

## **RINGS (RECITATION IN THE NEW NORMAL THROUGH GUIDED SPEAKING): AN ORACY SKILL-BASED INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGY ACROSS GRADE 12 SUBJECT AREAS**



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### **ABSTRACT**

Oracy skill displays an important role in school subjects. It allows students to express their ideas efficiently in both academic and non-academic situations. Hence, the researchers want to apply this skill as the basis for an instructional strategy across the Grade 12 subject areas under modular distance learning. The researchers, together with the other SHS subject teachers, explored the use of the RINGS instructional strategy. RINGS stands for Recitation In the New Normal through Guided Speaking. RINGS is a mobile phone call-based teaching strategy for students who are under modular distance learning. On the course of its implementation, subject teachers' phone calls to student participants guided with the Oracy Skills Framework by Mercer, Warwick, & Ahmed (2014) and adhere to the five key types of 'teaching talk' outlined by Alexander (2008).

This action research applied the exploratory case-study approach. A mean difference of 4.56 suggests that the academic performance of the students improved from Fairly Satisfactory to Satisfactory. The findings of this study, with the help of RINGS (Recitation In the New normal through Guided Speaking) which is a mobile phone call- based teaching strategy for students who are under modular distance learning, the students were able to develop their oracy skills through participating verbally given the space and time to reflect upon and discuss complex ideas meeting cognitive gains, personal and social gains, and civic engagement and empowerment which was evident during the post conference activity after Phase 1,2 and 3 were conducted during the first quarter of SY 21-22.

**Keywords:** *Instructional Strategy, Mobile Phone, Modular Distance Learning, Oracy Skills*

## INTRODUCTION

Challenges during remote learning have intensified. Be it with online learning, modular learning, or blended learning, empirical experiences coming from teachers can testify to those challenges.

As per online learning, Minero (2020) stated that technological platforms can generate new communication barriers by making it difficult to identify when to speak, for instance, or how to read subtle but significant elements of communication like a person's body language and facial expressions. Moreover, virtual discussions are usually hampered by students' poor access to technology and by privacy concerns. Accordingly, a lot of teachers depend on students submitting their work over remote channels like email – where academic honesty becomes a test.

In terms of modular learning, the study of Dangle and Sumaoang (2020) revealed that the implementation resulted to emergence of lack of school funding in the production and delivery of modules, students struggle with self-studying, and parents' lack of knowledge to academically guide their child/children. It was suggested to have reduction of activities from the modules, more examples for each subject, home visitation once a week, limited face-to-face class or Blended Learning, provision of colored printed modules, immediate information given by teachers on what to answer in the modules, online consultation with students, responsiveness of teachers through the use of social media platform, and leniency of teachers in the submission of students' outputs.

Moreover, modular distance learning created a major backlash on student participation and teacher interaction for actual and prompt exchange of ideas becomes limited, or at an extent, not possible due to varying constraints. Oral competence or oracy skill is not particularly demonstrated or established in this learning modality. For most of the teaching-learning time, students are facing the modules and worksheets they need to learn. It was emphasized in the study of

Kaldahl (2019) that oracy serves as a key competency across school subjects. Oracy portrays an important role in high stakes examinations because school certificates of completion are partly based on oral exams in school disciplines.

As a rationale, the word “oracy” was coined by Wilkinson (1965) to differentiate the skills of speaking and listening from reading and writing (literacy). Oracy skills play a major role in thinking (Mah, 2016) and permit students to express their ideas efficiently in both academic and non-academic situations (Alexander, 2013). In addition, oracy can be seen as an outcome, whereby students learn to talk confidently, appropriately, and sensitively. Oracy serves as a process – whereby students learn through talk, deepening their understanding through dialogue with their teachers and peers (Alexander, 2012). Oracy requires teachers and students to think carefully and deliberately about the types of spoken language they use, which will range between subjects and age groups.

Oracy is associated to rhetoric and as Burke (1973) contends, rhetoric enables people to navigate through life. Likewise, oral competence is to efficiently collaborate and think together in creating new knowledge at work (Littleton & Mercer, 2013) and at school (Rychen & Salganik, 2003). Moreover, in school systems such as the Norwegian one, oracy takes an important part in high stakes examinations because school certificates of completion are partly based on oral exams in school disciplines.

Millard and Menzies (2016) argued that there is a range of benefits in practicing oracy in school, including developing pupils' spoken language, to communicate more effectively and social and emotional benefits regarding confidence and self-esteem.

In the world of work, oral communication skills have been recognized as “one of the most desired graduate employability skills” (Jackson, 2014), and it has been noted that presentation skills to be specific are an

important element for a professional life (Ritchie, 2016). Competence in and an awareness of the power of appropriate language represent cultural capital, and it has been argued that oracy skills are part of this cultural capital, as they provide access to the cultures and practices of the workplace (Doherty et al. 2011). Johnson, Veitch and Dewiyanti (2015) argue the case for embedding communication skills as a key graduate attribute across the disciplinary higher education curriculum.

The development of classroom talk has a broad selection of advantages on students' outcomes during school, and beyond. To be specific, structured dialogue during lessons, where students are stimulated to participate verbally and given space and time to reflect upon and discuss complex ideas, is connected with: (1) Cognitive gains, including better results in English, Maths and Science, the retention of subject-specific knowledge, and 'transference' of reasoning skills across subject areas (Jay et al., 2017); (2) Personal and social gains, including attitudes towards learning, enhanced self-esteem and self-confidence, and a decrease in anxiety (Hanley P et al., 2015); (Gorard et al., 2015), and; (3) Civic engagement and empowerment, increasing children and young people's capacity to debate issues, while also increasing the comprehension on social issues and ability to cope with differences with others (Nagda and Gurin, 2007).

According to Gaunt (2018), an oracy-rich classroom could support students to refine their subject knowledge and develop their understanding. Teachers offer students with opportunities to learn, both to and through talk. In actual instances, this means that students are promoted to expand and revise their understanding through continuous and efficient dialogue with their peers. When participating in discussion, for example, students must have a system for turn-taking, and they must ensure that everyone has a chance to contribute and that when somebody speaks, their ideas are respected.

The key ideas stated about oracy skills have paved the thinking of the researchers for the birth of RINGS instructional strategy. RINGS stands for Recitation In the New normal through Guided Speaking. RINGS is a mobile phone call-based teaching strategy for students who are under modular distance learning. On the course of its implementation, subject teachers' phone calls to student-participants will be guided with the Oracy Skills Framework by Mercer, Warwick, & Ahmed (2017) and will adhere to the five key types of 'teaching talk' outlined by Alexander (2008).

This present study aims to apply RINGS as an instructional strategy to refine knowledge and deepen the understanding across senior high school subject areas. Grade 12 Academic Track – Humanities and Social Science Students who are under Modular Distance Learning of Southville 5A Integrated National High School for the first semester of School Year 2021-2022 are the target participants and beneficiaries of this study.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The study aims to apply RINGS as an instructional strategy to refine knowledge and deepen the understanding across senior high school subject areas of Grade 12 Academic Track – Humanities and Social Science Students of Southville 5A Integrated National High School for the first semester of School Year 2021-2022. Specifically, it aims to:

1. Identify student performance before the implementation;
2. Implement RINGS;
3. Identify student performance after the implementation;
4. Determine the pedagogical implications of RINGS.

## **METHODOLOGY**

Grade 12 students who belong to Academic Track – Humanities and Social Sciences Strand of Southville 5-

A Integrated National High School for the 1st semester of S.Y. 2021-2020 were the participants of the study. Specifically, Grade 12 students from sections Mahatma Gandhi, Nelson Mandela, and Jane Addams participated in this research.

Purposive sampling technique was used in this study to necessarily identify the participants of this research attempt. Specific criteria were provided by the researchers to finalize the number of participants. There are three purposive sampling criteria for students to be qualified as participants of this study such as: (1) Regular grade 12 students who chose modular distance learning as the learning modality; (2) Students who are enrolled in Academic Track – Humanities and Social Sciences Strand; and (3) Students who will garner ‘satisfactory (80-84),’ ‘fairly satisfactory (75-79),’ and ‘did not meet expectations (74 and below)’ descriptive rating for the 1st quarter, 1st semester of School Year 2021-2022 are the final participants of this study.

This action research applied an exploratory case-study approach. It focuses on RINGS Instructional Strategy which is implemented in a single institution – Southville 5A Integrated National High School. This is a narrow study in terms of location and pedagogical practice, the intention is in light with features of a problem that has previously been little studied; in this case, poor academic performance of Grade 12 students who are under Modular Distance Learning. One of the advantages of this case-study approach is that it “provides a unique example of real people in real situations, enabling readers to understand ideas more clearly than simply by presenting them with abstract theories or principles” (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007).

## RESULTS

**Table 1. Academic Performance of the Learners**

First Quarter Grade Mean	Second Quarter Grade Mean	Mean Difference
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75.56	80.12	4.56
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Table 1 shows the comparison of the first quarter grade mean and second quarter grade mean in six (6) subjects. A mean difference of 4.56 suggests that the academic performance of the students improved from Fairly Satisfactory to Satisfactory. Thus, it supports the study of Gaunt (2018), an oracy-rich classroom could support students to refine their subject knowledge and develop their understanding. Teachers offer students with opportunities to learn, both to and through talk. In actual instances, this means that students are promoted to expand and revise their understanding through continuous and efficient dialogue with their peers.

## DISCUSSIONS

Challenges during remote learning have intensified. Be it with online learning, modular learning, or blended learning, empirical experiences coming from teachers can testify to those challenges. Moreover, modular distance learning created a major backlash on student participation and teacher interaction for actual and prompt exchange of ideas becomes limited, or at an extent, not possible due to varying constraints. Oral competence or oracy skill is not particularly demonstrated or established in this learning modality. For most of the teaching-learning time, students are facing the modules and worksheets they need to learn.

This research was an effort to expect that at the end of the semester, students will acquire and demonstrate learning competencies across these subject areas. RINGS is guided with the Oracy Skills Framework by Mercer, Warwick, & Ahmed (2014). This identifies the skills needed to be able to communicate effectively in a range of settings and styles, using a wide vocabulary with fluency. This framework presents oracy development in terms of four strands of skills: cognitive; physical;

social and emotional; and linguistic. The framework appears to draw on a range of traditions of research related to language and meaning and their role in social interaction, although these are not made explicit. It is recognized that there is overlap between the four strands. However, as the framework is designed to be 'teacher-friendly', it has been designed to be accessible and not overwhelming. It is intended to be relevant in any context, formal or informal, within and beyond school.

In relation to the cognitive dimension, teachers are committed to a 'constructivist group work approach to learning.' In terms of the social and emotional dimension, the curriculum is underpinned by a firm commitment to enabling students to 'find their voice' and this is seen as essential to confidence and future participation. The physical dimension is seen in terms of aspects such as tone, pitch, facial expression, gesture, posture and eye contact. The linguistic dimension has been a particular focus for development in which ways of supporting vocabulary development are explored.

As for the research findings, based on the Quarter 1 performance of the HUMSS Grade 12 learners, it was observed that thirty (30) students garnered 'satisfactory (80-84),' 'fairly satisfactory (75-79),' and 'did not meet expectations (74 and below)' descriptive ratings. It is evident that 33% of student population is experiencing difficulty under the Modular Distance Learning. After the application of the RINGS, improvements were evident though it was not as high as the usual research experimentations performed by other researchers. The academic performance of the students improved from Fairly Satisfactory to Satisfactory. As Kaldahl (2019) posited that oracy serves as a key competency across school subjects, the researchers are projecting to fully implement RINGS instructional strategy in all Modular Distance Learning classes of Grade 12 tracks and strands for the 2nd semester of school year 2021-2022. It will be implemented in Academic Track – Humanities and Social Science Strand,

Technical-Vocational and Livelihood Track – Information and Communications Technology Strand (With majorship in Programming and Computer Systems Servicing) and Industrial Arts Strand (With majorship in Electrical Installation and Maintenance).

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