The Difficulties Encountered by Filipino Elementary Pupils in Completing Online Performance Tasks

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ABSTRACT

This study analyzed the difficulties encountered by Filipino elementary pupils in completing an online performance task. The data and results were gathered through an online questionnaire and focus group discussions conducted in 2020–2021. Twenty participants contributed to the Focus Group Discussions (FGD), while 83 respondents answered the online survey questionnaire. The findings revealed that most of the teachers either do not explain the content of the rubrics or do not present them at all when assigning online performance tasks. Teachers should be familiar with the process of developing rubrics. They should understand how to set appropriate activities based on the pupils' degree of comprehension. In addition, most Filipino elementary pupils find giving simultaneous perfor-mance tasks difficult. They cannot do their studies because they lack the necessary equipment and slow internet connection. The most significant predictor is the subject teacher, the needed materials, the submission deadline, appropriate gadgets, internet connection, and the learning environment. When it comes to completing their perfor-mance tasks, pupils must set realistic deadlines and goals. For the students, completing a task requires plenty of time to finish, especially concurrent tasks. In addition, both the teacher and the students need adequate technology and a steady internet connection at home to fully deliver quality education in this pandemic.

Keywords: online performance task, Filipino, elementary pupils

I. INTRODUCTION

Blended learning has been used for the past 100 years in Europe using early technology such as radio and televisions. Distance learning was also changing (Valentine, Gellman-Danley, and Fetzner, 1999). The distance learning approach uses Videotapes, audiotapes, and emails have been used to deliver distance learning. Today, the modern age has utilized various types of distance learning through blended learning. Distance learning is an instruction used to reach students who cannot go through face-to-face classes using technology (Elsberry, 2016).

Moreover, blended learning is an approach that combines face-to-face learning activities with online learning practices (Badawi, 2009). Strategically, the asynchronous online approach involves individual project consultations, a reflection table, and a thinking design template (Hew and Cheung, 2014). Students learn through online instruction in a blended learning environment – with student control over time, place, path, and pace – and education in a supervised brick-and-mortar location away from home (Tayebinik and Puteh, 2013). According to Akkoyunlu and Soylu (2006), there is a success in communication and interaction in learning through online platforms. Students enjoyed participating in blended learning discussions compared to a face-to-face setup supplemented with an online class because they could communicate and interact confidently.

In most technologically advanced countries, blended learning has become the favored model of instruction due to the advancement of Information technology (Bates, 2010). However, in developing countries such as the Asian Region, it is challenging both for teachers and the students because of the adaptation and development of the latest software, hardware, and electronic communications (Gaol and Hutagalung, 2020). In most parts of Asia, most countries are undergoing social and economic changes such as globalization, technology, and industrialization. Even before the pandemic, governments are giving high priority to Online Distance Learning (Smith, 2010).

The Department of Education (DepEd) in the Philippines recently implemented the new K to 12 Curriculum by the Republic Act 1013 or the Enhance Basic Education 2013, which resulted in curriculum update and alignment of the educational curriculum of the Philippines to the world (Montebon, 2014). However, SARS Cov2 or Covid19 is a game-changer. It completely changes

the face of education in the Philippines. All physical classes were suspended nationwide since the transmission of the virus is through droplets of body liquids and close contact communication. The Department of Education (DepEd) adopted blended learning, incorporating distance blended learning as an alternative way to continue learning despite the Covid-19 pandemic (Baclig, 2020). The most delivery mode in education, both public and private schools, is through distance blended learning. According to Wang et al. (2004), blended learning combines face-to-face and online classes. It was the best modality to be adopted in the Philippines because not all learners can afford an entirely online course. However, most teachers have a real struggle, especially the learners. Based on the research conducted by (Dron, Seidel, and Litten, 2004), the quick shift from traditional to online instruction needs tough time and resources. It requires an investment in technology and gadgets both for teachers and learners. Lastly, it demands maintenance to secure the quality of education. The Department of Education (DepEd) also provides teacher-made modules. There is a big challenge to the Department of Education (DepEd) regarding proper facilities, internet connectivity, gadgets, and the professional development of teachers (Tupas and Linas-Laguda, 2020).

One of the most important factors to consider during this transition is the learners' academic performance, especially in the elementary department. During the earlier shift, both the teachers and the learners had difficulty coping with the new rules and policies mandated by the Department of Education. One of which is accomplishing an online performance task. A performance task is usually done during the face-to-face classes given by teachers to determine the degree of understanding of the learner within the subject area. It is where the learners apply their knowledge and skills to a real-life scenario. These tasks will be evaluated using a rubric. Learners are usually paired with each other or by groupings, and they are given a specific amount of time to finish the tasks.

There is just one difference between an online performance task and a regular face-to-face performance task – it is usually submitted online. The learner will upload their tasks online via google classroom individually or by group, and the teacher will check if the learner has already pinned their tasks. As simple as that. However, that is not the actual case scenario. Most learners have a hard time submitting their tasks on time, which is alarming. The researcher has encountered this problem in most of his classes for the past year, ominous. The researcher needs immediate action on why the learners have difficulties completing an online performance task. There is a need for accurate and efficient instruction for primary and intermediate learners (Kazakoff, Macaruso, and Hook, 2018).

 In maintaining the learners' interest in an online platform, teachers must use appropriate digital tools. This action will result in a positive outcome. Moreover, professional training, strong internet connection, and equipment are some of the enormous help teachers need for better performance on an online platform (Kundu, Bej, and Dey, 2021).

Based on the above-mentioned transition that teachers and students experienced during the pandemic, the current study seeks to learn more about the problems that students face when completing online performance tasks. It also includes the right development of rubrics for teachers, as well as the use of technology and good internet connections.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

One of the challenges today experienced by the learners is submitting their online performance tasks. Usually, performance tasks are solved based on real-life problems collaboratively or individually. It is created to evaluate the competency of a particular student (Amornchai, Songkhla, and Sujiva, 2015). Its purpose is to determine the learners' mastery and understanding of the lesson. Also, if accomplished correctly and on time, the creativity of the outputs or performance is a good indicator of authentic learning (Chun, 2010). Teachers use performance tasks to evaluate their teaching-learning process and measure their learners' higher-order thinking skills (Abbott and Wren, 2016). Examples of performance tasks include writing a news report, designing an art material, making a brochure, sketching, diagramming, programming, scientific investigation, acting, singing, and dancing. According to Kim (2005), performance tasks improve student learning in general and positively impact the learners' learning attitudes. In addition, teachers can determine the effectiveness of the learning process and mastery of the lesson through the results and outputs of the tasks.

Unaccomplished performance tasks indicate unsuccessful performance due to a lot of factors. One factor to consider is its non-conformity to the assessment tool. Another is the attainment of the mastery of the lesson. Unaccomplished performance task indicates students' inability to develop a deeper understanding of the lesson. It also impedes the progression of the lesson and prohibits the teacher from measuring accurate knowledge of the students. It has also been tested and observed that many students fail to accomplish the required performance task because of

their unidentified problems.

The most appropriate tool for rating a performance task is a rubric. According to Roblyer and Wiencke (2003), it is a tool that allows both the teacher and learners to achieve a meaningful examination of the task given. It contains procedures and a scoring system to guide and model the students to follow. The teacher will guide and teach the students how the rubric works to assess the performance task objectively. However, one of the fundamental problems teachers encounter in giving performance tasks is providing appropriate lessons corresponding to the learners' level of understanding (Schendel and Tolmie, 2017). Moreover, lack of time to accomplish the task, a good learning environment, and appropriate gadgets and technology contribute to compliance with learning tasks (Abbott and Wren, 2016).

The COVID-19 pandemic greatly impacted all forms of social gatherings and activities globally. One of the greatly affected by this pandemic is the traditional classroom setting across all levels of education—this situation strengthens the use of the blended distance learning approach. A good learning environment determines students' success in accomplishing a performance task because it gives their full attention and engagement. There is a sudden shift from physical to online instruction. There is a tremendous challenge in teaching in the new normal classroom setting. The use of technology such as google classroom, google meet, zoom, and digital media is the new normal in education. These kinds of technology contribute to the improvement of the overall performance of the students in their daily activities (Keengwe, Pearson, and Smart, 2009). However, strong internet connection, basic skills in operating different applications, technological literacy (Heck, 2009), and absence of technology interaction are problems that the students commonly encounter (Stine, 2004). According to Tan and Chen (2021), there is a massive challenge in replicating collaborative classroom learning in the online classroom. Students cannot fully collaborate online; there is only a two-way communication mechanism for both teachers and students; limited physical demonstrations of science activities and experiments; and creates additional affordance of students' engagement within the virtual classroom.

The above discussion formed the basis of the study. The study wanted to find out the problem encountered by Filipino Elementary pupils in accomplishing their online performance task about the teacher, assessment, classroom management, learning environment, classroom technology, and other internal and external factors. Moreover, it sought to establish the predictors of a successful performance task relative to the identified variables.

III. Mathodology

The present study used a mixed-method, particularly parallel analysis mixed method. In this method, the researcher combined both qualitative and quantitative research techniques. The researcher collected both forms of data simultaneously and integrated the information into the interpretation of the overall data (Chu and Chang, 2017). In the survey, respondents answered questions through interviews and questionnaires. The researcher described the given answers of the respondents after answering the online questionnaires using SPSS and Google Forms.

The researcher sent a consent letter to the participants' parents, informing them that they allowed their children to participate in the study. After they signed and agreed on the interview, the researcher scheduled a virtual consultation with the participants since all of them were studying at home. At the same time, the researcher sent a google link to the remaining respondents for the survey questionnaire. The researcher described the given answers of the respondents. The collected data analyzed the difficulties encountered by Filipino elementary pupils in completing an online performance task (parallel analysis) (Figure 1).
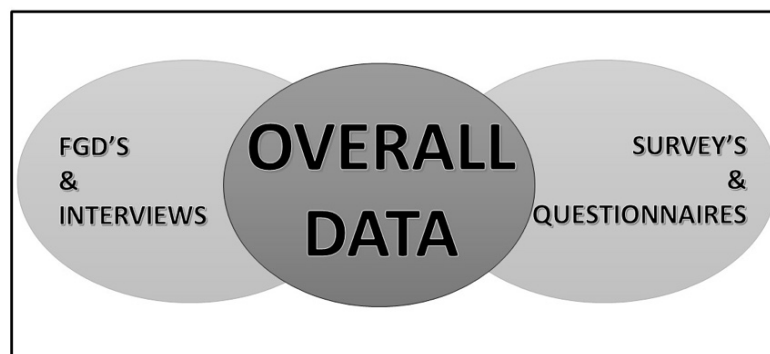
Parallel Analysis

Figure 1 shows the process of the parallel analysis used in the study.

In the survey, respondents answered questions through interviews and questionnaires. Twenty

participants contributed to the Focus Group Discussions (FGD), selected through a parent consent letter, while 83 respondents answered the online survey questionnaire. Fifteen participants were nine years old, three were ten years old, and one was 11 years old. Most of the respondents were nine years old, six were ten years old, and three were 11 years old. **Table 1** below shows the respondent's demographic profile for the quantitative portion.

Table 1 Demographic characteristics of the respondents

Age	Frequency	Percentage
9	70	84.34%
10	9	10.84%
11	4	4.82%

The researcher arranged the age in the School Form (SF) 1 based on the period at the start of the school year. 70 (84.34%) of the 83 pupils are nine years old, 9 (10.84%) are ten years old, and 4 (4.82%) are eleven years old. The researcher carried out the study in the school year 2020-2021. Direct responses from the focus group discussion were gathered and referenced from the participants' audio and video recordings for the qualitative analysis.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Unclear Performance Tasks

The researcher analyzed qualitative data from the direct responses in the focus group discussion to contextualize the quantitative findings and give them a more detailed examination. This theme summarizes the problems that pupils' problems in accomplishing online performance tasks from the direct responses.

During the interview session, when participants were asked if the teacher explained the content of the rubric, a respondent shared that:

"*Often, when our teacher gives a rubric, they don't explain it well. They will tell us to read the content of the rubrics.*"

The teacher affects the accomplishment of performance tasks because they are the ones grading/evaluating the outputs and indicating student success. However, without proper guidance and supervision of different assignments, it may result in poor motivation and loss of interest and may even result in misunderstanding and unaccomplished outputs. According to Metin (2013), a teacher has a significant role in guiding students to execute their performance tasks. They should know how to determine proper topics for students' level and correct criteria for the subject matter and understand the subject matter and the prepared rubrics. Teachers increasingly use rubrics to communicate assignment expectations, provide targeted comments on works in progress, and grade final projects (Andrade, Du, and Mycek, 2010).

According to most participants, the rubrics are challenging to interpret, particularly in the study at-home environment. Since most of their parents' work, pupil monitoring is challenging. Also, the pupils are hesitant to ask their subject teachers for clarifications at times. A respondent explained that:

"*I am having difficulty understanding rubrics because I'm alone at home. My parents are also not at home because they work, and my grandparents cannot understand it. I am also shy to ask my subject teacher about it.*"

A well-guided class helps pupils accomplish the online performance tasks on time. It prevents distractions, misunderstandings, and misconceptions about the given tasks. Also, it may avoid misunderstanding and miscommunication and promotes clarity of the given assignment. However, there is confusion concerning the quantitative answers provided by the students. Table 2 below shows the pupils' responses if the teacher accurately describes the given task.

Table 2 Provision of an accurate description of the teacher of the task.

Pupil's Responses		
Attribute/Criteria	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Agree	32	38.6%
Disagree	3	3.6%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	2	2.4%
Strongly agree	38	45.8%
Strongly disagree	7	8.4%
TOTAL	83	100.00

The researcher organized and analyzed the data using Google form and SPSS. Out of 83 pupil respondents, 84.4% of the participants determined that they strongly agreed and agreed that their teacher accurately described the performance task. On the other hand, only 12% or ten participants disagreed. According to Metin (2013), teachers have trouble planning and executing performance activities. Furthermore, they cannot select the appropriate tasks to be assigned, which is particularly important during a pandemic. Given the challenges that both teachers and learners face in an online setting, assessing if the appropriate tools and resources are met to fulfill the topic's task is critical. Moreover, Teacher training in online education, blended learning, and distance learning is also advised to help teachers acclimatize to the new instructional approach.

Aside from the struggles mentioned above experienced by the pupils, longer duration and multiple performance tasks are other factors that contribute to accomplishing performance tasks properly. A respondent shared that:

"*I find it difficult to finish the performance tasks because sometimes each subject teacher gives tasks simultaneously. All the deadlines are over in just one week. It's tough for me when they give multiple tasks in a week.*"

Most of the respondents agreed on this matter. They are having difficulty coping with the different tasks in different subject areas. However, according to Şahin and Boztunç Öztürk (2018), students' perspective plays a significant role in accomplishing the given task. Most students think only of their grades and do not take the tasks seriously because some students only see these performance tasks as grade raisers.

B. Gadgets and Strong Internet Connection

The existence of the Covid-19 outbreak surprised the whole world. It can drastically change the course of events in a short amount of time. People's daily routines have changed dramatically in the blink of an eye, most notably in schooling. Distance learning, online learning, e-learning, and technology-enabled learning are just a few names used to describe how technology is used in educational settings (Tatnall, 2020). Most countries around the planet have implemented the following solutions to continue the education process during the pandemic, including implementing distance learning. Google, TV broadcasts, guidelines, resources, video lectures, and online channels are some of the online learning platforms that have been established (Tumwesige, 2020). On the other hand, distance learning is challenging to execute, particularly in a third-world nation like the Philippines. Recently, its government ordered that face-to-face classes be delayed for the Academic Year 2020–2021 until the number of cases declines and the vaccine becomes universally accessible (Ancheta and Ancheta, 2021). However, that is just the beginning of the more significant struggle the Philippines faced.

Most public school students have insufficient technical resources, such as dependable internet connections and suitable equipment for an online classroom (Tria, 2020). During the interview process, participants were asked whether they possessed the appropriate devices to use in an online classroom, and one of the youngsters shared that:

"*We don't have an internet connection at home, and we only use cellular data for our online class. Then my brother and I used our mother's cellphone. He is in the morning, and I am in the afternoon.*"

Another participant shared that:

"*As for us, we are just trying to connect with our relatives on the internet. Then sometimes, we have a hard time keeping up with the class because of lagging issues with the phone and the connection. Most of the time, the internet connection is too slow.*"

According to (Nygren, Sitaraman, and Sun, 2010), the Philippines has Asia's least developed digital infrastructure. This condition can compromise the quality of learning for both teachers and the pupils. The teacher's role is essential in teaching and learning in the new normal, regardless of modality. When compared to a typical classroom setup, the position has been extended. Teachers must always be available in the new normal, even if they are not teaching. They do their work from home. Teachers must always be available online in case of questions from students and parents, which is a bit of a strain. Aside from a steady internet connection,

teachers struggle to upgrade their teaching equipment to the new normal. A simple laptop cannot support the demands of google classroom and other online applications that are timely and relevant to the needs of the online learners. During one of the Learning Action Cell (LAC) Sessions of the grade four teachers, most of them shared those updated gadgets are their most significant problems besides internet connection. One teacher shared that:

"It's not the internet connection that is the main problem in blended learning, but the appropriate gadget and tools like my laptop. My laptop's physical and internal features are not appropriate and cannot support some highly technical and advanced applications that we are using in the online classroom. I need to upgrade my laptop, but it is very pricey, and I cannot afford to buy an updated one."

Teachers and students alike face challenges as they shift from the four walls of the classroom to the virtual reality frontier (Tria, 2020). Both the teachers and the learners struggle financially to provide themselves with an educational upgrade. Also, there is a growing need and demand for educational institutions to strengthen curricular methods and make programs more responsive to learners' learning requirements outside of traditional classrooms.

Another factor to consider is the learning environment where the pupils are staying or located. Since the Philippines is ranked one of the lowest in the digital infrastructure, most of its area is experiencing poor internet signal, especially pupils in the rural areas. One of the participants shared that:

"Because I'm in the province, I'm having trouble connecting." My mother and I returned to the province to avoid the fear of a pandemic. It allowed my mother to focus on my education since I was studying from home. Our primary problem is a poor signal, so I'm usually out of the house attending online classes."

Another participant added that:

"Usually, I don't complete the performance task because our house is overcrowded and noisy. The materials I use are also insufficient because they are not always available in the store."

A good learning environment is required in which students can freely communicate with one another and exchange ideas. It must provide areas for personal space so that students can think independently and contribute successfully to the learning goals. Before beginning a performance task, a teacher must ensure that an appropriate learning environment is accessible. However, due to the existing educational system's work-from-home and study-from-home structure, this is extremely difficult to do. According to Ramage (2002), there is no significant difference in students' achievement between face-to-face and e-learning modalities. The same observation was concluded in the study of Francescucci and Rohani (2019). The statistical comparison of face-to-face and virtual, interactive, real-time, teacher-led indicated that students performed at the same level in both approaches.

C. Limitation

The study addresses Filipino elementary learners' challenges when completing online performance tasks. Several factors are thought to play a role in this, including teacher factors and technological considerations. Another stumbling block is the participation of pupils in other sections. They could not participate in the FGD due to time constraints and internet and data availability.

D. Recommendations

After considering the presented facts and conclusions, the researcher suggests holding a seminar or webinar on creating a good rubric for each topic area. Pupils should be given additional time to complete an online performance task. Additionally, performance tasks should be assigned to a single subject per week or combined into a single performance task if they are connected.

V. CONCLUSION

Because the final formatting of your paper is limited in scale, you need to position figures and tables at the top and bottom of each column. Large figures and tables may span both columns. Place figure captions below the figures; place table titles above the tables. If your figure has two parts, include the labels "(a)" and "(b)" as part of the artwork. Please verify that the figures and tables you mention in the text actually exist. **Do not put borders around the outside of your figures.** Use the abbreviation "Fig." even at the beginning of a sentence. Figures are numbered with Arabic numerals. Do not abbreviate "Table." Tables are numbered with Roman numerals.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Authors declare that they do not have any conflict of interest.

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