized assessment results), but there might not be enough quantitative data available given that standardized testing resumed only last school year.

The samples will be middle school students and teachers. These will be separate samples and the amount depends on how many participants respond to the request. The participants will first be sent a survey asking for a level of interest in taking part in the study. They will be contacted via email, pending IRB approval. Since using one's own district is discouraged, I will reach out to the district where I live and my son attends school. I would obviously let them know that all names would be redacted and confidential. Given that I do not know any of the teachers or students at the middle school level, there will not be any conflict of interest.

The only potential issue that I see arising is a lack of participation. Given that the participants do not know the researcher, what would give them the incentive to join? The researcher would consider some reward, a gift card being the most likely option, to

hopefully increase interest and participation. If participation continues to be an issue, the researcher could reach out to a colleague in the cohort to see if I could conduct the study within his or her district. This would, of course, require another IRB. However, it would likely garner better participation numbers.

The questions to the students will be related to how they think their reading skills have changed since returning to school, whether or not their outlook on reading and school has changed, if they think learning the content is more difficult, and how virtual learning changed their academic practices. The teachers will be asked what changes in literacy development and trajectory they have seen in their students, new habits/practices that the students now have, and any new differentiation methods or adjustments to the curriculum that they have had to make.

References

Turner, C. (2022, June 22). *6 things we've learned about how the pandemic disrupted learning*. NPR.org.
<https://www.npr.org/2022/06/22/1105970186/pandemic-learning-loss-findings>