

Reading Performance Of Elementary Pupils In The Philippines As Influenced By CIP Processes: An Assessment

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Abstract: This study was designed to determine the level of effectiveness of the Continuous Improvement Program (CIP) processes for Grade 3 reading. The CIP is a joint project of Philippine Australia Human Resource and Organizational Development Facility (PAHRODF) and DepEd which is implemented in public elementary schools in the Philippines to solve reading problems of Grade 3 pupils. Using descriptive approach, the study arrived at the following salient findings: The operationalization of the 10-step Continuous Improvement (CI) processes was done as expected; but, there is need for all teacher-implementers to strive more to go beyond what is expected to guarantee full success of the CIP for English reading in Grade 3. This positive finding, though room for improvement is still in sight, is supported by the implementers' positive experiences in the CIP implementation. The authors came up with the thematic presentation of responses as follows: Theme 1: Motivation is basic to CIP success. The CIP teacher-implementers were motivated by the praises coming from their superiors and by their desire to be promoted in their work. Theme 2: Appropriate instructional materials and extra time for pupils in need are vital CIP ingredients. The teacher-implementers believed that proper choice of reading materials and teachers' willingness to devote extra time to help pupils in need is vital for CIP success. The CIP for English reading in Grade 3 was generally effective based on post-test results after the CIP implementation: there was zero non-reader in all the eight (8) schools; there was big reduction in number of pupils in the frustration level and big increase in the number of pupils in the independent level compared to the pre-test result. Though the findings are positive, there is still room for improvement, for instance: (1) limited disclosure of experiences related to CIP implementation must be addressed by future researchers for richer information and for deeper insight; and (2) reading proficiency levels that remained within the frustration and instructional levels must be minimized to increase the number of pupils in the independent reading level.

Index Terms: Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP), phenomenological approach, reading performance

1. INTRODUCTION

The Continuous Improvement Program (CIP) is a joint venture project of the Department of Education (DepEd) of the Philippines and the Australian Government which aims to improve public school's management and delivery of educational services in the Country. CIP is a one-year Australian-Aided (AusAID) program designed to enhance the skills of schools' stakeholders in managing school processes and turn schools into learner-centered (LC) institutions that continually improve and build on their best practices. Rivera stated that the DepEd wants schools to be learning institutions, not just institutes of learning but institutes that become better over time [1]. The CIP empowered schools not for the sake of empowerment but to serve learners better. As models, the Philippine-Australia Human Resource and Organizational Development Facility (PAHRODF) [2] chose districts to implement the said program, and one of the model districts was San Miguel North in Bulacan where one of the authors was employed as an Elementary School Principal I. The CIP, launched in July 2013, was first implemented in 5 regions, 9 divisions and 34 schools in the country by offering not only competency building through trainings and workshops for educators but also by providing coaching. The five regions by which the Program was pilot-tested were Regions III, IV-A, VII, VIII and National Capital Region (NCR). The Program focused on five major categories: (1) teaching reading, (2)

teaching mathematics, (3) managing wastes and feeding program, (4) managing class attendance, and (5) delivering remedial science and other major subjects. In September 2014, DepEd Bulacan conducted a 3-day echo-training workshop in Educational District III wherein school administrators and selected teachers of San Miguel North District acted as participants. As an offshoot of the aforementioned training, the implementation of CIP reeled-off in the 19 schools of the said district allowing them to identify and decide on the problem that they would want to resolve. Each school was given three months to implement the ten-step process of the CIP, namely: get organized; talk with customers; walk the process; identify improvement areas; do root cause analysis; develop solutions; finalize improvement plan; pilot solution; roll out solution; and check progress. The District organized CIP Evaluation Team which consisted of school principals with the district supervisor as the pile leader. Likewise, the school administrators together with the CIP team members monitored and checked on the progress of the pupils' learning performance following the 10-step process which was very crucial in achieving full success of the Program. According to Elgart "continuous improvement" has been part of the lexicon of school improvement for decades. It is at least nominally at the heart of efforts to improve instruction both big and small [3]; schools need to gain the competencies for continuous improvement to enable desired changes addressing their unique needs.

The CIP of San Miguel North District had various categories - Reading, Science, Mathematics, Canteen Management and Araling Panlipunan; however, based on the Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI) result, another project of DepEd, eight out of the 19 schools in the District regarded reading difficulties in English as their topmost problem in Grade III which could be resolved by CIP. Students' performance in the said area fell under Frustration Level, second from the lowest of the four categories of pupils' reading abilities as follows:

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Independent, Instructional, Frustration, and Non-reader. Titus (2018) stated that "Reading is an essential skill children must learn in order to become successful at school [4]." The capability to read is crucial. The better a child can read, the easier it will be for them to learn what they need to in school. The above-mentioned situation resulted in the conduct of this study. This study focused on CIP assessment for Grade III English reading. This covered eight schools in SMND to be of help in enhancing their pupils' reading skills through the proposed CIP reading enhancement activities for Grade 3.

Objectives of the Study and Statement of the Problems

This study aimed at analyzing the CIP for Reading of Grade III pupils in SMND on the basis of the pupils' reading proficiency level. Specifically, this study tried to answer the following questions:

1. How may the CIP for Grade III English reading per participant school in the target District be described based on the implementers' experiences?
2. How may the effectiveness of the CIP for Grade 3 English reading per participating school in school year 2014-2015 be described based on the pre- and post-test Phil-IRI results for the same school year?

II. METHODOLOGY

The CIP assessment for English reading of Grade III pupils in the eight participating schools of San Miguel North District of Bulacan, Philippines was conducted in school year 2015-2016 using the results of PHIL-IRI in English reading for 788 Grade III pupils in School Year 2014-2015 as the basis. This study utilized descriptive approach to research. For deeper meaning, interviews with teachers and heads/principals were conducted to determine their experiences in the implementation of the CIP processes. The following strategies were used to gather important data: One-on-one interviews. This is a qualitative research strategy which aimed at digging more deeply into some issues and experiences of teachers in the implementation of CIP. This method involves gathering of qualitative information relative to the participants' experiences themes and subthemes are generated from the participants' experiences to describe the phenomenon more fully. Open-ended questionnaire was used to get insights from the experiences of the teacher-implementers and their principals in the implementation of CIP. Said experiences were given meanings to shed light on the extent of implementation of the 10-step process of the CIP. Survey method. This is a quantitative strategy which was employed to assess the effectiveness of the CIP by comparing the Phil-IRI pre-test and post-test results in reading for Grade 3 English.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Findings based on the teacher-implementers' experiences in the operationalization of the 10-step CI processes. The experiences of the eight teachers in the operationalization or implementation of the 10-step CI processes were gathered through one-on-one interviews. Their significant statements were presented in the Repertory Grids 1 and 2 from which themes/meanings were generated or extracted. There were two main themes that were generated from the significant statements of the teacher-implementers. These are presented below with the supporting verbatim statements from the participants.

Fig.1. Thematic Presentation

Theme 1: Motivation is basic to CIP success.

As shown in the significant statements in Repertory Grid 1, CIP team members were motivated internally as well as externally. This encouraged them to implement the CIP more effectively to the extent of going beyond what was expected of them. One subtheme that was derived from this theme was "internal motivation" which was based on the following verbatim statements: "Masaya na kami na successful ang project naming [We're happy when our project is successful]." "Pag binati ni Ma'am na successful kami sa implementation, it's more than an award [When our principal commend us for successful implementation...it's more than an award]." The research finding of Swartling and Poksinska (2013) is in consonance with this. They found out that many continuous improvement (CI) initiatives fail since management is unsuccessful in motivating the employees to actively participate in CI activities. In such cases CI often is run by managers and the power of wide participation is lost [6].

Repertory Grid 1

Theme	Sub-themes	Significant Statements
Theme 1: Motivation is basic for CIP success	Internal Motivation	Teachers and principals feel proud of themselves when their projects are successfully implemented. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Masaya na kami na successful ang project naming [We're happy when our project is successful]" • "Pag binati ni Ma'am na successful kami sa implementation, it's more than an award". [When our principal commend us for the success-ful implementation of CIP, it is more than an award.]
Theme	Sub-themes	Significant Statements

	External Motivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential teachers who are candidate for promotion need CIP to gain rate in research. "Considered as research ang CIP kaya dagdag points 'pag nagpa rank." [CIP is considered as research, hence, can be used as additional points in ranking]. • Teachers were included in the team because of their mastery of the lesson. • Those who are willing to learn help find the right solution to the problems. • Teachers aspiring for promotion devote time and effort in helping the pupils. "Kailangang maipakita ko sa CIP na deserving akong ma promote" [I need to show, through CIP, that I am deserving to be promoted].
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Another sub-theme that was crafted from the experiences of the same teachers in the implementation of the CIP for Grade 3 English is "external motivation". In support to this subtheme are the following verbatim statements: "Considered as research ang CIP kaya dagdag points pag nagpa rank [CIP is considered as research, hence, can be used as additional points in ranking]." "Kailangang maipakita ko sa CIP na deserving akong ma promote [I need to show, through CIP, that I am deserving to be promoted]". It is clear from these statements that one main ingredient for success in the implementation of the CIP is the teacher-implementers' motivation to be praised or acknowledged by superiors and to be promoted for the work well done. As Nasibov (2015) detailed, motivation occupies an important place and position in the whole management process. This technique can be used fruitfully for encouraging workers to make positive contribution for achieving organizational objectives [5]. Making sure they conceive the big picture and the part they play in the success of the organization will help them better understand why decisions are made and how those decisions impact them specifically as well as the school as a whole. Effective motivation leads everyone to be on the same page, moving in the same direction toward the same goal.

Theme 2: Appropriate instructional materials and extra time for pupils in need are vital CIP ingredients.

Reading intervention is very crucial to enhance the reading ability of pupils [7]. The mere fact that the pupils have different learning styles, various interventions should be provided to them. Crucial to an intervention of this sort is proper choice of intervention materials and willingness on the part of the teachers to devote extra time to help students who are in need of assistance. Two subthemes were generated from this theme: "suitability of reading materials" and "efficacy of remedial classes". In support to these subthemes are the following verbatim statements: (1) "Mahalaga na ang bawat word ay suited para sa Grade III para mas madali nila maiintindihan [It is important that words are suited to their grade level so that pupils can understand it better]; and (2)

"Teachers should conduct remedial classes to enhance the pupils' ability to read".

Repertory Grid 2

Theme	Subthemes	Significant Statements
Theme 2: Appropriate instructional materials and extra time for pupils in need are vital CIP ingredients	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suitability of reading materials • Efficacy of Remedial Classes 	<p>Phil-IRI materials are suited to the grade level. "Mahalaga na ang bawat word ay suited para sa Grade III para mas madali nila maiintindihan." [It is important that words are suited to their grade level so that pupils can understand it better]</p> <p>Teachers should conduct remedial classes to enhance the pupils' ability to read.</p>

The experiences that were revealed as regards the implementation of the CIP for reading in Grade 3 were not as extensive as expected; nevertheless, they shed light on the preceding quantitative findings.

Effectiveness of the CIP for Grade 3 English Reading Based on the Pre- and Phil-IRI Posttest Results

Frequency and percentage distribution was employed to determine the effectiveness of the CIP for English reading in Grade 3 in eight elementary schools in San Miguel North District, San Miguel, Bulacan in school year 2014-2015 based on the pre- and posttest results of the Phil-IRI instrument. Anonymity of these eight schools was maintained by assigning letters A – H. Frequency and percentage distribution was employed to determine the number of pupils who belonged to the different levels of reading proficiency in the pre- and posttests such as the following: [8] Independent level–pupils who read 97-100% of the given words in the selection and 80-100% of the given comprehension questions (highest level); Instructional level–pupils who read 90-96% of the words in the selection and 59-79% of the comprehension questions; Frustration level–pupils who refuse to read and answer the comprehension questions; and Non-readers-pupils who cannot decode words (lowest level). The Phil-IRI tool for English reading in Grade 3 was used because this is a standardized tool designed by the DepEd to determine the pupils' level of proficiency in reading. The results are shown in Table 1. In School A, 11 (12%) out of 95 pupils were non-readers in the pretest in July 2014; 21 (22%) belonged to frustration level; 35 (37%) instructional and 28 (29%) independent. In the posttest which was administered in February 2015, significant improvement could be observed: the number of non-readers decreased from 12% to 0%, so with those in the frustration level, from 22% to 13%. On the other hand, the number of pupils in the instructional level increased significantly in the post-test – from 35 (38%) in the pre-test to 45 (48%) in the post-test, so do with those in the independent level, from 28 (30%) in the pretest to 36 (39%) in the posttest.

Table 1. Test of Effectiveness of the CIP Based on Pre- and Post-test Results

NAME OF SCHOOL	ENROLMENT	PUPIL TESTED		READING LEVEL						NON READER		CHANGE			
				FRUSTRATION		INSTRUCTIONAL		INDEPENDENT							
		Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Frus	Ins	Ind	NR
A	95	95	93	21	12	35	45	28	36	11	0	-9	10	8	-11
B	22	22	21	7	3	10	11	4	7	1	0	-4	1	3	-1
C	53	53	53	0	0	25	10	28	43	0	0	0	-15	15	0
D	52	52	54	20	13	25	29	7	12	0	0	-7	4	5	0
E	85	85	85	43	5	34	40	8	40	0	0	-38	6	32	0
F	35	35	35	20	5	5	20	4	10	6	0	-15	15	6	-6
G	180	180	180	144	10	30	90	6	80	0	0	-134	60	74	0
H	266	266	266	190	60	55	180	8	26	13	0	-130	125	18	-13
TOTAL	788	788	787	445	108	219	425	93	254	31	0	-337	206	161	-31

A similar scenario is portrayed in School B which had the smallest Grade 3 enrolment of 22. In the pretest, there was one (5%) non-reader, seven (32%) frustration level, 10 (45%) instructional level, and four (18%) independent readers while in the post test, from 21 pupils tested, non-reader was 0; frustration level, three (14%) from seven in the pretest; instructional level, 11 (52%) from 10 in the pretest; and independent level, seven (33%) from four in the pretest. This result is indicative of pupils' improved performance in reading comprehension. In School C, with 53 pupils being tested, no one belonged to the non-reader and frustration categories. There were 25 (47%) who belonged to instructional level and 28 (53%) in independent level in the pretest. In the posttest, a significant reading improvement could be observed. The independent readers became 43 (81%) from 28 (53%) in the pretest. This remarkable change was made possible with the aid of the CI processes. As in the case of School D, with 52 pupils being pretested, no one was a non-reader but quite a big number, 20 (38%), belonged to the frustration level; 25 (48%) in the instructional and seven (13%) in the independent level in the pretest. In the posttest, the number of pupils in the frustration level was reduced from 20 to 13 (24%) and an increase in the instructional level from 25 to 29 (54%) and in the dependent level from seven pupils to 12 (22%). With regard to School E, with 85 pupils being tested, no one was a non-reader, but there were 43 (51%) who were in the frustration level and 34 (40%) in the instructional level. Only eight (10%) were in the independent level in the pretest. In the posttest, a remarkable improvement could be noted. There was great reduction in the frustration level from 43 pupils in the pretest to five (6%) in the posttest. Those in the instructional level increased from 34 pupils in the pretest to 40 (47%) in the posttest and for the independent level, from eight in the pretest to 40 (47%) in the posttest. The effectiveness in the utilization of CI processes is evidently magnified in this particular school. In School F, 35 pupils were tested, and the results were as follows: 20 (57%) were in the frustration level; five (14%) in the instructional level; four (11%) in independent; and six (17%) non-readers in the pretest. In the posttest, there was zero non-reader; those in the frustration level were reduced from 20 to five (14%); number of pupils in the instructional level rose from five to 20 (57%) and independent readers increased from four to 10 (28%). This indicates that the CI processes fared well in this school. School G, with 180 pupils

being tested, had the following report: frustration level, 144 (80%); instructional level, 30 (17%); and independent readers, six (03%) in the pretests. In the posttest, a very impressive turn-out happened with a great reduction in the frustration level from 144 pupils to 10 (06%); an overwhelming increase in the number of pupils in the instructional level from 30 to 90 (50%) as well as in the independent level from six pupils to 80 (44%). This notable progress in pupils' reading competency magnifies effectiveness of the CI processes in promoting and elevating the delivery of quality basic education. In School H, with 266 pupils being tested in English reading, the pretest results showed that 190 (71%) of the pupils belonged to the frustration level; 55 (21%), instructional level; eight (03%), independent level; and 13 (05%), non-readers. In the posttest, the number of pupils in the frustration level was trimmed down from 190 to 60 (23%) and nonreaders from 13 to 0, while those in the instructional level rose from 55 to 180 (68%) along with independent level, from eight to 26 (09%). This is another manifestation of the vitality of the CI processes in enhancing the reading proficiency of the pupils in Grade 3. The aforementioned findings vividly speak of the effectiveness in the operationalization or implementation of the CI processes in San Miguel North District. The CIP is essential in the improvement of the reading competency of pupils; it creates a milestone in the development of Grade 3 pupils in particular; however, there are some areas that need some attention such as the following:

- (1) Limited disclosure of experiences related to CIP implementation – there should be no inhibition on the part of the teacher-implementers to disclose their experiences for richer information and for deeper insight; and
- (2) Those reading proficiency levels that remained within the frustration and instruction levels in Table 1 - more efforts on the part of the teacher-implementers are needed to increase the number of pupils in the independent level.
- (3) The identified areas for improvement are made the basis in the proposed enhancement in the CIP for reading in Grade 3 in the succeeding academic years which must be updated year after year as needed.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, if the 10-step CIP processes for reading in Grade 3 are well carried out, the chance of improving the Phil-IRI post-test score of Grade 3 pupils in reading is expected to be high. The operationalization of the 10-step CI processes was done as expected; but, there is need for all teacher-implementers to strive more to go beyond what is expected to guarantee full success of the CIP for English reading in Grade 3. This positive finding, though room for improvement is still in sight, is supported by the implementers' positive experiences in the CIP implementation as follows:

- The CIP teacher-implementers were motivated by the praises coming from their superiors and by their desire to be promoted to a higher teaching position because CIP implementation is given credit in their research work.
- The teacher-implementers believed that proper choices of reading materials and teachers' willingness to devote extra time to help pupils who need help are vital for success of the CIP.
- The CIP for English reading in Grade 3 was generally effective based on the pretest and posttest results using the Phil-IRI tool. As revealed in the posttest after the CIP implementation, there was zero non-reader in all the eight

schools; there was big reduction in number of pupils in the frustration level and big increase in the number and percentage of pupils in the independent level.

Though the findings are positive, there is still a room for improvement, for instance:

1. Those CI processes that were rated “meets expectations” could still be improved with teacher-implementers striving to do more than what is expected of them;

2. Limited disclosure of experiences related to CIP implementation must be addressed by future researchers for richer information and for deeper insight; and

3. Those reading proficiency levels that remained within the frustration and instruction levels must be minimized to increase the number of pupils in the independent reading level.

4. The additional strategies that are proposed in this study should be utilized by DepEd-San Miguel North District to further enhance the CIP for Grade 3 in the succeeding school years should be utilized with proper monitoring and evaluation of authorities concerned.

5. Replications of this study should be done in other districts in the Division of Bulacan, Philippines to validate results of this study.

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