**ASHESI UNIVERSITY COLLEGE**


**IMPLEMENTING A CUSTOMIZED CLASSROOM LITERACY**

**ACCELERATION PROGRAM (CCLAP) AT FIDELITY JUVENILE**

**COLLEGE, BEREKUSO**


By


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**DECLARATION**

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own original work and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

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I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the dissertation were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of dissertation laid down by Ashesi University College

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Date: **APRIL …, 2013**

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

# ABSTRACT

In developing countries like Ghana, low literacy rates and high poverty especially in rural areas tend to go hand in hand. Efforts to solve this problem of low levels of literacy have mainly been along the lines of out of school instruction, popularly called 'extra classes' in Ghana. This paper examines how a Customized Classroom Literacy Acceleration Program (CCLAP) woven into the general education curriculum, thus implemented during regular classroom hours improves literacy in a small underprivileged school in Berekuso. The findings indicate an improvement in literacy of second graders provided some targeted instruction as part of the general curriculum. This paper concludes with recommendations for further research involving more learners, classrooms and subject areas.

**Key words: CCLAP, scaffolding, universal design for learning, individualized/targeted instruction, curriculum, tracking, differentiation**

# Table of Contents

# CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Introduction and Background

"Never let your schooling get in the way of your education" (Twain, 1875).
To most people, the Twain quote signifies a rebellion against the
traditional school system in America at the time. Those words hold a
contrary meaning to me. All children-irrespective of where they live, or
how much money their parents or families make-deserve access to a
great education. Mark Twain's quote bring back to me images of students
wearing tattered clothing, walking miles to school in the blistering heat,
and teachers striving to impart knowledge to such students in spite of
unfavorable conditions. Those simple, yet powerful words hold a lot of
meaning in today's educational system. According to a report by the
Ghana Education Service (GES), while enrolment rates in Ghana's primary
schools have improved significantly in recent years- to the current 95%
Gross Enrolment Rate and 80% Net Enrolment Rate-the quality of
education has not matched this progress. Less than 20% of pupils in lower
primary school in Ghana achieve proficiency in literacy and numeracy
(Initiative). Research conducted on how the world's most improved school
systems keep getting better described Ghana's current educational system
as on an improvement journey from poor to fair (Mourshed, Chijioke, &
Michael, 2010). Needless to say, there are still huge gaps in terms of the
educational system helping students achieve basic literacy and numeracy.

"Nothing you do for children is ever wasted" (Keillor, 1996). Off that line
of reasoning then, everyone deserves a quality education, especially those
not privileged to attend a rich school. Furthermore like the above quote

suggests, efforts made to improve the quality of education provided underprivileged children can reap results. Not being privileged to attend a 'rich' school should ever deprive any child of a proper education. In 1966, James Coleman conducted the second largest social science research in US history-involving 600,000 students in 4,000 schools. At the end of it all, 'Equality of Educational Opportunity' was issued. His report made a very interesting discovery, one that still holds true today. He found that peers mattered in gaining equality of educational opportunity (Kahlenberg, 2001). In other words, the impact who one attends school with has a greater impact on that person's learning vis a vis the resources particular schools have access to. The report concluded that the social composition of the student body is more highly related to achievement, independent of the student's own social achievement or background, than any school factor is. An idea James Coleman thus propounded, and which this project also aims to employ is that of 'learning by association' (Kahlenberg, 2001).

It was found in that research that students were 14 times more likely to say it was harder to accept the disapproval of their peers than of teachers. Students learn vocabulary and other academic basics from one another so that going to school with other children whose vocabulary is larger than one's own demands and creates a larger vocabulary. Putting his reasoning into context, a Twi speaking child will learn English faster in a classroom full of English speaking students than from the best English teacher. What a Customized Classroom Literacy Acceleration Program (CCLAP) seeks to achieve is an overall improvement in the literacy achievements of each student in a classroom so that learning by association becomes possible. However, contrary to Coleman's report that

predicted and found true that a lower income child who attends school in a middle income class environment will naturally expand his vocabulary (Kahlenberg, 2001), because the economic status and mix of the students in a classroom cannot be altered, targeted instruction becomes even more important.

## 1.2 Motivation

My love for children coupled with my determination to make a difference in Ghana's educational system moved me to participate in an exchange program in the Fall of 2012. During Teacher Education training at Coe College in the United States, a special education class, Exceptional Learners really stood out to me. The concept of an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) designed to accommodate students with special needs (learning disabilities and gifted students) whiles integrating them in the general education classroom was an educational milestone that inspired this project. Seeing firsthand through classroom observations at public schools how impactful the use of IEPs were to the literacy development of students with special needs, the idea of a literacy program customized to the needs of regular students was developed. The numbers are very discouraging, worrying even- less than 20% of primary school pupils in Ghana achieve literacy proficiency (Initiative). As part of my contribution to Ashesi University College's effort to engage its local community, I decided to develop this literacy acceleration plan to help boost the literacy proficiency of second grade students at Fidelity Juvenile College, Berekuso.

## 1.3  History of Ghana's Educational System

Ghana, a British colony, gained independence having adopted some British systems. One such system was the British curriculum. The country operated an O-level and A-level system until the Ministry of Education restructured the system in 1987. The restructuring came about as a result of issues that arose concerning the objectives, content, administration as well as management of education in Ghana. It was not until about 10 years later that the final transition was complete (Keteku, 1999). There was however, yet another Educational Reform implemented on September 11, 2007 (Ghana, 2009). Under the Kufuor administration, the educational reform came about with the aim to make education more relevant to the world of work after school as well as to promote national and cultural identity and citizenship. Some of the key points of the new education system were that basic education shall now be 11 years, and there will be a greater emphasis on Information Communication Technology (ICT) (Ghana, 2009).

## 1.4 The Ministry of Education

The mission of the Ministry of Education is "to provide relevant and quality education for all Ghanaians especially the disadvantaged to enable them acquire skills which will make them functionally literate and productive to facilitate poverty alleviation and promote the rapid socio-economic growth of the country" (Ghana, 2009). The Ministry's vision is to use quality education delivery to accelerate the nation's socio economic development (Ghana, 2009). The Ghana Education Service (GES), under the Ministry of Education is in charge of running the educational system of all public schools in Ghana, as well as of most private schools.  With that in mind,

this applied project will be focusing on Fidelity Juvenile College, a private school located in Berekuso.

## 1.5 About Fidelity Juvenile College

Fidelity Juvenile College was established on September 10, 2001 by Mr. Michael Aryee who is also the Head Teacher. The school comprises of about two hundred and seventy (270) students from Kindergarten through to J.H.S 3. There are twelve (12) permanent staff members who make up the teachers. The school runs the Ghana Education Service (GES) syllabus, but does not adhere strictly to it. "GES mandates that all village schools teach in a Ghanaian language at the lower primary levels, but here at Fidelity, we teach the children in English right from KG" (Aryee, 2013). A Circuit Supervisor appointed by the GES comes around on average twice a term to ensure that the school is performing in terms of meeting GES standard requirements for student and teacher performance.

## 1.6 Objectives of the Study

**Objective:** To implement a Customized Classroom Literacy Acceleration Program (CCLAP); a customized lesson plan template used to differentiate instruction in English class to improve literacy.

**Secondary Objective:** To design a template that can be used to provide targeted instruction in different subjects at Fidelity Juvenile College

## 1.7 Outline of project

This project will consist of five chapters. Chapter 1 will consider an introduction and background to the topic. Chapter 2 will provide a review and analysis of existing literature related to schooling systems, targeted

instruction, and learning strategies. Chapter 3 will discuss the research methodology. Chapter 4 will provide an in-depth analysis of data collected, in relation to the objectives of this project. The final chapter presents an imperative conclusion of the entire project, including defined recommendations for future research. Data sources will include primary sources. Books, articles, electronic sources, interviews, as well as field data will also be considered.

# CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

## 2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, a discussion and analysis of literary works of others on schooling systems, learning strategies and individualized instruction is carried out. Hence through this review of existing literature, there would be an attempt to evaluate the feasibility of a literacy program customized for use in the general education classroom.

A majority of the literature reviewed relate to targeted instruction: most of such targeted instruction was implemented outside the regular classroom setting. The said literacy improvement programs were mostly after school programs spearheaded by entities separate from the learner's classroom teacher. Inasmuch as those programs had their successes, what the Customized Classroom Literacy Acceleration Program (CCLAP) aimed to do was to get the same targeted attention and differentiated instruction, but to have it administered one time, by the class teacher the learner is accustomed to. For that matter, CCLAP was woven into the general English curriculum Fidelity Juvenile College was using.

## 2.2 Schooling Systems: Best Practices around the World

Research conducted on how the world's most improved school systems keep getting better placed Ghana in the bracket of a system on a journey from poor to fair. The implication of being in such a bracket according to research conducted was that, such systems have the goal of achieving basic literacy and numeracy (Mourshed, Chijioke, & Michael, 2010).

The example of Minas Gerais, Brazil, also in the poor to fair category showed an interesting outcome to the intervention implemented. The Department of Education in this system was focused on improving the overall system environment and structure. They developed an evaluation system where teachers could see where they started as well as their progress overtime. Prescriptive teaching materials and textbooks were provided the teachers, together with a bi monthly visit to the schools to gather feedback on challenges and progress made. As a result, from 2007 to 2009, Minas Gerais rose from $5^{th}$ place to $1^{st}$ place among Brazilian states on Brazil's national (IDEB) assessment. Ghana albeit having the same goal of improving literacy and numeracy is much looser in its choice of intervention, and in effect has not been as successful as Minas Gerais in its journey from poor to fair. Three common themes the research named as delivering results at this stage include: providing scaffolding and motivation for low skill teachers and principals, getting all schools to minimum quality standard and finally, getting students in seats (Mourshed, Chijioke, & Michael, 2010). This research helps with achieving the theme of providing scaffolding to teachers. Scaffolding refers to assistance that helps children complete tasks that they cannot complete independently (Eggen & Kauchak, 2007). In relation to the help provided teachers in schooling systems on the road from poor to fair, content knowledge is shown to be a major problem, hence the need for scaffolding in the first place. A CCLAP in its entirety provides scaffolding for teachers in that it is used as an outline they can flesh out according to what lesson is being taught and the level of student performance.

Another interesting finding from the McKinsey study also relevant to this project was Singapore's educational system. A report by Singapore's

Minister of Education in 1978 led to a major overhaul in the country's schooling system. The central recommendation of that report was to streamline Singapore's students. This was based on the premise that the existing curriculum at the time was not sufficiently customized to students' different abilities. It resulted in students being placed into three aptitude based groups and the results were positive. Today, Singapore's schooling system is in the category of systems on the journey from "great to excellent". In an effort to mimic the practice of Singapore with the aim of achieving similar success, consideration was given to the need for tracking when developing CCLAP. "Tracking is the practice of placing students in different classes or curricula on the basis of achievement" (Eggen & Kauchak, 2007). The whole process of implementing a Customized Classroom Literacy Acceleration Program (CCLAP) begins with placing students of similar abilities into three groups, and attempting to match instruction to the needs of these groups. This grouping is done after averaging the individual scores of students on four different tests taken over a period of one week.

## 2.3 Learning Strategies

Studies have shown that teachers' knowledge plays a critical role in how materials like textbooks are used. Study by Valencia et al (2006) suggested that instructional materials in themselves did not promote teacher learning, but the process of adapting topics, concepts and tasks in textbooks to the needs of students is what promoted teacher change. The question then arises as to whether a scripted curriculum would be beneficial since providing the materials does not in itself promote teacher learning, and in effect student learning. The word curriculum derives from

the Latin term meaning 'running course' (Koch, 2012). A curriculum is therefore the overall plan that includes what you will teach and how the material should be arranged and presented. Some researchers have shown a scripted curriculum to be quite effective on the whole, stating three possible responses to such an introduction. Namely, that the teacher follows the guidelines to the letter or accommodates the scripted curriculum by making modest changes in teaching. Finally, the teacher can totally resist the scripted curriculum and insert his/her own content and pedagogical perspectives to teaching (Valencia, Place, Martin, & Grossman, 2006).

Whichever of the above is employed by a teacher will be shaped by interactions between his/her knowledge, materials provided and the context in which they work. The challenge of implementing CCLAP that was observed in the classroom was that inasmuch as the teacher followed the guidelines as directed, the context in which she worked and the background of her students acted as a hindrance to her ability to effectively teach them. The teacher at Fidelity Juvenile College viewed the CCLAP procedurally as against a more instructional approach she could vary to reach her students. The GES curriculum she currently followed had the topics for the term outlined in the order in which they were to be taught and so her focus had become covering the curriculum versus having the students learn or understand the material being taught. Examples of teachers who had been successful in using the prescriptive teaching materials were those who thought outside the box and spent time lesson planning. They made necessary changes to the 'script' by taking into consideration the specific needs of their students lesson by

lesson and finally coming up with the best ways to meet them at their point of need (Valencia, Place, Martin, & Grossman, 2006).

## 2.4 Literacy and Disadvantage

Pretorius & Machet (2004) describe proficiency in reading as giving learners access to information, broadening their knowledge, increasing their vocabulary and developing their language skills. According to their article, teachers and learners alike struggle with literacy in general, in English as well as in the African languages. The research focused on five South African schools, and considered how an out-of-school enrichment program called the Family Literacy Project (FLP) affected learners' literacy levels. Students in Grades 1-4 across the five schools participated in the FLP program. Additionally, there was a control group of learners who were not part of the FLP but who were also assessed in comparison to the learners in the program. The aim of the out-of-school program (FLP) was to engage children in literacy activities outside the formal classroom setting and curriculum in an effort to promote their literacy development. An interesting facet of the out-of-school program was the fact that it also provided literacy classes to adult learners, mainly mothers and grandmothers of the students. This was to encourage family literacy. This approach reiterates the point the Coleman report explained about children from low income families learning less vocabulary at home since family members are often swamped with providing for the family and/or are illiterate themselves (Kahlenberg, 2001). The provision to educate the family members was therefore another way to improve the literacy gains of the learners. The writers also discussed two terms, decoding and comprehension which relate to the literacy proficiency of learners in their studies and also learners involved in this study. They describe both terms

succinctly as, decoding being students 'learning to read' and comprehension being students 'reading to learn' (Pretorius & Machet, 2004).

In relation to implementing CCLAP, the aim is to reach a literacy level such that learners can both decode and comprehend simultaneously and rapidly. The encouraging results of the South African out-of-school enrichment program, is an indication that learners from disadvantaged backgrounds like Berekuso can improve their literacy proficiency with some extra help. Exposure to storybooks and other print material was instrumental in helping the learners improve on their decoding skills. This finding is also in harmony with the Jenkins & Russell (1971) article that emphasized the positive effects of printed materials on student learning. For that matter, CCLAP seeks to also encourage the use of printed materials like textbooks into the English lessons taught.

## 2.5 What is differentiation and how does CCLAP incorporate it?

"Differentiation is an educational philosophy recognizing students' varying background knowledge, learning profiles, abilities, interests and language (Koch, 2012). A great method found to aid in differentiation is the idea of concept mapping. "Concept mapping is a learning strategy in which learners construct visual relationships among concepts" (Eggen & Kauchak, 2007). This idea is not limited only to students but extends or in some cases begins with the teachers themselves using it to enrich their own understanding and assess that of their students. A concept map in the form of a simple rectangular box divided into four sections is used to succinctly summarize an entire lesson. The parts include one that tells of the definition of the topic for consideration, facts and characteristics of the

concept being taught or learned, examples of that topic as well as a section for non-examples to help minimize misconceptions. Such a concept map is called a Frayer model. The use of the Frayer model and the general layout of the actual CCLAP model teachers use takes into consideration the differences in ability of the students. As a result, in every class or lesson taught, the teacher makes it a point to read something, say something, do something and write something so that every student is met at his/ her point of need in terms of what teaching and learning practices work best for them.

*See appendix A for sample CCLAP lesson plan and appendix B for sample Frayer model on Verbs.*

## 2.6 Kolb's Learning Cycle & Universal Design for Learning (UDL)
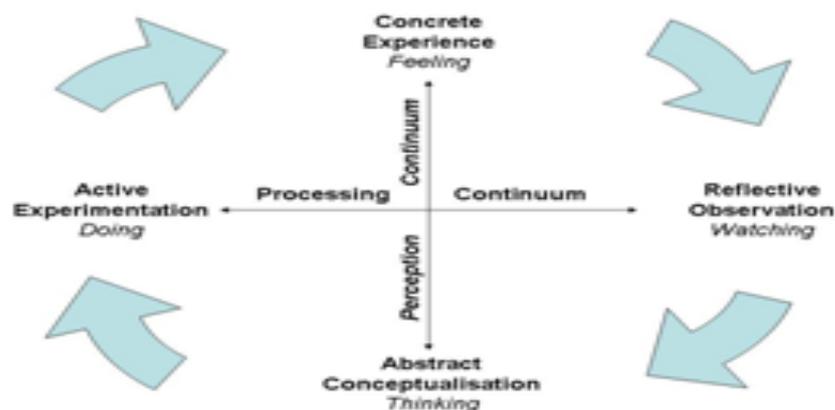


Kolb's learning cycle is a model of experiential learning which draws from the works of Jung, Piaget, Dewey and Lewin. This model is based on the assumption that people learn from experiences, as well as from books,

and that people learn differently (Miller, Corcoran, Kovacs, Rosenblum, & Wright, 2005).   A careful look at the above diagram shows four major elements of experiential learning on the continuum. According to Kolb, each individual's learning style falls under one of these four elements and so such individuals learn by either feeling, watching, thinking or by doing. Similar to this idea is the Universal Design for Learning (UDL).

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is a "whole school" approach that contributes to progress in the general education classroom in designing assessment methods and teaching strategies to accommodate a wide range of individual abilities and preferences including the exceptionally gifted and culturally diverse (Smith, Polloway, Patton, & Dowdy, 2012). The primary components of UDL are multiple means of representation, multiple means of engagement, and multiple means of expression. Multiple means of representation refers to the manner in which material is presented to students. In a single lesson for instance, the means of presentation could vary; there could be visual, auditory or written means of representation. Multiple means of engagement addresses the question of how best to engage students' minds and bodies. Multiple means of expression allows the students to demonstrate their understanding of concepts taught in more ways than one. After a lesson on verbs for instance, a teacher may allow her students to present a drawing of some everyday verbs, sing a song about verbs or even act out some action verbs. This method of teaching in its holistic approach makes it more likely for all students to maximize their classroom experience and get the most out of the instruction they receive

## 2.7 Involving Students in Individualized Instruction

In order for material to be meaningful to the student, it should relate to or be associated with something commonly known and understood by the student. For that matter, individualized or targeted instruction is the mode of instruction that meets the demands of both the students and the learning process, making it possible for each student to learn that which is most appropriate for him personally. It is especially successful in bridging the gap of failed communication due to large student numbers. Individualized instruction and meaningful material go hand in hand. Jenkins et al (2000) refer to five kinds of involvement that can motivate learners. These include tangibles, audio input, human interaction, visuals and printed materials. For purposes of this project, the focus will be on human interaction, visuals and printed materials. Printed materials and visuals are an effective tool for enhancing individualized instruction as they provide color and their diversity can easily be stored in learners' memory (Jenkins & Russell, 1971). Printed materials are useful in the context of Fidelity Juvenile College because when reading a textbook for instance, the student is free to read at his/her natural rate and can even flip back and forth to reread certain portions. Human interaction on the other hand ties all the kinds of involvement in with the instructor's presence to enrich the student's learning experience by serving as a reassurance that the teacher is there to clarify any issues they may have understanding a particular lesson. Not only is interaction limited to the student and instructor, but student to student interactions also serve to further enrich the learning process. Students can discuss questions raised by the lesson or teacher, and at the same time deepen their own understanding as they explain to their peers. The importance of such

student to student interaction is recognized in CCLAP lesson plans making provision for some amount of teamwork in every lesson, be it through group reading, homework or projects.

Emphasizing student to student interaction by no means shoves the teacher's role to the background. The teacher when providing individualized or targeted instruction must try his/her best to make the classroom environment one that allows students to respond freely and appropriately to questions and classroom discussions. This calls for careful planning on the teacher's part. S/he must carefully sequence the material to be covered so that every idea stands out and can be readily connected to things relevant to the student to aid in easy retrieval when necessary.

Finally, to ascertain whether or not the individualized instruction has been beneficial, careful evaluation is needed. For a higher internal validity of results, each student's evaluation must be based on his/her own performance independent of the performance of other students. It is as a result of this focus on personal improvement of the learners that the initial assessment used to put the learners into the three ability groups and all the assessments done using CCLAP were evaluated individually and not on a curve.

# CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Based on the streamlining success of Singapore, a country on an educational journey from 'great to excellent', CCLAP seeks to also 'track' students but at a more basic level- in their specific classrooms. Tracking is a term that refers to grouping students based on ability (Eggen & Kauchak, 2007). Using a basic pre-test approach, students will be assessed and placed in one of three groups. The students could be struggling/below average, average or above average and instruction will be differentiated to accommodate their unique challenges and abilities, all with the aim of improving literacy. Initial observation showed that the class teacher did not differentiate at all. Using the Frayer model for her lesson planning helped to differentiate her lessons a little more. Additionally, the present system used at the school focuses on raw scores. However, evaluation of the CCLAP model will be focused on group improvement from the time of pre-test to the reevaluation stage 12 weeks later. CCLAP was designed after analyzing the current curriculum materials the class teacher used in teaching the lessons. This was to help get a thorough understanding of the content and approach to instruction she used to implement each material. Outside classroom observations, the researcher engaged in dialogue where she was helped to get a feel of the class teacher's experience as a teacher in an underprivileged school and the challenges she faced as a result.

## 3.1 Study Design

The study design employed for this project is a Case Study. "Case studies involve an in-depth examination of a single person or a few people" (Marczyk, DeMatteo, & Festinger, 2005). For purposes of this project, the few people studied were a group of second graders at Fidelity Juvenile

College. The goal of case studies is to provide an accurate and complete description of the case, which for purposes of this project was that student literacy can be improved using a CCLAP. The focus of this case study was on the individuality of the second grade class, as well as of the three distinct groups of students that make up the class, namely, struggling students, average students, and above average students. A practical function of this case study is that all findings and suggestions that worked for the learners can be immediately applicable to their case. The approach designed to address the class problem of poor literacy proficiency was a Customized Classroom Literacy Acceleration Program (CCLAP). Together with the class teacher, a realistic document to outline class objectives as well as track progress was designed. This choice of study design is however not wrought of drawbacks. Inasmuch as it helps to give a good description of the situation on the ground; that students' level of literacy if poor, it is quite limited in its explanation of why it is so. This gap made it necessary to consider another study design that would strengthen the internal validity of the CCLAP. As a result, a non experimental study design was partially employed alongside the case study approach.

## 3.2 Study Population

Fidelity Juvenile College was established on September 10, 2001 by Mr. Michael Aryee who is also the Head Teacher. It is located in Berekuso, a small village in the Eastern region of Ghana. The school comprises of about two hundred and seventy (270) students from Kindergarten through to J.H.S 3. There are twelve (12) permanent staff members who make up the teachers. The school runs the Ghana Education Service (GES)

syllabus, albeit it adheres to it only partially. Out of 35 students making up the class, a study sample of 21 students was used. The students were made up of 14 boys and 7 girls. The average boy to girl ratio of the class was therefore 1.67 boys to 1 girl. The average boy to girl ratio of the study sample was 2 boys to 1 girl. The average age of boys in the class was 8.65 years. The average age of girls in the class was 8.58 years. The mean age of the whole class was 8.625 years. Juxtaposing these figures with the Ghana Education Service (GES) average age for second grade which is 7 years, it was evident that students at Fidelity Juvenile College were well over the standard age for that class (Ghana, 2009). A conclusion as to whether or not this disparity in their ages has any effect on their literacy achievement will be a consequence of further research.

## 3.3 Sampling technique

The sampling technique used for this project was the Purposive Sampling method, which refers to sampling with a purpose in mind (Trochim, 2005). The decision to use this sampling method was informed by the need to reach the targeted sample quickly. In this case, the target was second graders, and so going into Fidelity, the researcher was fully aware of who needed to be reached and this saved a great deal of time that would have otherwise been used to classify the population before proceeding with any form of random sampling.

Exactly how this sampling method was carried out was by the researcher randomly showing up to class and administering the tests to the class. The technique was used based on the premise that only students who were present and participated in both post-CCLAP tests would make up the sample. The implication was therefore that students who were absent for one or both of the tests had in essence removed themselves from the

sample. Each student was however given an equal probability of being selected to participate in the study, as the tests were available to the entire class on the randomly selected days known in advance to none in the class.

## 3.4 Data requirement and sources

Sources of data used included both primary and secondary sources. The primary sources refer to those sources that came directly from the researcher's observations, personal interviews, personal reflections on the experience as a whole as well as journal entries detailing all preparations and evaluations made before and after classroom visits. Secondary sources of information include all books, journals, studies, articles, websites as well as interviews consulted as authority for arguments and claims made for this project.

## 3.5 Data Collection and Tools

A number of tools were employed or designed during the course of this project, all with the aim of meeting the project's objective. The most significant tool that was designed for the second grade class is what the researcher called a Customized Classroom Literacy Acceleration Program (CCLAP). This is a lesson plan template that allows teachers to differentiate instruction for students in English class. Since, the class teacher was found to use a notebook for her lesson planning, the template was designed such that the teacher could fill out a section in her regular lesson planning notebook. To assist with the differentiation, the need for a more prescriptive lesson plan was identified. Research conducted on how curriculum materials can help with elementary reading showed that providing support for teachers by way of comprehensive, structured materials for instruction is a way to boost their self confidence (Valencia,

Place, Martin, & Grossman, 2006). For that matter, as part of the CCLAP, a concept map called a Frayer model was included in every lesson taught to serve as a simple, visual summary of the entire lesson for the teacher as well as the students. The CCLAP was not designed exclusive of the headmaster. The norm at the school is for the head to sign off on lesson notes, and this practice was considered in designing the CCLAP. A part of the CCLAP is a simple assessment form with objectives and timelines required for each of the three identified groups of students in the classroom-struggling, average and above average. This form is reviewed and signed by the headmaster together with the class teacher before the program is started.

# CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS AND DELIVERABLES

Table 4.1 showing the performance of the three groups of students after implementing CCLAP

| Group | Baseline Assessment (scaled to 100) | CCLAP Assessment 1 (scaled to 100) | CCLAP Assessment 2 (scaled to 100) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Above Average | 85.0 | 80.0 | 100 |
| | 81.7 | 70.0 | 100 |
| | 73.3 | 40.0 | 33.3 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Average | 61.7 | 0 | 66.7 |
| | 61.7 | 70.0 | 100 |
| | 61.7 | 50.0 | 66.7 |
| | 61.7 | 90.0 | 66.7 |
| | 58.3 | 30.0 | 66.7 |
| | 56.7 | 80.0 | 66.7 |
| | 56.7 | 40.0 | 66.7 |
| | 55.0 | 30.0 | 66.7 |
| | 53.3 | 20.0 | 33.3 |
| | 53.3 | 60.0 | 66.7 |
| | 51.7 | 20.0 | 66.7 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Struggling | 50.0 | 30.0 | 33.3 |
| | 48.3 | 20.0 | 33.3 |
| | 48.3 | 10.0 | 100 |
| | 48.3 | 40.0 | 100 |
| | 40.0 | 0 | 66.7 |
| | 40.0 | 30.0 | 33.3 |
| | 40.0 | 30.0 | 66.7 |

*Source: Field Data*

Table 4.1 Group Distribution/ CCLAP Assessments

According to the practice at Fidelity Juvenile College, likely mandated by the GES curriculum they follow, the first week of the term is set aside for assessment. As the name assessment week suggests, it is a period during which students are administered four tests to assess their individual proficiency. For purposes of this project, only the assessment for English class was considered. The assessment consists of two class tests, one team project and one homework assignment worth 15 points each. The highest possible outcome for any student thus becomes 60 points. From the above table, the first column shows the raw scores of each student scaled to 100 for easy comparison. However, before the scaling, those raw scores out of 60 were used to put the students into the three ability groups discussed in previous chapters.

- ➢ Students described as above average, highlighted in the table with the color green are students who scored 40 or above in the baseline assessment.
- ➢ Average students, depicted in the table with the color yellow refer to those who scored between 31 and 39 in the baseline assessment.
- ➢ Finally, struggling students, shown in the table with the color red refer to those who scored 30 or below on the baseline assessment.

Below is a visual representation of the percentage of students that made up the three groups after the assessment week.

**Pie Chart showing the percentage of students in the three groups**

14%
33%
52%

Above Average
Average
Struggling

Source: Field Data
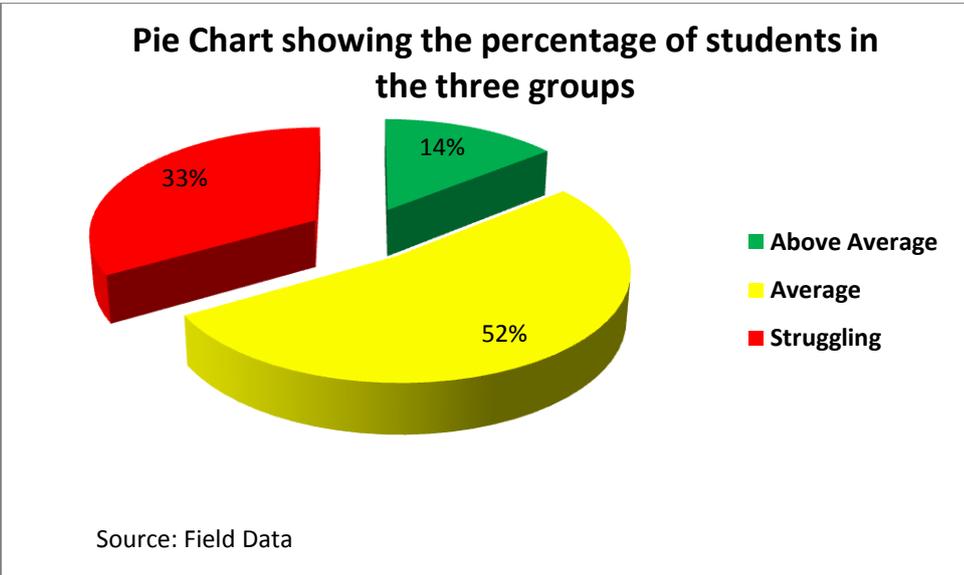
*Figure 1.1 Ability Group Percentages*

The next two columns of the table *(Table 1.1)* show those same students' performance in the two tests administered after the Customized Classroom Literacy Acceleration Program (CCLAP) was implemented. The first column shows the results of students after a lesson on Verbs that was taught using the CCLAP model. The second column shows the results of students after a lesson on Pronouns also taught using the CCLAP model.



**% of Struggling Students who Improved**

Improved (%)    Regressed (%)

15%
85%

Source: Field Data
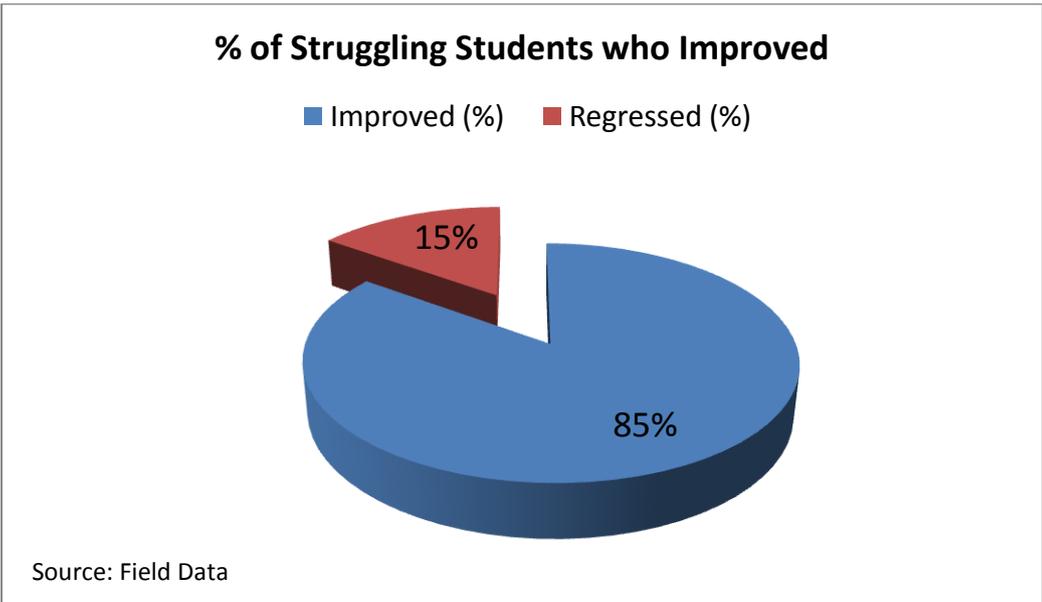
*Figure 1.2 Performance of Struggling Students*

Using the individual scores of struggling students from Assessment 1 and Assessment 2, the researcher was able to isolate those students who improved from A1 to A2 from those who regressed from A1 to A2. Figure 1.2 shows in percentage form what Table 1.1 showed. Namely that out of the 7 students that fell in the struggling group, 6 improved and only 1 regressed which is a very impressive outcome.



**% of Average Students who Improved**

■ Improved (%)   ■ Regressed (%)

18%

82%

Source: Field Data
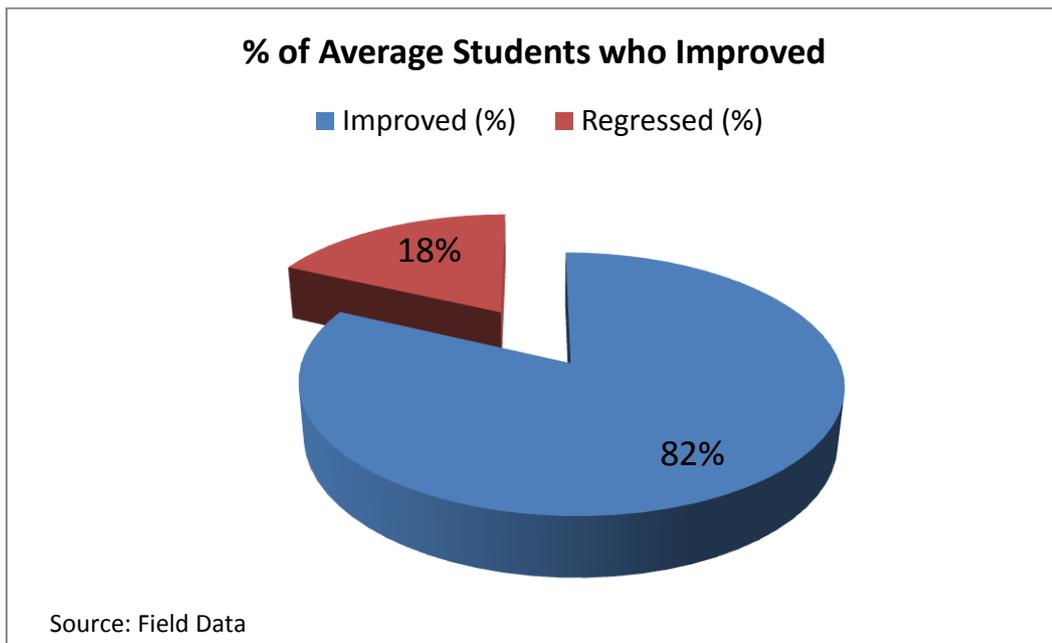
*Figure 1.3 Performance of Average Students*

Similar to what was done in Figure 2, the average students' performance in both assessments was analyzed and it was found that of the 11 students who made up the average group, 9 improved and 2 regressed. This was likewise a positive outcome.

**% of Above Average Students who Improved**

■ Improved (%) ■ Regressed (%)

33%

67%

Source: Field Data
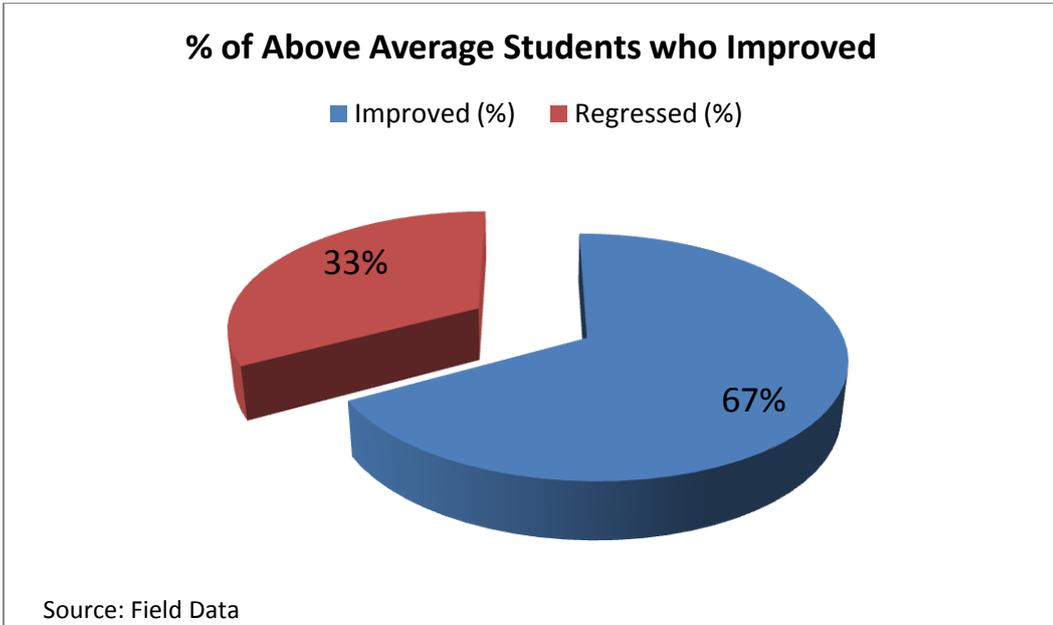
*Figure 1.4 Performance of Above Average Students*

The final group of students who made up the class was the above average group who were made up of 3 students. Of the three who took both CCLAP tests, 2 improved and 1 regressed which is also a very encouraging outcome of the CCLAP.



**Overall Results of CCLAP**

■ % of students improved ■ % of students regressed

19%

81%

Source: Field Data
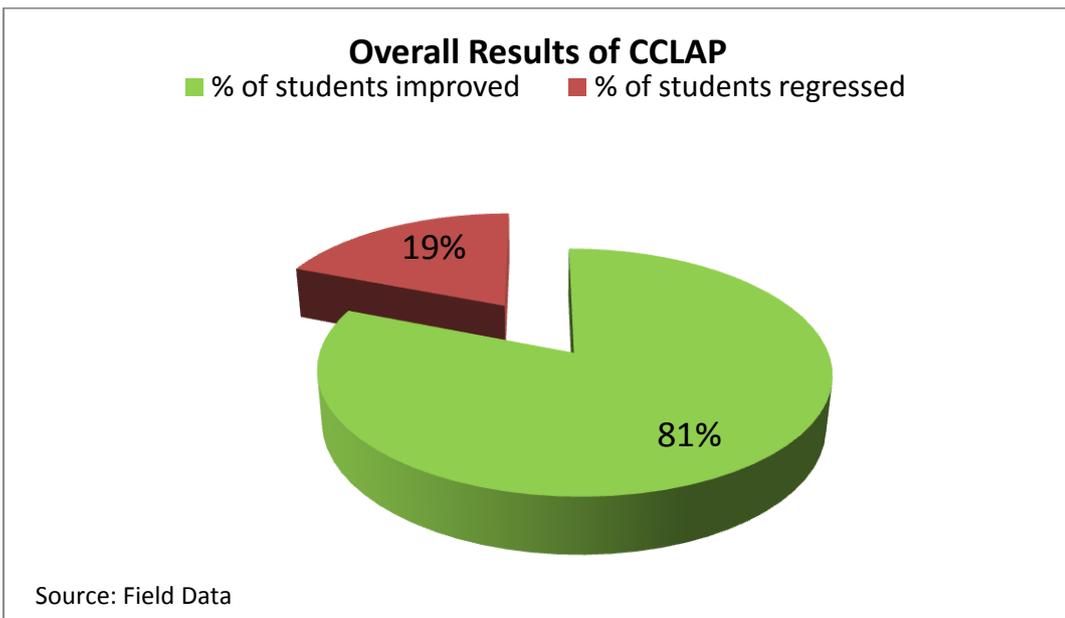
*Figure 1.5 Post-CCLAP Performance of all students*

Finally, to show succinctly the overall effect implementing a Customized Classroom Literacy Acceleration Program (CCLAP) had on all the learners, they were grouped into those who improved and those who regressed. Of the 21 students sampled, 17 improved and only 4 regressed; an overall excellent outcome considering how new the program was to the learners and teacher alike.



**Column Graph showing the average results of the three groups from Assessment 1 to Assessment 2**
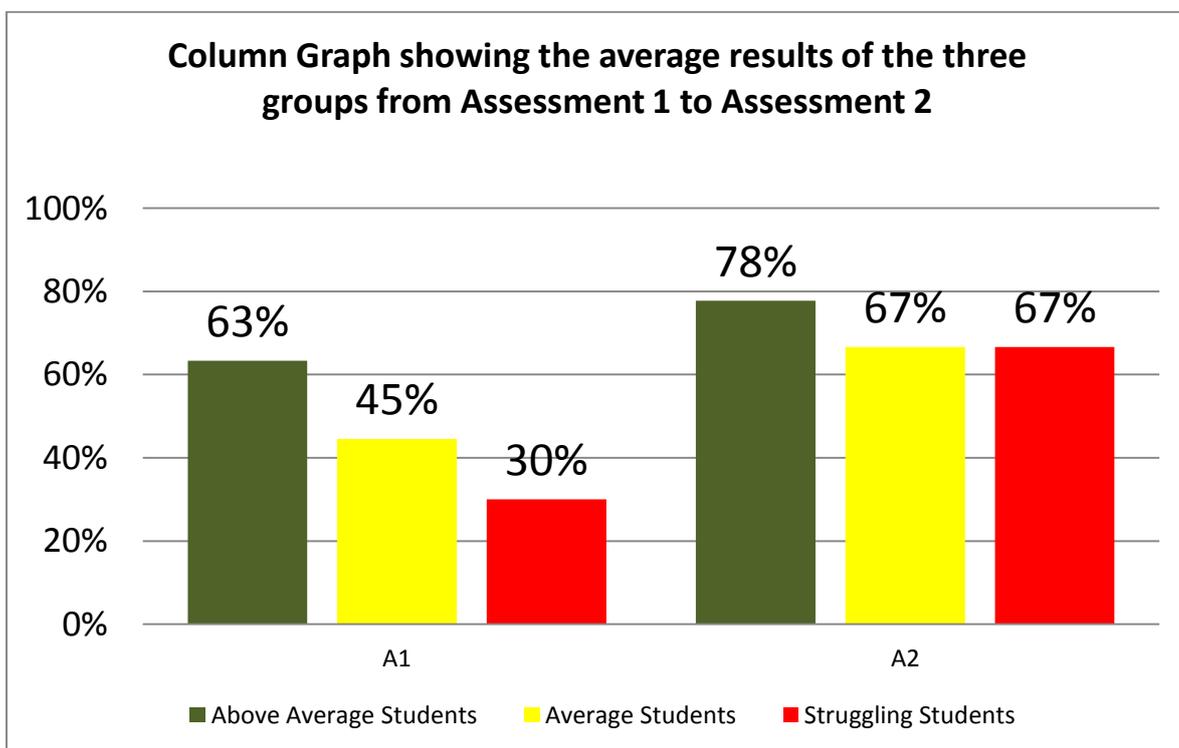
Source: Field Data

*Figure 1.6 Average Performance of the 3 groups in both CCLAP tests*

The above column graph shows the performance of all three ability groups in both CCLAP assessment tests on the same graph. The vertical axis shows the percentage scores the various groups attained, and the horizontal axis shows both tests- Assessment 1 on Pronouns (A1) and Assessment 2 on Verbs (A2)

From the graph, we see that there is a greater variance in the results of A1 versus the results of A2. The variance in Assessment 1 was thirty-three percentage (33%) points and that of Assessment 2 was eleven percentage (11%) points. Looking at the graph, it is evident that low performing students depicted by the color red improved the most from an average score of 30% in A1 to an impressive 67% in A2. This shows that the teaching window which might have been too high for low performers to have grasped may have been brought to their level with the implementation of CCLAP. As a result, if an intervention of differentiated instruction like using CCLAP is continued, the problem of struggling students continually lagging behind will be addressed and positive results as seen in Figure 1.6 could be expected. Average students showed the second highest points of improvement from an average of 45% in A1 to 67% in A2. This like in the case of the struggling students also lends credence to the fact that the teaching window may have been wrongly positioned for their ability level and was adjusted to fit their needs under CCLAP. As a result they were able to achieve an overall improvement of 22% points from A1 to A2. The final group of students shown on the graph and depicted by the color green is the above average group. This group improved with the smallest percentage points from an average of 63% in A1 to 78% in A2. It is noteworthy however that their smaller percentage improvement does not indicate that they did not do well in the tests. Their higher starting point simply means that they had less room for improvement, but the fact that they still improved is impressive.

In a nutshell, from Table 1.1 and Figures 1.1 to 1.6, the learners improved after being taught and assessed using a Customized Classroom Literacy Acceleration Program (CCLAP). No doubt, the targeted nature of

such instruction met each of the three ability groups at their points of need and was able to help the students improve their literacy proficiency.

## 4.1 Deliverables

➢ Customized Classroom Literacy Acceleration Program (CCLAP) form *(See Appendix A)*

➢ Frayer Model *(See Appendix B)*

➢ Existing Lesson Plan *(See Appendix C)*

➢ Sample CCLAP Lesson Plan *(See Appendix D)*

## 4.2 Data Analysis

Data analysis for this project was well structured. It began with a collation of all field notes and creating an excel sheet for the results of the three tests used for analysis. Charts and graphs were created to visually represent findings.

# CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The objective of this project as outlined in Chapter 1 was to implement a Customized Classroom Literacy Acceleration Program (CCLAP), to improve literacy proficiency of second grade students at Fidelity Juvenile College- a small private school located in Berekuso. Over a period of one school term and many visits to the school, the new literacy program was implemented and the findings are encouraging. Although further research is no doubt needed to validate the efficacy of the new program, 81% of students sampled showed improvement after applying the treatment. This is enough to drive further research into this and other targeted literacy programs.

The project followed this action plan: Implementing a differentiation of instruction where the teacher employs multiple means of representation, expression and engagement so as to benefit all learners (spatial, visual, auditory, and tactile). A benefit of this intervention is its simplified nature and the fact that it fit with how teachers at the school currently do their lesson prep. Together with the customized objectives for the various levels of students, general class literacy was predicted to improve, and according to the findings, literacy did improve.

## 5.1 Limitations of the Project

A major limitation of this project was the fact that the study design chosen was not as holistic as an experimental design since it had no control group to compare findings with. Having no control group also meant that the project lacked experimental control. Although it described what the situation was-that literacy levels were low in the second grade

class at Fidelity Juvenile College, the project was a mere narrative of the situation and failed to explain why the situation was so.

Another challenge with case studies this project had to overcome was the challenge of experimenter bias as it involved considerably more interaction between the researcher and the participants than most other research methods. This potential bias was addressed by limiting all contact with the learners to a third party position by communicating all the researcher's suggestions or inputs through the class teacher. A case in point was in the decision to administer all the tests through the class teacher with the exception of the last test which was administered by the researcher together with three volunteers to minimize copying.

Additionally, the small number of individuals examined in case studies makes it difficult to claim the findings will generalize to other people with similar issues or problems (Marczyk, DeMatteo, & Festinger, 2005). As was true with this project, the sample studied was a small second grade class of 32 students of which only 21 were actual participants of the study, a woefully minute fragment of the larger population of second graders across the country. Thus, approaches that worked for this class cannot be generalized as being the remedy for other second grade classes across the country with low literacy levels.

A challenge that may arise is the fact that CCLAP could be undermined if the teacher does not have enough content knowledge. Using the Frayer model could even become an issue if the teacher does not have the correct information with which to complete it. The class teacher could become fixated on following CCLAP as a procedure that must be adhered to systematically in lieu of viewing it as more of a conceptual approach that could be altered as the students do.

The question about whether the teachers will still be using CCLAP a year from now also becomes an area of concern. The need for on the job training of teachers on the importance of CCLAP thus becomes necessary as they must learn or refresh their knowledge on how to teach students to learn comprehension strategies instead of choral responses that falsely indicate an understanding of material. Since curriculum mandates do not substantially enhance teacher and student learning, or encourage thoughtful instruction, further research into how a curriculum framework that is both prescriptive and encouraging of some alteration can be helpful in a poor literacy school is recommended.

## 5.2 Recommendation

The million dollar question thus becomes whether or not CCLAP had an effect on the literacy development of the learners?

It appears that a very simple method of including differentiation in teachers' lesson planning could have positive results, and further testing could show this. In spite of the overall positive results of the CCLAP, namely that 17 of the 21 students sampled improved, it is important to note that: given study design and the small number of subjects tested, these results should be treated circumspectly and are not to be generalized. Further research of this nature including more classrooms, tests, learners and alternative teaching methods is needed to survey the situation and draw a more palpable conclusion.

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# APPENDIX A; CCLAP Form

**CUSTOMIZED CLASSROOM LITERACY ACCELERATION PROGRAM**

**DATE:** ___/___/___          **Type:** ☐ **Initial**     ☐ **Review**   ☐ **Reevaluation**

**Teacher:** _____          **Class:** _____

**Duration of this CCLAP - From:** ___/___/___    **To:** ___/___/___

**Reevaluation is due:** ___/___/___

**This CCLAP was reviewed by:** _____ **(HEAD)**

**Present Levels of Literacy Achievement (out of 60): Struggling (≤ 30)** ☐

**Average (31 ≥ 39)** ☐

**Above Average (≥ 40)** ☐

**Strengths, Weaknesses, Interests & Preferences of this group**

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**Other information necessary for the development of this CCLAP**

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**Describe the effect of this group's level of literacy on progress in their understanding of the curriculum, and involvement in the classroom in general**

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**CUSTOMIZED CLASSROOM LITERACY ACCELERATION PROGRAM**

**GOAL #: 1**                                                           **Goal Area: LITERACY**

**Current Academic Achievement** (results of the initial or most recent assessment; performance in comparison to rest of class and GES standards)

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**Baseline** (describe the group's current performance in measurable terms)

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**Measurable Annual Goal** (criterion for acceptable level of performance)
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**Evaluation Procedures** (state how progress toward meeting this goal will be measured and how often progress will be measured)

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| PROGRESS REPORT | |
|---|---|
| 1 | This goal has been met |
| 2 | Progress has been made towards the goal. It appears the goal will be met by the time this CCLAP is reviewed. |
| 3 | Progress has been made towards the goal but the goal may not be met by the time this CCLAP has been reviewed. |
| 4 | Progress is not sufficient to meet this goal by the time this CCLAP is reviewed. Instructional strategies will have to be changed. |

# APPENDIX B; FRAYER MODEL ON VERBS

| Definition:<br><br>A doing or action word | Facts & Characteristics:<br><br>- often end in –ING, ES, ED, S<br><br>➢ Action<br>➢ Helping<br>➢ Linking |
|---|---|
| **VERBS** | |
| Examples:<br><br>➢ Clapped<br>➢ Running<br>➢ Eats<br>➢ Dances<br>➢ Singing | Non- Examples:<br><br>➢ Kofi (Noun)<br>➢ Blue (Noun)<br>➢ Trotro (Noun)<br>➢ It (Pronoun) |
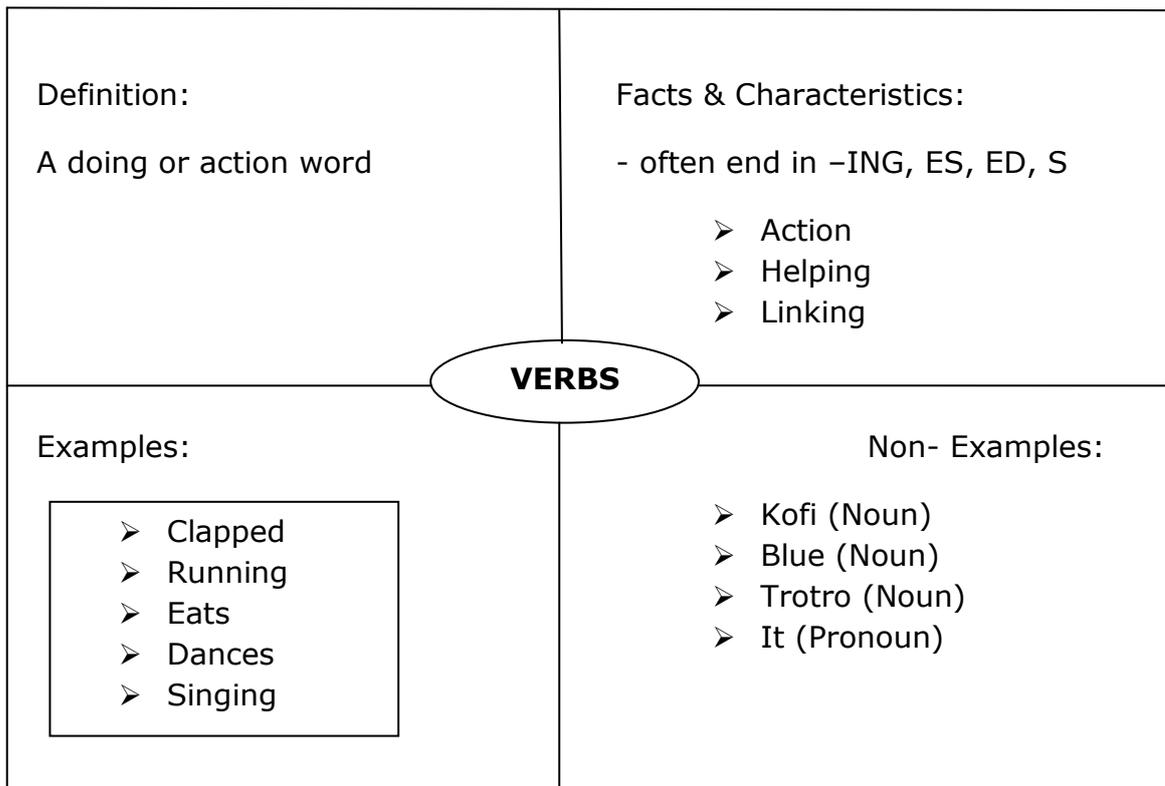
# APENDIX C; Existing Lesson Plan

Subject: English Language

| Week | Date/ending | Topic | REF. |
|------|-------------|-------|------|
| 1st | | | |
| 2nd | | Nouns | Enrich |
| 3rd | | | |
| 4th | | Pronouns | ✓ |
| 5th | | | |
| 6th | | | |
| 7th | | Verbs | ✓ |
| 8th | | | |
| 9th | | Present | ✓ |
| 10th | | tense | ✓ |
| 11th | | | |
| 12th | | Past tense | ✓ |
| 13th | | The Doctor | ☞ Unit 12 |
| 14th | | and the teacher | |

| Day/Dura | Topic/Sub-topic | Week ending:<br>Subj: English<br>OBJECTIVES |
|---|---|---|
| Mon<br>50mins | Nouns | At the end of the lesson, the pupil must be able to know what a noun is and the types of nouns |
| | | 3RD WEEK<br>Creative Arts |
| Mon<br>50mins | Imaginative drawing and Painting | At the end of the lesson the child will be able to draw and paint any object of his/her way of imagination. |

| TLA TLM | Core Points | Evalua |
|---|---|---|
| enrich your grammar | Ask the class question about the lesson and to name the groups and the types of nouns and what each of it comprises; likewise the countable and uncountable nouns ⟹ Countable nouns are the nouns which can be counted eg: Pencils, books, buckets etc. whiles uncountable nouns are nouns that cannot be counted eg! water, kerosene, sand etc. | Let the class found some examples of nouns and the meaning of the noun in particular |
| Pencil, eraser, crayon etc. | Ask the class to draw a table and cups and plates on it and colour them with any colour of their own. | Let the pupil know what they are ought to do and how to go about it. |

# APPENDIX D; Sample CCLAP Lesson Plan

**Objective:** Students will improve in their comprehension of Verbs and will demonstrate this by successfully completing 80% of tasks designed to show mastery of writing, oral, and memory skills.

**Materials:** Pencils, Erasers, Crayons, Paper, Text books, Exercise books

**Step-by-step Lesson**

**In Class**

1. Explain what verbs are
2. Read together "Kwaku Ananse and the Wisdom Pot"
3. Identify verbs in the story
4. Suggest verbs we can act out together
5. Complete CCLAP assessment on Verbs

# In teams, draw pictures of verbs to decorate your classroom

**Homework**

6. Write about action verbs you perform in the morning
7. Struggling students (draw some action verbs you perform in the morning)
8. Extension activity for above average students (write down some linking and helping verbs)