Authors: Jeanne Gunther, PhD

Associate Professor, Francis Marion University

jgunther@fmarion.edu

Title: COVID-19 Learning Modality Restrictions and Learning Strategies: Reading in rural areas during time of pandemic

Abstract: Changing the patterns of American life to eradicate COVID-19 has been accepted since the spring of 2020. The economy, parental employment, education, and stress on families come with the fight to conquer the virus and it is imperative we gain an understanding of these dynamics for future pandemics. There are closed businesses and schools, teachers working from home, parents and other family members scrambling to fill the role of educator. Access to education varies with geography. This study sought to illuminate factors in coping and learning to read which exhibited alignment among central factors growing out of the nation's unfolding emergency.

Objectives: This work aims to uncover the common strategies used by students in a rural school district to improve their reading while attending school from home.

Methodologies: A qualitative cross-case analysis is employed to reveal themes indicative of support to reading success across cases. Cases include selected four students and their caregivers. Data include reading assessments and interviews.

Findings: Preliminary findings reveal repeated readings, dedicated workspace, and support from a grandmother influenced daily learning in reading.

Future Contributions: Understanding strategies supportive of such learning when students are not in a face-to-face environment can inform the future of education as such modalities become choices.

Key Words: COVID-19, Reading, Pandemic, Rural Education