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Teachers' Decision-Making in Grading Students at Risk of Academic Failure during the Implementation of the Basic Education Learning Continuity Plan

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative case study aimed to explore teachers' decision-making in grading students at risk of academic failure during the implementation of the Basic Education Learning Continuity Plan (BELCP). Anchored on the model developed by McMillan (2003), grade decision-making has three domains, namely: (1) influences, (2) rationale, and (3) practices. A total number of 12 high school teachers of different ranking positions and from different subject areas participated in the study by engaging in one-on-one, semi-structured interviews. Findings revealed teachers identify the chronically truant, non-compliant, disinterested/unmotivated, emotionally disturbed, and those from low-income households as the students at risk of academic failure. Aside from assessment results, teachers consider non-achievement elements (i.e., student effort, teacher empathy, administrative pressure, payoff beliefs) in grading these students. In terms of rationale, grades become a basis for student promotion, intervention, reinforcement, and precaution. In terms of practices, teachers employ different strategies to avoid student failure, such as calling the attention of homeroom advisers and/or parents/guardians, adapting tasks, and adjusting rating standards.

Keywords: grade decision-making, students at risk of academic failure, assessment, evaluation

Introduction

Ideally, grades should be based on students' mastery of the established learning standards. However, this is hardly ever the case as grading is a complex, challenging, and context-specific decision-making process. Apart from evaluating students' outputs, it also involves considering student effort, compliance, and work quality. Likewise, grading is a value-laden judgment that can be influenced by students' appeals to fairness and benefits (Sun & Cheng, 2014). Aside from the promotion of students to the next level of education, grades also serve other long-term functions as they influence students' motivation and self-regulation. They also pave the way for further educational and career opportunities (Tierney, 2015). Because of such importance and complexity, it is

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undeniable that teachers sometimes alter students' grades for several reasons, such as compassion for the student, the desire to give students an extra opportunity, or the intent to teach life lessons (Tierney, 2015).

Just before the school year started in October 2020, the Philippine Department of Education released DepEd Order No. 31, s. 2020, or the Interim Guidelines for the Assessment and Grading in accordance with the Basic Education Learning Continuity Plan (BE-LCP). This is a supplement to D.O. No. 12, s. 2020, or the Adoption of the BE-LCP. These orders aim to ensure that education will not be interrupted despite the adverse circumstances brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic which prompted ministries of education worldwide to make an abrupt shift from traditional face-to-face classes to alternative modes of education. While still adhering to the basic tenets of classroom assessment of the K-12 Basic Education program, there were some modifications to the guidelines, like the development of the Most Essential Learning Competencies (MELC), the introduction of asynchronous learning, and the provision of reasonable leniency in grading.

This study aimed to explore and understand the complex interplay of factors, processes, and practices involved in grading students who are at risk of academic failure during the adoption and enactment of the BELCP. The study made use of the framework of McMillan (2003) as its guiding model. This model recognized three domains of teachers' grading decision-making, namely: influences, rationale, and practices. The first domain is further divided into three components. The first component is the teacher's knowledge, beliefs, expectations, and values. The second component is the external factors. These include parents, administrators, and institutional assessment. The last component is class realities. These refer to students' motivation and behaviors. The second domain refers to the grading rationale or the teacher's judgment in their grading practices. The third domain refers to the grading practices or what the teachers do when preparing students' progress reports.

While there has recently been a growing interest in teachers' grade decision-making (Cheng & Sun, 2015; Cheng et al., 2020; Isnawati & Saukah, 2017; Phung & Michell, 2022), there appears to be an absence of such research in the Philippines. Thus, this study aimed to explore the teachers' grade decision-making during the implementation of the BELCP as prompted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, this investigation may help understand the decision-making process that teachers employ in dealing with students at risk of academic failure and consequently facilitate grading reforms (Kunnath, 2017).

Students at Risk of Academic Failure

DepEd Order No. 8, s. 2015 set out the guidelines for assessing and evaluating learning outcomes under the K to 12 Basic Education Curriculum. Through such a memorandum, Grade 1-10 education learners are promoted to the next grade level if they have a final grade of at least 75 in all learning areas. But then, if they fail in not more than two learning areas, they are required to attend remedial classes. In case they fail in three or more learning areas, they are to be retained in the same grade level. On the other hand,

in senior high school (Grades 11 and 12), if learners fail, they must attend remedial classes after school hours or during school breaks. In case they still fail remediation, they will retake the failed subject as a back subject. This measure is a form of intervention for students at risk of academic failure.

But with these efforts being made, why are there still students who fail? Boiser et al. (2019) identified the factors that influence learners to get failing grades. These variables include gender, family size, school proximity, and family income. In terms of specific problems, the study of Carreon (2018) reveals that the most common problems of at-risk students are absenteeism and slow learning.

Factors Influencing Grading

In theory, assessment should be the basis of students' grades. However, a myriad of studies reveals that there are a lot of other factors that are considered in evaluating students because grades serve a lot of purposes as well. The study by Yesbeck (2011) identified four elements that teachers consider when grading students. The first is influences. This refers to the teachers' own student-teaching experiences, their training with mentors and coaches, and their collaboration with colleagues. Second are the academic elements: students' course outputs such as quizzes, tests, and projects. Third is the non-academic factors that pertain to the student's work habits, class participation, effort, and responsibility. And lastly, there is the individual teacher's evaluation of which of the four elements or factors are considered most important, and are given the most weight in individual teachers' grade decision-making. These four points are consistent with the findings of Isnawati and Saukah (2017) who claim that even though teachers consider student achievement as the chief influencing factor in grading, they still look into other elements such as effort, study habits, and classroom conduct, class participation, administrative policies, and the curriculum. In the quantitative study of Cheng and Sun (2015), data reveal that students' effort, non-test indicators, and improvement in student performance are some of the most widely considered factors in grading.

The study of Cheng and Sun (2015) explored the association between assessment methods and factors considered by teachers in grading. First, they identified the various factors teachers consider in grading. They grouped these factors into three categories, namely: norms/objective reference, effort, and performance. Next, they identified assessment methods and grouped them into three categories, namely: performances/projects, teacher-made quizzes/examinations, and summative tests. Factor loading analysis reveals that performances/projects are determined by norm/objective factors; teacher-made quizzes/examinations are determined by effort factors, and summative tests are determined by performance factors.

Given the complex interplay of factors that teachers consider in the process of grading, the research suggests that grades are not based solely on student achievement. Therefore, it can be said that teachers face a challenging dilemma in grade decision-making. The study by Galevska (2019) reveals the challenges faced by teachers in the process of evaluating and grading students. These include the subjective and objective

criteria in grading, considering students with special educational needs, using traditional and non-traditional forms of assessment, and the pressure for higher grades.

Grading Rationale

Grading rationale refers to the teachers' beliefs about the purpose of grading (Yesbeck, 2011). Findings show that teachers view grading as a form of communication of learning outcomes and performance standards, feedback to the students, demonstration of students' progress and mastery of the content knowledge, and compliance with educational policies and processes. As to the study of Isnawati and Saukah (2017), teachers view grades not only as indicators of students' abilities but also as sources of motivation to perform better.

The study of Kunnath (2017) investigated the teachers' grading rationale, qualitative data generated the following findings. First teachers consider balancing grading rigor and student promotion. This means that while teachers should refer to the student's assessment for accuracy, they should also consider the fact that they should help students stay motivated to succeed. Second, teachers should also consider the student level.

Grading Practices

In the literature (McMillan, 2003), grading practices are largely tied to the teacher's assessment practices. After all, grades are mostly based on the assessment tasks and activities given to them. Isnawati and Saukah (2017) investigated the grading practices of English teachers. Findings show that teachers use both written and oral assessments as well as formal and informal assessments. Formal assessment refers to daily tests, midterm tests, and final tests that students take.

Galevska (2019) mentioned the use of group work in the classroom. This kind of assessment appeals to the students as they find it fun and less stressful for students. However, this kind of assessment also poses a threat to fairness as there are instances in which some students do not do their share of work and simply let the outstanding students do the tasks.

In the study of Lasaten (2016) determining the assessment practices of English public-school teachers in the Philippines, results show that in terms of methods, public school teachers prefer the use of written assessments such as multiple-choice, matching, and true-false types of assessment. Conversely, performance and portfolio assessment are some of the least used. Such findings suggest that traditional written tests are preferred because they are objective and convenient to check. In terms of student-related problems, teachers consider the attitude and behavior of the students toward assessment, low performance, guessing, and cheating as their problems when it comes to assessment.

The study of Saefurrohman and Balinas (2016) investigated the assessment practices of Filipino and Indonesian English teachers. It employed a mixed-method design combining both quantitative and qualitative approaches. In the quantitative part of the study, results reveal that the main objective of the teachers in conducting assessments is to group students for class instruction. However, the qualitative findings suggest teachers

assess students' progress. In terms of assessment of learning, teachers report that they conduct an assessment to formally document students' growth in learning.

Concerning the students who are at risk of failure, the study by Comeque (2019) investigated the retaining and promoting practices of basic education teaching. Data revealed that when students did not meet the required minimum competencies appropriate for their levels, the teachers employed practices such as altering students' ratings to attain a passing score, providing the students with higher ratings, and modifying the tasks to make them easier.

The Study

This study aimed to explore teachers' decision-making in grading senior high school students who are at risk of academic failure during the implementation of BELCP. More specifically, it sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What students do teachers consider at risk of academic failure?
2. What factors influence teachers' grade decision-making toward students at risk of academic failure?
3. What grading rationale do teachers employ toward students at risk of academic failure?
4. What are the teachers' grading practices for students who are at risk of academic failure?

Materials and Methods

Design

The present study is descriptive-qualitative research. More specifically, it followed the case study design involving 12 secondary school teachers from a very large integrated high school in a large urban area in the Philippines. This design was deemed fitting for this topic since it allows the investigation of the how and why of a specific phenomenon (Yin, 2018). The current study is interested in exploring the uniqueness and peculiarities of grade decision-making of teachers for students at risk of academic failure during the implementation of the Basic Education Learning Continuity Plan brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Participants

Since the present study is a qualitative inquiry, a purposive sampling method was used. More specifically, the participants of the study were recruited through typical case sampling. This type of sampling considers what is usual or average for a particular phenomenon. In the present study's case, a total of 12 teachers of different ranking positions (i.e., master teachers and teachers) from different learning areas (i.e., science, mathematics, English, Filipino, social sciences, values education, physical education, and technical-vocational-livelihood education) were selected (see Figure 1 below). The criteria for inclusion were that (1) the participant should be a high school teacher and (2) that they should have been teaching for at least two years. Given the minimum years of teaching experience as

a criterion for inclusion, it was assumed that the participants should have encountered a student at risk of academic failure in one of their classes.

Figure 1. *Profile of Participants*

Teacher	Position	Subject Area
P1	Master Teacher II	Social Science
P2	Teacher II	Social Science
P3	Master Teacher I	TVL
P4	Master Teacher II	English
P5	Teacher I	English
P6	Master Teacher I	Values Education
P7	Teacher I	Values Education
P8	Master Teacher II	Mathematics
P9	Teacher I	Mathematics
P10	Master Teacher II	Science
P11	Teacher I	Science
P12	Teacher III	Physical Education

Data Gathering

Data were collected through a series of semi-structured interviews with the selected teacher participants. Semi-structured interviews involved a series of open-ended questions based on the topic areas of the study (Hancock, 2002).

As for the research instrument used, an interview protocol was developed which contains five primary questions validated by three external experts. These questions were targeted at exploring the teachers' attitudes, influences, rationale, and practices in grading students at risk of academic failure. Follow-up, or secondary questions, were asked as needed. This type of data collection technique allows flexibility in questioning which was deemed fitting because of the nature of the research methodology.

Trustworthiness and Authenticity

Participants were debriefed about the topic of the interview. The audio recordings were transcribed and sent back to the participants for validation and member checking. Likewise, themes underwent an intercoder audit for confirmability.

Data Analysis

The data collected from the interviews were subjected to thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This is an inductive type of analysis in which themes naturally emerge from the data (Dawson, 2007). These themes were further analyzed through coding: the process of fracturing, conceptualizing, and integrating data to form a theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, as cited in Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2012).

Ethical Considerations

The study did not pose any psychological or physical harm to the participants. All information about the aims and purposes of the study was explained clearly and did not include any form of deception. Likewise, participants were assured they were free not to answer any question they were not comfortable answering. Lastly, they were guaranteed that their identities would remain anonymous.

Results and Discussion

Profile of Students at Risk of Failure

Analysis of the data from the interviews revealed that there are five types of students whom teachers consider at risk of academic failure. Table 1 presents the attributes of students at risk for academic failure in distance learning as identified by the teacher-participants. These attributes include students who are chronically absent or truant, non-compliant, disinterested, or unmotivated, emotionally disturbed, and students from low-income households.

Table 1. *Profile of Students At risk for Academic Failure*

Themes	Core Ideas and Supporting Quotes
Chronically absent/truant	**Core idea** This refers to students who are not attending synchronous online classes. **Supporting quote** *"...students who are not attending synchronous sessions continuously. Parang yung sa akin once, twice medyo excuse pa siya pero 'pag medyo parati or regular syncrhonous sessions wala pa siya that's when I consider them at risk of failing..."* (P7) *"Ito yung mga bata na hindi mo na nakikita sa online. Hindi mo na naririnig ang boses. Ito yung mga batang deadma pag nagcacall ka, eto yung mga batang deadma pag nagfofollow-up ka..."* (P6)
Non-compliant	**Core idea** This refers to students who do not perform in class and who do not comply with class requirements, such as asynchronous activities or tasks.

	Supporting quotes *"...for me, doon sa online pumasok or hindi, OK lang sa akin kasi madaming reason. Pero number one sa akin yung submission of requirements."* (P9) *"Never nagpapasa kahit kausapin mo wala pa rin. So ayun yung nangyayari. Tapos minsan naman magpasa man parang kala nila kabuuan na yun ng buong taon na performance like gustong idaan sa special project."* (P2) "*...eto yung mga batang as in wala silang inupload sa Google Class nila."* (P6)
Disinterested/Unmotivated	**Core idea** This refers to students who lack the drive to attend classes or to learn. **Supporting quotes** *"...as to their participation in the class, may mga students talagang palitaw...tipong alam naman nilang may klase pero kagustuhan talaga nilang hindi pumasok...kumabaga walang interes. Kumabaga depende sa mood nila kung papasok sila o hindi."* (P5) *"Never nagpapasa kahit kausapin mo wala pa rin. Soayunyungnangyayari. Tapos minsan naman magpasa man parangkalanilakabuuan na yun ng buong taon na performance like gustongidaansaspecial project."* (P2)
Emotionally disturbed	**Core idea** This refers to students who are displaying inappropriate behavior in class. **Supporting quotes** *"...naging rampant siguro ngaun yung emotional problems. Naging emotional sila.*

	Parang mas umikot yung mundo nila sa pagdeal ng emotions." (P2) *"yung mga bumabagsak iyon yung mga pasaway. Yun yung mga ano nambubully."* *(P2)*
Students from low-income households	**Core idea** This refers to students who lack the amount of money or resources to support their studies and schooling. **Supporting quotes** *"Mayroon talagang mga students na wala talagang means, especially online class, walang gadgets."* (P4) *"Una sa reason ay financial. Per se sa subject ko. I teachprogramming kasi. Maraming mga bata na wala namangequipmentto learn programming. One factor iyan kung bakit hindi silanakakagawa ng output."* (P3)

Students who are chronically absent for whatever reason posit a high risk for academic failure because they often miss out on lessons, and this consequently leads to non-compliance with classroom tasks. This was cited by Carreon (2018) as one of the most common reasons for academic failure and is often associated with problems in the family. Next, students who avoid tasks reduce their chances of getting passing marks (Galveska, 2019). Students' lack of personal interest in schooling is considered one of the most common reasons for them to leave school for good (Albert et al., 2018). Moreover, students who display bad behaviors and emotional immaturity often get lower marks. Lastly, students from low-income families are also at risk since they do not have enough resources to support their studies (Boiser et al., 2019).

Influences on Teachers' Grade Decision-Making

In grading students at risk, teachers consider a multitude of factors. Table 2 outlines these factors which include results of assessment performance, student's effort/willingness, teacher's empathy, administrative pressure, and teacher's payoff beliefs.

Table 2. *Factors Influencing Teachers' Grade Decision-Making*

Themes	Core Ideas and Supporting Quotes
Assessment results	**Core idea** This refers to the students' performance on the different classroom assessments such as quizzes, class participation, etc. **Supporting quote** *"Number one siyempre yun nga yung kanilang scores sa mga activities, quizzes, exams. Number two yung kanyang attendance, yung notes, and siyempre yung recitation."* (P11)
Students' effort and willingness	**Core idea** This refers to the non-cognitive factors that reflect the students' hard work and willingness to pass the course. **Supporting quote** *"Yung nakikipagcommunicate.Yung may effort talaga na willing na sila ay pumasa kahit anung ibigay kong assignment, requirements talagang nakikipagcommunicate"* (P6) *"...I'm not after doon sa talino, I'm after doon sa effort at saka attitude, students' attitude, yung values nila as long as they are attending you, as long as they are communicating with you..."* (P9)
Teacher's empathy	**Core idea** This refers to the teacher's consideration of the student's circumstances that may affect their classroom performance, such as their state of mental health, family's struggles, and household environment. **Supporting quotes** *"...kung susundin lang natin ang minandate na grade na system without any conscience, without emotion, attachment, kaya nating i-fail kahit hindi natin kausapin kasi magrereflect yun sa class record na failed talaga sila..."* (P12) *"Yung relationship mo sa bata...kasi kahit may bumabagsak na bata, nakikilala mo siya eh, yung pinagdadaanan niya, ano yung journey niya, bakit ganoon..."*(P2)

Administrative pressure	**Core idea** This refers to teachers' beliefs and feeling that they must submit grades that they believe are favorable to administrators. **Supporting quote** *"...'pag hindi ko naman nakikita sa klase, 75 ko na yan...para wala na akong problema. Hindi na ako ipapatawag ng principal...ang kalakaran kasi sa public school talagang ipapasa mo lahat..."* (P1) *"...the system of DepEd has been there a long time ago, bagopatalagaaako naging teacher ano na yan eh mass promotion ang objectivenatin, At the end of the day ipapasa mo lahat."* (P5) *"...nasa public (school) kasi tayo we need to promote students...hindi natin pwedeng maiiwan sila"* (P7)
Teachers' payoff beliefs	**Core idea** This refers to the teachers' beliefs that giving certain grades to students improves their behavior. **Supporting quote** *"ang napansin ko doon kasi kapag may pinapasa akong at-risk, nakikita ko na tumitino, tumitino yung iba...pero yung talagang deserved ibagsak...pag bumagsak binabagsak ko talaga tumitino lalo"* (P2)

Teachers give various tasks and activities to assess learning. These become evidence of performance and evaluation. However, since most at-risk students are those who often miss classes, there are few to no student output submissions to justify their passing. However, apart from these objective references, some teachers also consider the effort of the student. Cheng and Sun (2015) classify this as a component that includes homework, effort, improvement, work habits, and disruptive behavior. However, in the case of the present study, effort appears to be limited to students' attempts to communicate with the teachers. (This may be because participants were drawing from their experience during the COVID-19 pandemic.)

In terms of administrative pressure, teachers often mention being pressured to pass students even though they do not meet the minimum standards of the course. They attribute this to the Department of Education's policy of mass promotion. While there are no existing policies mandating this practice, there appears to be an unwritten rule that discourages them from giving many failing marks (David et al., 2019). This also appears in the study of Kunnath (2017) in which teachers feel pressured not to give many failing grades to avoid administrative attention. Moreover, a more rational explanation for this pressure is that the

school's funding is dependent on the number of student enrollees. Students who fail may transfer schools and this will consequently mean a decrease in student population in the school (Isnawati & Saukah, 2017).

Teachers may empathize with their students and try to understand the possible reasons for the low performance of the students that are beyond the students' control; for example, family difficulties, low incomes, and mental health issues. Tierney (2015) mentioned teachers' compassion as one of the major reasons for teachers to alter grades.

Lastly, grades can also teach students important life lessons (Tierney, 2015). Some teachers give low grades in an attempt to teach their students the consequences of their actions. Other teachers believe that by giving low or failing grades, students will be alarmed and become motivated to improve in class. In such cases, grades serve as a warning.

Teachers' Rationale for Grading Students' At risk of Academic Failure

Ideally, grades are measures of students' performance. However, in the case of students at risk, grades serve other functions. Table 3 enumerates these functions of grades for students at risk. In such cases, grades become the basis for student promotion, intervention, reinforcement, and precaution.

Table 3. *Teachers' Rationale for Grading Students' At risk of Academic Failure*

Themes	Core Ideas and Supporting Quotes
Student promotion	**Core idea** This refers to the use of grades as a basis to promote students to the next educational year level. **Supporting quote** *"...kasi the purpose lang naman niyan is mabigyan mo ng siya ng passing grade tulungan mo lang siya na makakuha siya ng grado na makapasa siya na hindi siya maiiwan hindi siya maleleft behind..."* (P7) *"Public school tayo, we need, of course, to give them grade for the purpose of promoting them...hindi natin pwedeng maiiwan sila."* (P12)
Basis for intervention	**Core idea** This refers to the use of grades as a basis for administrative actions or steps to be taken to prevent students from failing. **Supporting quote** *"...kailangan din talaga iyon as assessment for them and so that we will evaluate them we will know the level of the student kasi in that way mabibigyan natin ng intervention..."* (P4)

Reinforcement	**Core idea** This refers to the use of grades to further motivate the students to do better. **Supporting quotes** *"Bilang isang teacher, it is our obligation to assess our student at yung grade ay isang reward sa kanila at sa mga magulang even though yung mga pabagsak na"* (P3) *"...for them to have this motivation to continue, to give them hope..."* (P7) *"...para ma-enganyo sila magpatuloy ng pag-aaral...parang tayo lang ding mga teachers ang mageencourage sa kanila eh."* (P8) *"...ang pagbigay natin ng grade ay pagbigay din sa kanila ng opportunity at pagbigay din sa kanila ng pagkakataon inspite and despite sa nangyari sa kanila...ayaw natin tayo maging instrument kung bakit huminto ang buhay nila"* (P12)
Precaution	**Core idea** Teachers give low or failing marks to alert students of their performance. This is in the hope that students will be compelled to do better. **Supporting quotes** *"...'pag first grading and second grading, sometimes talagang binabagsak ko kung talagang hindi gumagawa para makita ng bata na talagang seryoso ako tinitignan ko yung record kasi some students think hinuhulaan lang ang grades..."* (P11)

Teachers may feel pressurized to resort to passing at-risk students because of administrative pressure. Teachers also see grades as a basis for intervention by administrators to help students at risk by offering additional tutoring or review classes. Whether the students lack learning resources, additional time, or closer supervision, teachers use grades as a basis for deciding the necessary course of action for students at risk. Teachers also view grades as either a form of reward or punishment. Thus, teachers may use grades to warn students in the hope that they will do better. As Tierney (2015) claims, teachers sometimes alter grades to motivate students or provide them with opportunities.

Teachers' Grading Practices

There are many factors that teachers consider when grading students at risk of academic failure. Table 4 identifies these practices which include calling the attention of

homeroom advisers, parents/guardians, adapting assessment activities, and adjusting rating standards.

Table 4. *Teachers' Grading Practices for Students At risk of Academic Failure*

Themes	Core Ideas and Supporting Quotes
Calling the attention of homeroom advisers and parents/guardians	**Core idea** This refers to the act of calling the attention of homeroom advisers, parents, or guardians of the student concerned to inform them and ask for closer monitoring or supervision. **Supporting quote** *"...kung ako adviser siyempre magpapameeting muna ako diyan, PTA...kakausapin ko sila one-on-one..."* (P1) *"...call ko attention nung bata. Kapag walang response, adviser. Then, parents. Kapag wala pa rin, home visitation"* (P4)
Adapting assessment activities	**Core idea** This refers to the practice of making changes to the course activities so as to allow students to catch up, or to earn extra grades. **Supporting quote** *"...hindi naman yung original activities...we provide remediation activities and other things para mahatak or magkaroon sila ng scores na hindi nila kailangan sagutan lahat ng activities na hindi nila nagawa..."* (P11)
Adjusting rating standards	**Core idea** This refers to the practice of altering the rating standards (grade "curving") so there will be more chances for students to get passing grades. **Supporting quote** *"...nakabase talaga ako sa class record ko, kung ano yung grade nila recitation nila, attendance, performance task, attendance after that so may mga fail, tapos ibaba ko yung ceiling grade ko..."* (P9)

Calling the attention of homeroom advisers and parents can help monitor those students at risk. Communication and collaboration with these individuals can assess the

reasons for the student's low performance or the lack thereof. Likewise, calling the attention of parents can help supervise or monitor the student's compliance with the class requirement. Other than involving parents, teachers also adapt assessment activities or adjust rating standards to make it easier for the students at risk to get passing grades. This supports the findings of Comeque (2019) that teachers use various strategies for at-risk students, such as altering students' ratings to attain a passing score, providing a higher rating, and adjusting the rating standards.

Conclusions

Based on the foregoing discussions, there are several interconnected reasons why students become at risk of failing school. Students fail because of frequent absences or non-compliance with course requirements or tasks (Carreon, 2018). This may be attributed to their lack of interest or motivation to study or not having enough resources to support their schooling. Moreover, their lack of interest in studying (Albert et al., 2018) may also push them to resort to misbehaving in class (Boiser et al., 2019). Nevertheless, apart from achievement and performance, teachers consider a lot of factors when grading these students such as administrative pressure (Kunnath, 2017) and the need for compassion (Tierney, 2015). Because of the complexity of circumstances, teachers resort to simply promoting at-risk students through grade alteration. But apart from this, they also employ other strategies such as extending deadlines, modifying tasks, giving remediation, adjusting rating standards, and/or calling the attention of the student's homeroom adviser and/or parents/guardians. While there is no formal or institutionalized practice of mass or automatic promotion in public schools, the government should consider how they can address the problems that cause students to fail and how they can support teachers in addressing the burden of grading. The government should develop effective mechanisms to ensure that grades are objective measures of students' academic performance and achievement.

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