



Effect Spawned by Youth-led Remedial Class for Learning Recovery

Achievement of Grade V and Grade VIII Students in Math and English

Executive Summary

As elsewhere in the world, expansion of COVID-19 paralyzed the functioning of educational institutions for more than two years affecting the learning of about nine million students in Nepal. The alternative mode of learning (remote learning/online) adopted as an attempt to combat with the adversities of learning created by the pandemic was less effective due to unavailability and inaccessibility of internet and other facilities of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). The students from marginalized and deprived communities were more vulnerable in accessing quality learning. They faced learning loss questioning the campaign of promoting quality education. Realizing this fact, ActionAid International Nepal (AAIN) designed a project of implementing remedial classes in its project areas particularly focusing on the students of Grade IV to Grade VIII. This was an effective way to bridge the learning gap and make children able to continue their education and boost their confidence level. Youth-led remedial classes for learning recovery could be one of the best alternatives to recover the learning losses due to COVID-19.

In so doing, a test of each of Math and English of each Grade V and Grade VIII were developed based on the grid prescribed by the respective curriculums. The tests were administered to 330 Grade V students and 279 Grade VIII students from different districts. The students were selected as sample units using multistage sampling technique. Based on the Pre-Test of the learning performance of the students, the learning gaps were identified. The gaps (the ideas and concepts on which the students demonstrated weaker performance) were clustered in 12 thematic areas in order to develop 12 lesson plans in each of Math and English of Grade IV to Grade VIII for one and half hours. The local volunteers were oriented to engage in teaching learning practices using the lesson plans conducting a workshop in each district. The youth volunteers delivered the lessons in the classes. The Post-Test (Post-Assessment) was conducted after 12 weeks using similar tests (slightly modifying the test items but retaining the same difficulty level) to measure the performance of the students. The Post-Test was administered to the same students from the same Grades.



Key Findings

1. The achievements of Grade V students were found to have significantly increased in Mathematics after the intervention of remedial classes but their achievements on English was not increased to the satisfactory level. They are still under achievers in English despite improvement brought by the remedial classes.
2. The achievements of Grade VIII students improved significantly by around 25% in the Post-Test unless otherwise they achieved only 30% or less in the pre-Test.
3. There were no gender differences among Grade V students in achievement improvements as both boys and girls improved almost equally in both Math and English. The progress of both boys and girls in English were not satisfactory (below 30%) though both of them achieved slightly more than 50% in Math.
4. Grade VIII students progressed by the mean difference 5 both in Math and English. The average achievements in the Post-Test of Math stands slightly more than 50% improved from around 30% in the Pre-Test and the achievement of the Post-Test of English stands nearly 50% improved from around 25% of the pre-Test.
5. The scores of the students of both Grade V and Grade VIII distributed normally with improved achievements in both Math and English.
6. The highest positive effect of remedial classes appeared in Palpa and Siraha districts as the average achievements in Post-Test in Grade V Mathematics were 70.25% and 76.67% respectively. However, the lowest average achievements in Grade V Mathematics were in Doti (27.50%) and Bhaktapur (35.00%). The achievements in the Post-Test were lowered in Doti and Bardiya.
7. The achievements in English in the Post-Test of Grade V were improved in most of the districts but the scores were not so much satisfactory. The Post-Test achievements in Doti and Bhaktapur were significantly improved standing at 41.09% and 49.29%. However, the achievements of the students in Sankhuwasabha were lowered by half standing at 25.50%. The achievements in Tehrathum, Bajura, Kathmandu, and Palpa were also not satisfactory (below 30%).
8. There was significant progress in achievements of the students in Grade VIII Math in Doti, Siraha, and Palpa. However, the scores were found to be decreased in Tehrathum (35% to 32%) and Bhaktapur (28% to 27%). The achievements in Grade VIII Mathematics as improved were satisfactory in other districts except Bhaktapur.
9. The eighth graders were found to have improved their performance in English. The students of Tehrathum, Doti, Siraha, Parsa, Bhaktapur, Bardiya, and Palpa improved their scores significantly. Even though, the students of Sankhuwasabha and Kathmandu moderately improved their performance in English. The students from all the districts achieved more than 40% in English in the Post-Test.
10. The achievement of the students in Grade V Math stands around 50% in the post-Test. However, the improvements in English were not satisfactory as all Janajati, Dalit, and Brahman/Chhetri (except Madhesi students) scored less than 30% in the Post Test. Even though, the students from Madhesi groups improved the best followed by Janajati, Dalit, and Brahman/Chhetri.
11. The students from Dalit and Madhesi communities improved their achievements significantly as compared to Brahmin/Chhetri students. Dalit students were able to increase their achievement in mathematics from 22.25% to 57.61% and Madhesi students from 34.00% to 67.04%.
12. The achievement change of Janajati students was the lowest in English than the achievement changes of Brahman/Chhetri, Dalit, and Madhesi groups. The Madhesi students achieved the best standing at 55.02%. However, the achievement of the Grade VIII students of all caste/ethnic groups increased more than 42 % in the Post-Test unless otherwise they had achievements less than 30%.
13. There were significant changes in the achievements of the students of Grade V in Math in rural and urban areas. However, the achievement in English in both rural and urban areas could not be changed as desired as the students in the Post-Test of English underscored (less than 30%). The improvements in Math were better than in English. The urban students improved better in Mathematics than the students from rural areas. On contrary, the students from rural areas improved better than the students from urban areas in English. Even though the achievements of the students of Grade V from both rural and urban areas were not satisfactory.
14. The significant changes in average scores of Grade VIII students in Math and English. Importantly, the rural students were able to demonstrate better achievements and improvements than the students from urban locations. The rural students were able to score slightly more than 50% both in Math and English but the students from urban areas scored less than 40% in both Math and English.

Key Recommendations

This research may provide an excellent example on how to conduct remedial classes for recovering the learning losses of the students due to pandemic situations. The study gives a way on how to engage volunteers to boost up the students in learning providing meaningful support.

1. It is important to make schools and local governments responsible to conduct remedial classes for learning recovery beyond school hours. The local governments should manage the budget for remedial classes.
2. Local volunteers and teachers can be used to engage in remedial classes. They have to engage in planned teaching-learning activities identifying the gap of competency of the students.
3. The focus should be given to conceptualizing ideas and concepts of major subjects rather than rote memorizations.
4. The achievement on English in Grade V was not improved satisfactorily. Thus, the more attention should be given to improve the achievements on Grade V English.
5. The schools and local governments should be made responsible to manage the learning resources (including the ICT tools and reference materials) for effective remedial classes.
6. The focus is to be given to those students who left behind in learning in the COVID-19 pandemic situations particularly the students from under poverty families and underprivileged groups such as Dalits, highly marginalized groups, and religious minorities.
7. It is crucial to analyze the results of ongoing assessments during the remedial classes and provide feedback to the students, head/teachers, parents, and other actors of education.
8. The parents are to make responsible to help and guide their children in learning at homes and communities.
9. It should be encouraged to manage and use the Information Communication and Technologies (ICTs) such as radio, television, local FM, and social media in learning processes.
10. Assuring integrity in assessment practices is a must. Fair and dignified internal assessment practices support identifying the weaknesses and areas of improvement of the students. The classroom interventions should stem based on such ongoing assessments.
11. It is essential to have a shift in changes from rigid, structured, time-bound, and testing model of examination systems to more flexible performance-based assessments such as take-home assignments, projects, and group works or any other locally grounded task-based assessments.



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