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Effectiveness in Unlocking the Difficult Words in Teaching Science in Relation to the Performance of Grade V Pupils

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Abstract —The study aimed to evaluate the effectiveness in unlocking the difficult words in teaching science in relation to the performance of the Grade V pupils. The study utilized a quasi-experimental research design employing the pre-test and post-test using a researcher-made test which covers the 1st quarter Most Essential Learning Competencies (MELCs) in science which focused on unlocking of science words and integration of unlocking of difficult words was part of the lesson in science with crafted lesson plan for that purpose. Simple percentage and t-test of mean difference were the statistical tools used to interpret the result of the study. It was revealed in the study that there is a significant difference in the pre-test and post-test performances of the Grade V pupils in science before and after the integration of unlocking of difficult words in teaching. Thus, this intervention is effective in achieving positive performance outcomes of the pupils. Hence, this study recommends the inclusion of unlocking of difficult words in teaching science.

Keywords — Effectiveness, Unlocking of Difficult Words, Teaching Science, Performance, Grade V Pupils

I. Introduction

Education is the most effective agent of social and personal transformation that leaves a relatively formative effect on learners. The primary purpose of teaching at any level of education is to bring a fundamental change in the learner through various teaching and learning methods (Oigara, 2011). The effectiveness of this teaching and learning process largely depends on the choice of the teacher's teaching method. Whalen III (2012) alludes that effectiveness of a teaching method is reflected in the outcome of the teaching-learning process inform of marks, grades and mean scores.

Kosgei et al. (2013) cited to education as a basic human right, which provides a key to enlightenment, wealth and power. Noting that for every individual to achieve this, the role of teachers towards it cannot be removed. Teachers as role models are expected to impart knowledge and skills to students in order to acquire the necessary information needed to function well within the society.

Teachers occupy an important position in the teaching and learning process. Consequently, Orji (2015) emphasized that teachers' management roles are important for a suitable learning climate which could help them to harness all resources for the fulfillment of educational goals and objectives. Adegbola (2019) further noted that the effective management of lessons in the classroom can help students develop positive attitude towards learning so as improved performance is attained. Thus, to achieve this, teachers must be creative and resourceful enough to use different strategies in teaching most especially in science.

Science as an organized body of knowledge which as systematized and produced by careful observation, measurement and experiment, which attempt to establish principles to describe any phenomenon under study.

Science is very important subject because it concerned with the analysis of both living and non-living things, which when applied to our everyday activities, and it will sustain life. According to Webster's new collegiate dictionary, science is "knowledge of the operation of general laws, as obtained and tested through scientific method and concerned with physical world. Also, Omoegun (2005) refers to science as a system acquiring knowledge. This system uses observation and experimentation to describe and explain natural phenomena. It is an organized body of knowledge people has gained using that system. Man from origin has always had an enquiry mind, thus the inception of the people who which lead to the introduction of the people who were specialist in science and master in teaching. They were able to make the study of nature science as a dynamic and unforgettable learning experience for students. Science concepts must be developed to be able to apply it to everyday life.

Science plays an important role in the lives of millions of people throughout the globe. It has changed the trends of human history and has been a contributory factor in shaping the destination of the nation. Science has not only accelerated the face of material progress, it also enables man to enter to a new phase, the age of electronics and wonders of atomic era. According to Lisama (2011), the role of science plays in man's life beyond doubt. He needs a working knowledge of science to find meaning to events that takes place in his body and his environment. Furthermore, man needs science to cope with new development and discoveries.

Science is important subject at upper primary level and understanding of basic science concepts increases the content knowledge of the teachers and students. But for some time, teachers faced the difficulties to understand some science concepts. Also, they had occurred difficulties to teaching some science concepts. If these concepts which are difficult to understand for the teachers,

it will be transferring towards students incorrectly and it will create many alternative conceptions. In order to teach today's science concepts, teachers need to understand subject matter deeply and flexibly so they can help students create useful cognitive maps, relate one idea to another, and address alternative conception. Teachers need to see how ideas connect across fields and to everyday life. This kind of understanding may provide a foundation for pedagogical content knowledge that enables teachers to make ideas accessible to others, to be aware of the conceptual problems of the teachers.

In order to succeed in the teaching of science concepts and in assessing learning outcomes, pupils must demonstrate adept literacy abilities (Scruggs et al., 2013). One of the key science-specific literacy skills targeted by these measures is the ability to comprehend the meanings of keywords, phrases, and symbols and apply them towards understanding science content and concepts (Common Core State Standards Initiative, n.d., Scruggs et al., 2013; Virginia Department of Education (VDOE), 2018). For instance, the middle-school Next Generation Science Standard MS-ESS2-2 states that students should be able to "Construct an explanation based on evidence for how geoscience processes have changed Earth's surface at varying time and spatial scales" (NGSS, 2013). To do so would require a pupil to understand terms such as "plate motions," "microscopic," "catastrophic," "surface weathering," and "deposition." The meanings of these terms along with phrases found in the standard such as geoscience processes and spatial scales could be potentially elusive for pupil. In fact, science includes a large quantity of complex, specialized vocabulary words that, without instruction, could obstruct the understanding of pupils (Kaldenberg et al., 2015; Mason & Hedin, 2011). Further complicating matters, some of the science terms hold alternative meanings in other content areas and in daily life (e.g., cell, fault, solution) which hinders comprehension (Fang, 2006; Rice & Deshler, 2018). Unfortunately, there is no magic set of practices that will remedy this significant and omnipresent issue.

Typically, very little instructional time is dedicated to teaching vocabulary terms outside of language arts (Scott et al., 2003). This can lead to pupils compensating by using strategies to memorize word meanings and facts; however, they often do not understand or allocate the time towards understanding the associated scientific concepts (Harmon et al., 2005).

In view of the fact that every person should have sufficient knowledge in science, it has been integrated in the school curriculum both in basic and higher education; hence, the field science education. Science education aims to instill science content and process with people who are not conventionally considered part of the scientific community. But how are we going to attain these science objectives where most of the learners if not all have difficulty in understanding science words. This idea is similar to that of reading a text or a story.

Reading a text or hearing a word with unfamiliar or challenging vocabulary can be difficult and can affect your ability to fully understand what you've read or heard. Just like in teaching, when teachers use unfamiliar words, learners are confused on the meaning of it most especially if unlocking is not done. Hence, teachers use different ways and strategies to unlock the words. There

are many ways to unlock the difficult words which can be used by teachers in teaching science. One clue that readers can use to decode an unfamiliar term is to break the new word down into word parts. Often, words are challenging because they are lengthy. Their length may be due, in part, to how they are built. Many words have a root or base word to which a prefix, suffix or both may be attached. If you come across one of these word puzzles, try breaking the word down into recognizable or familiar parts and considering the meaning of each part. Using word parts to unlock the meaning of strange new words does require a pretty strong understanding of Greek and Latin roots, prefixes, and suffixes, but knowing some of the more common ones can really go a long way in helping you determine the meaning of unfamiliar words.

Other clues to word meaning require a little less work on the reader's part. When you look at the text surrounding the unknown word, you are using context clues. Authors often put these in their writing on purpose because they want the reader to understand.

An author may use a synonym or antonym in the same sentence as the unfamiliar word, or in a sentence close by. Sometimes just reading a little further along can help you understand what a word means because the author will reference something with which the reader is familiar, but knows by a different term (synonym). The author may include an antonym or make reference to a word that means the opposite to show that a word is unlike or different from an unfamiliar word. The reader can pick up on the contrast and, if he or she knows antonym, be able to make meaning of the unfamiliar word by using that clue.

Another way to determine an unfamiliar word's meaning is to look around it to see if the author provides an example in a nearby sentence. Examples can give a clue to a word's meaning by providing additional information. They may be included within the same sentence as the unfamiliar word or appear in a nearby sentence.

Possibly the easiest clue to look for is an actual definition the author might provide for the reader within the text. The unknown word may be literally defined. One key word to look out for is or as that often signals the start of a definition or the author rewording the term so the reader knows what the author is writing about. The term may also be implicitly defined by being explained within the text, even if it's not a direct definition. Be on the lookout for those in-text definitions as they'll save you a trip to the dictionary.

During the School Year 2021-2022, particularly in the last two quarters, Antipolo Elementary School of Albuera South District is one of the schools in the district implemented the limited face-to-face classes. In the first two weeks of classes, the teachers conducted assessment on the learning of the learners in the 1st and 2nd quarter lessons. That was when modular distance learning modality was implemented. It was found out that learning using modules especially in science, did not help them learn the most essential competencies, for teaching the science concepts need a teacher to discuss and develop the lesson. Furthermore, as the researcher had reviewed their accomplished modules, the result revealed that 80% of the Grade V pupils had developed zero

understanding of science words of which the most important element in science teaching. Thus, the researcher prepared means and ways on how to recover the learning loss of the learners. The teacher had strategized teaching methods and approaches in teaching science and one of the interventions she implemented was on unlocking of difficult words using different strategies. And it is in this premise that this study was formulated to determine the effectiveness in unlocking of the difficult words in teaching science in relation to the performance of the Grade V pupils. A proposed improvement plan was formulated based on the findings of the study.

It is in the rationale that the researcher who is currently a Grade V teacher in the above mentioned local, would like to delve worthy research undertaking that will benefit the school she is currently teaching and that of her Graduate Program she is enrolled at.

This study evaluates the effectiveness in unlocking of the difficult words in teaching science in relation to the performance of Grade V pupils in Antipolo Elementary School of Albuera South District, Leyte Division for School Year 2021-2022. The findings of the study were bases for the proposed improvement plan.

Specifically, this study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the pre-test performance of the Grade V pupils in science before the utilization of unlocking of difficult words in teaching science?
2. What is the post-test performance of Grade V pupils in science after the utilization of unlocking of difficult words in teaching science?
3. Is there a significant difference in the pre-test and post-test performances of the Grade V pupils before and after the utilization of unlocking of difficult words in teaching science?
4. What training plan can be proposed based on the findings of this study?

II. Methodology

Design. This study employed the quasi-experimental research design utilizing the pre-test and post-test to evaluate the effectiveness in unlocking of difficult words in teaching science in relation to the performance of Grade V pupils for School Year 2022-2023. Antipolo Elementary School, Albuera South District, Leyte Division is the main locale of the study. The 33 Grade V pupils enrolled in the said locale for School Year 2022-2023 are the main respondents of the study and a researcher-made test which covers the 1st quarter Most Essential Learning Competencies (MELCs) in science which focused on unlocking of science words was used. A lesson pls where unlocking of difficult words is part of the lessons were crafted and taught during the data gathering as an intervention for the study. Matrix of activities was crafted to guide the teacher-researcher the flow of her study. This research is focused in evaluating the effectiveness in unlocking of difficult words in teaching science in relation to the performance of Grade V pupils through the pre-test and post-test and its significant difference. A Proposed Training Plan based on the findings of the study is the output.

Sampling. There are 33 Grade V pupils involved in this study. The research instruments were administered face-to-face with consent from the Local IATF and strictly following the prescribed Health Protocol during the limited face-to-face classes.

Research Procedure. The researcher prepared the research design and tools to be utilized in the study. Approval and recommendation from the Panel of Examiner of the Graduate Studies was sought. A letter request to conduct this study was forwarded to the Office of the Schools Division Superintendent. Upon approval, permission from the District Supervisor and School Head was secured before the actual gathering of data. Orientation of the participants and administration of the pre-test was done through face-to-face after the approval of the permit from the parents of the respondents. After accomplishing the pre-test, intervention was given within four weeks. The integration of unlocking of difficult science words was emphasized before the development of science lessons. After the four-week of intervention, post-test was administered. Results of the tests were collected. Data were tallied and submitted for statistical treatment. Analysis and Interpretation of Data. Making of Proposed Training Plan followed.

Ethical Issues. The right to conduct the study was strictly adhered through the approval of the Schools Division Superintendent of the Division, District Supervisor, and School Head. Orientation of the respondents was done using face to face modality. In the orientation, issues and concerns were addressed and consent to be included in the study were signed.

Treatment of Data. The Simple Percentage was employed to evaluate the pre-test and post-test of the Grade V pupils in science. **t-Test of Mean Difference** was used to determine the significant difference in the pre-test and post-test performances of the Grade V pupils in science.

III. Results and Discussion

Table 1
Pre-Test Performance of Grade V Pupils in Science

Score Range	Description	PRETEST	
		Frequency	%
25-30	Excellent	0	0
19-24	Very Good	0	0
13-18	Good	5	15
7-12	Fair	20	61
1-6	Poor	8	24
Total		33	100
Weighted Mean		**7.94**	**Fair**

Table 1 presents the pre-test performance of Grade V pupils in science. It was revealed on the table that among the 33 Grade V pupils, 5 or 15% got a score between 13-18 which is interpreted as good, 20 or 61% got a score between 7-12 which is interpreted as fair and 8 or 24% got the score of 1-6 or poor. It was revealed also that the weighted mean is 7.94 which is interpreted as fair. This means that Grade V pupils have difficulty in understanding science lessons because they do not know the meaning of the unfamiliar words used. They need vast vocabulary to understand such. This implies that teachers have to think of solutions or interventions on how these pupils be able to learn the lessons in science. It is crucial that pupils have explicit and robust instruction in vocabulary to support their understanding of the concepts convey in the lesson and in their verbal and written communications. Teachers have to explicitly teach vocabulary for it allows pupils to access academic language and discourse and facilitates their comprehension of increasingly complex texts.

Table 2
Post-Test Performance of Grade V Pupils in Science

Score Range	Description	POST-TEST	
		Frequency	%
25-30	Excellent	32	97
19-24	Very Good	1	3
13-18	Good	0	0
7-12	Fair	0	0
1-6	Poor	0	0
Total		33	100
Weighted Mean		**27.64**	**Excellent**

Table 2 presents the post-test performance of Grade V pupils in science. It was revealed on the table that among the 33 pupils tested, 32 or 97% got a score of 25-30 which is interpreted as excellent and 1 or 3% got a score of 19-24 which is interpreted as very good. The table also revealed that the post-test performance has a weighted mean of 27.84 which is interpreted as excellent. This means that after the intervention was given, the performance of the post-test has increased compared to that of the pre-test. This implies that integration of unlocking of difficult words before the development of the lesson help the learners understand the concepts convey in the lesson. The different strategies used to unlock the difficult science words is effective in learning science concepts and in understanding the lessons. Oigara (2011) has cited that the primary purpose of teaching at any level of education is to bring a fundamental change in the learner through various teaching and learning methods. The effectiveness of this teaching and learning process largely depends on the choice of the teacher's teaching method. Whalen III (2012) alludes

that effectiveness of a teaching method is reflected in the outcome of the teaching-learning process inform of marks, grades and mean scores.

Table 3
Test of Difference Between the Scores in the Pre-Test and Post-Test of Grade V Pupils in Science

Aspects	Test Scores		Computed T	Critical T	Decision	Interpretation
Grade 5 in science	Pre Post	7.94 27.64	3.634	0.293	Reject H_o	Significant

Table 3 presents the test of difference between the scores in the pre-test and post-test of Grade V pupils in science. It was revealed on the table that the computed t of 3.634 is greater than the critical value of t which is 0.293, so null hypothesis is rejected. The weighted mean of the pre-test performance of 7.94 had increased after the integration of intervention and the weighted mean had reached to 27.64 in the post-test. This means that there is a significant difference in the pre-test and post-test performances of the Grade V pupils in science. This implies that it is important to unlock the difficult science words first before teaching the concept. This implies further that it is important to understand unfamiliar words so that pupils can interpret the overall meaning of a science concept. Misunderstanding a tricky word can prevent them from understanding a text meaning. With the intervention made by the researcher, it was proven that unlocking of difficult words is one of the strategies to help pupils learn the science concepts and understand the lesson. Retention of the skills is evident because pupils have improved their comprehension skills especially on the words used by the teacher in teaching science.

IV. Conclusion

The study revealed a significant difference in the pre-test and post-test scores of the Grade V pupils in science. This shows an excellent performance of the pupils after the integration of unlocking of difficult words in teaching science lessons. It was indeed relevant to unlock the difficult words first before proceeding to the development of the lesson. Unlocking of difficult words using different strategies and methods help improve the performance of the pupils making it more meaningful in learning science concepts. Thus, this intervention is effective in achieving positive performance outcomes of the pupils.

V. Recommendations

1. The proposed training plan formulated should be utilized;
2. Teachers should prepare a lesson where unlocking of difficult words will be part of the lesson;
3. Teachers should prepare list of words used in teaching science;
4. Teachers should use different strategies and methods to unlock difficult words;
5. Teachers must attend trainings or LAC sessions on learning the different strategies and methods used to unlock difficult words;
6. School Heads should institutionalize the integration of unlocking of difficult words in teaching all learning areas;
7. School Heads should spearhead in the crafting of training design and LAC plan for trainings and LAC sessions for the improvement of teaching-learning process of teachers;
8. School Heads should conduct trainings on teaching methods and strategies for unlocking of difficult words;
9. School Heads should provide technical assistance to teachers in terms of teaching science with integration of unlocking of difficult words;
10. School Heads should provide appropriate supplies to be used in the preparation of instructional materials to be used in teaching and learning process; and
11. Future researchers should replicate this study to include different locale and include different variables aside from the mentioned in this study.

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She was teaching for almost 12 years at Antipolo Elementary School, Division of Leyte headed by SDS Dr. Manuel P. Albaño. Her District Head is Dr. Jasmine B. Misa and her School Head is Mr. Dante D. Espera. She was handling 1st grader for 8 years, and currently she is the adviser of 5th graders for almost 4 years with a 33 number of pupils in a class. She also attended series of webinars/seminars and trainings to increase her professional growth as a teacher.