

2021 Volume Fifty, Number 3/4

# PLANNING AND CHANGING

An Educational Leadership and Policy Journal

**Linsay DeMartino**

The Challenges of the COVID-19 Crisis on Education

**Jennifer Antoni**

Disengaged and Nearing Departure: Students at Risk for Dropping Out in the Age of COVID-19

**Jenna Cushing-Leubner, Trish Morita-Mullaney, Michelle C. S. Greene,  
Amy Stolpestad, & Michelle Benegas**

The (Im)possibilities of Equitable Education of Multilingual English Learners in Remote Teaching:  
An EL teacher Survey of the Great Lakes Region

**Lisa Crosslin & Lucy E. Bailey**

Mother School Leaders Negotiate 'Blurred Lines' Between Work and Home During COVID-19

**Donna Sayman & Heidi Cornell**

"Building the Plane While Trying to Fly:" Exploring Special Education Teacher Narratives During  
the COVID-19 Pandemic

**Rosa Bahamondes Rivera & Erika Abarca Millán**

First-Year Students' Experience in Higher Education in Chile in Times of COVID-19

**Susan Zoll, Natasha Feinberg, Beth Pinheiro, & Leslie Sevey**

Found in Oz, the Ruby Slippers to Embracing Digital Classrooms through Appreciative Inquiry

**S. Gavin Weiser**

Taking a Pause to Consider a Radical New: Or All (Re)envisioning is Science-FS. iction Work

# *Planning and Changing*

---

Editor—Dianne Renn

Managing Editor—Thomas Navickas

---

## **Editorial Board**

Guy Banicki  
PK–12 Administration

Diane Dean  
Higher Education  
Administration & Policy

Linsay DeMartino  
PK–12 Administration

Beth Hatt  
Educational Research/  
Social Foundations

Pamela Hoff  
Social Foundations

Lisa Hood  
Educational Policy

Erika Hunt  
Educational Policy

Brad Hutchison  
PK–12 Administration

Lydia Kyei-Blankson  
Educational Research

Zeng Lin  
Educational Research

Elizabeth T. Lugg  
Education Law

Phyllis McCluskey-Titus  
Higher Education

Mohamed Nur-Awaleh  
Comparative  
Higher Education

Stacy Otto  
Educational Research/  
Social Foundations

John K. Rugutt  
Educational Research/  
Education Technology

Lenford Sutton  
Higher Education  
Administration & Policy  
PK–12 Administration

S. Gavin Weiser  
Higher Education

---

Indexed in: ERIC—Current Index to Journals in Education      Education Index      Educational Administration Abstracts

Articles are copyrighted in the name of the journal and are available through National Archive Publishing Company in 35mm, 16mm, or microfiche. NAPC, 300 North Zeeb Road, PO Box 998, Ann Arbor, MI 48103; 734-302-6500; [www.napubco.com](http://www.napubco.com)

*Planning and Changing* is published semi-annually by the Department of Educational Administration and Foundations, College of Education, Illinois State University, Campus Box 5900, Normal, IL 61790-5900.

Yearly subscription rates: Domestic, \$18; international, \$24; student, \$15. Third class postage paid at Normal, IL. Single issue, \$12 plus shipping. Orders should be accompanied by a check payable in U.S. funds to *Planning and Changing*. (ISSN 0032-0684)

Information also available at [Education.IllinoisState.edu/Planning](http://Education.IllinoisState.edu/Planning)

*Planning and Changing*  
An Educational Leadership and Policy Journal

2021 Volume Fifty, Number 3/4—Copyright © 2021

---

**CONTENTS**

---

- 112 Biographies of Guest Editors
- 113 The Challenges of the COVID-19 Crisis on Education *Linsay DeMartino*
- 117 Disengaged and Nearing Departure: Students at Risk for Dropping Out in the Age of COVID-19 *Jennifer Antoni*
- 139 The (Im)possibilities of Equitable Education of Multilingual English Learners in Remote Teaching: An EL Teacher Survey of the Great Lakes Region  
*Jenna Cushing-Leubner*  
*Trish Morita-Mullaney*  
*Michelle C. S. Greene*  
*Amy Stolpestad*  
*Michelle Benegas*
- 165 Mother School Leaders Negotiate ‘Blurred Lines’ Between Work and Home During COVID-19  
*Lisa Crosslin*  
*Lucy E. Bailey*
- 191 “Building the Plane While Trying to Fly:” Exploring Special Education Teacher Narratives During the COVID-19 Pandemic  
*Donna Sayman*  
*Heidi Cornell*
- 209 First-Year Students’ Experience in Higher Education in Chile in Times of COVID-19  
*Rosa Bahamondes Rivera*  
*Erika Abarca Millán*
- 237 Found in Oz, the Ruby Slippers to Embracing Digital Classrooms through Appreciative Inquiry  
*Susan Zoll*  
*Natasha Feinberg*  
*Beth Pinheiro*  
*Leslie Sevey*
- 257 Taking a Pause to Consider a Radical New: Or All (Re)envisioning is Science-Fiction Work *S. Gavin Weiser*

## *About the Guest Authors*

**Linsay DeMartino** (she/her) is currently an assistant professor in the Educational Administration and Foundations Department at Illinois State University. As a former P-12 educational practitioner in Tucson, Arizona, Dr. DeMartino served as a special education teacher, inclusion specialist, special education department chair, and as an instructional data and intervention administrative coordinator. Her current research examines transformative practices, equitable community collaboration, and justice-based leadership in schools. She is particularly interested in administrative practices grounded in just schooling and contextual alternatives rather than “best practices” and educational trends. Relatedly, she teaches coursework on leadership for diverse learners, community engagement, and human resources administration. Finally, she hopes to spend her afternoons with a Pembroke Welsh Corgi in the near future.

**S. Gavin Weiser** (ze/hir/hirs) is an assistant professor of higher education and co-coordinator of the College Student Personnel Administration program as well as affiliated faculty with Women, Gender, & Sexuality Studies and Latin American and Latino Studies at Illinois State University. Gavin’s research interests center on intersectional oppressions in the academy and working toward solidarity and liberation which is related to the professional praxis-based work ze has engaged in for over a decade.

## **Introduction to the Special Issue**

### *The COVID-19 Pandemic and the Impact on Educational Institutions*

by Linsay DeMartino

#### **The Global Impact of the COVID-19 Crisis**

The COVID-19 crisis continues to impact everyone across the globe. It is apparent no one is spared by the devastation caused by this virus. Previously, global citizens never considered a pandemic affecting every facet of our lives. Our social, health, economic, and political spheres are forever changed. In the field of education, adjustments were made swiftly, if not overnight. Everyone felt the pressures brought on by the pandemic and were drowning in the imperative need to radically shift their practices and provide an array of supports to their students, faculty, staff, and communities.

#### **The Very Near Past**

On January 9, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) reported that Chinese authorities determined the influenza-type outbreak was caused by a novel coronavirus (World Health Organization [WHO], 2020). Then, from January 10-12, 2020, the WHO published a package of guidance documents for countries, covering topics related to the management and mitigation of an outbreak of the novel coronavirus. Among other topics, this guidance included prevention and control, risk communication and community engagement, and travel advice (WHO, 2020). Soon after, on January 30th, the Director-General of the WHO “declared the novel coronavirus outbreak a public health emergency of international concern (PHEIC), the organization’s highest level of alarm” (WHO, 2020). On February 11th, in order to avoid any inaccuracies or stigma attached to a certain geographic area, animal, or group of people, WHO announced the widespread novel coronavirus would be named COVID-19 (WHO 2020). Finally, on March 11th, the Director-General stated, “we cannot say this loudly enough, or clearly enough, or often enough...all countries can still change the course of this pandemic...detect, test, treat, isolate, trace, and mobilize their people in the response” (WHO 2020). Thus, WHO determined the COVID-19 outbreak was now considered a pandemic. As of February 25, 2021, over 112.2 million cases and 2.4 million deaths have been reported worldwide (WHO, 2021), and the WHO expects that this numbers will unfortunately continue to climb higher by the time of this publication’s release and beyond.

## **The Present Impact of COVID-19 on Education**

Pivoting to the impacts of COVID-19 on education, most K-12 and institutions of higher education shifted to emergency remote instruction and operations in the fall of 2020. As Hong Kong returned to remote learning (Chor, 2020), the three largest public-school districts in the United States (U.S.), including New York City Public Schools, Los Angeles Unified School District, and Chicago Public Schools (CPS), and so many other PK-12 school districts started their school year online (Hubler & Goldstein, 2020). In fact, given the recent rising number of COVID-19 cases and extensions of stay-at-home advisories (Rosenberg-Douglas et al., 2021) at the beginning of the spring 2021 semester, many students remain in the remote classroom, while some have returned to in-person classrooms. For example, 6,500 CPS students in pre-kindergarten and special education arrived for in-person classes at the start of the second semester, with a phase-in approach planned for kindergarten through eighth graders by February 1, 2021 (Rosenberg-Douglas, et al. 2021). Simultaneously, major international universities transitioned to mostly online learning at the onset of the pandemic, as well. For example, due to an alarming spike in COVID-19 cases, the University of Southern California (USC) announced that undergraduate students would take all, or most of their courses online, reversing course from earlier plans to invite undergraduates back to campus for an in-person fall semester (Redden, 2020). In addition, major universities continue to delay the return of students by extending remote classes and operations into the spring, like Stanford University and the University of Pittsburgh (Ruark, 2020).

### ***Planning and Changing Special Issue***

As co-editors for the re-launch of the open-access journal, *Planning and Changing*, Dr. S. Gavin Weiser and I curated a selection of articles written by a brilliant group of international scholars with the purpose of documenting the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the changes and planning necessary to attend to at the intersection of education in order to better inform our decision-making under future crisis. In this Special Issue on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in education, the reader will find articles from both the PreK-12 and higher education perspectives.

In the PreK-12 section, Jennifer Antoni begins with her article, “Disengaged and Nearing Departure: Students at Risk for Dropping Out in the Age of COVID-19,” where her robust review of literature indicates the need to examine the turbulence of the current educational context considering COVID-19 pandemic and the associated school closures for disengaged high school students. Next, in “The (Im)possibilities of Equitable Education of Multilingual English Learners in Remote Teaching: An EL Teacher Survey of the Great Lakes Region,” Jenna Cushing-Leubner,

Trish Morita-Mullaney, Michelle C. S. Greene, Amy Stolpestad, and Michelle Benegas explore the response to the sudden shift to emergency remote teaching and learning experienced by teachers of emergent bilinguals labeled “English Language Learners” due to COVID-19 pandemic. The third article in our PreK-12 sequence is “Mother School Leaders Negotiate ‘Blurred Lines’ Between Work and Home During COVID-19,” by Lisa Crosslin and Lucy E. Bailey, addresses the challenging experiences and “blurred boundaries” between work and home of school mother/leaders during the pandemic.

In the higher education section, Donna Sayman and Heidi Cornell’s “‘Building the Plane While Trying to Fly’: Exploring Special Education Teacher Narratives during the COVID-19 Pandemic,” presents a qualitative narrative inquiry research design to explore special education teacher narratives related to their experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic. Next, in “First-Year Students’ Experience in Higher Education in Chile in Times of COVID-19,” Rosa Bahamondes Rivera and Erika Abarca Millán studied first-year university students’ experiences with an emphasis on the aid and support provided to them by the university to succeed in their academic programs. Also, Susan Zoll, Natasha Feinberg, Beth Pinheiro, and Leslie Sevey’s “Found in Oz, the Ruby Slippers to Embracing Digital Classrooms Through Appreciative Inquiry,” closes our section in higher education, where researchers mapped their journey of transforming their instruction and delivery by collectively re-envisioning the upcoming semester’s online teaching approach. Finally, S. Gavin Weiser concludes the special issue with “Taking a Pause to Consider a Radical New: Or All (Re)envisioning is Science-Fiction Work,” where ze extends the conversation by suggesting this pandemic has given us a pause to (re)consider a radical new vision for education.

Lastly, it was a privilege to collaborate with the talented scholars included in this special issue, and I hope you will find the following literature enlightening and pragmatic for your work in 2021 and beyond. As the pandemic continues, we know information about COVID-19 changes rapidly and we need to continue to study its effects on PreK12 and higher education. However, it is important to note that the COVID-19 pandemic affords us an opportunity to dig more deeply into our educational practices as a way to reset education.

## References

- Chor, L. (2020, July 10). Photos: How Hong Kong reopened schools – and why it closed them again. *NPR*. <https://www.npr.org/sections/goat-sandsoda/2020/07/10/889376184/photos-how-hong-kong-reopened-schools-and-why-it-closed-them-again>.
- Hubler, S., & Goldstein, D. (2020, July 13). Los Angeles and San Diego Schools to go online-only in the fall. *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/13/us/lausd-san-diego-school-reopening.html>.
- Redden, E. (2020, July 6). COVID-19 roundup: Changing course for the fall. *Inside Higher Ed*. [https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2020/07/06/coronavirus-roundup-surge-cases-forces-universities-change-their-fall-plans?utm\\_content=buffer27206&utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_source=facebook&utm\\_campaign=IHEbuffer](https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2020/07/06/coronavirus-roundup-surge-cases-forces-universities-change-their-fall-plans?utm_content=buffer27206&utm_medium=social&utm_source=facebook&utm_campaign=IHEbuffer)
- Rosenberg-Douglas, K., Pratt, G., Rodriguez Presa, L., Buckley, M., Lee, W., & Leone, H. (2021, January 11). CPS schools reopen today after 10 months, even as Chicago extends its stay-at-home advisory and amid ongoing teachers union resistance. *Chicago Tribune*. <https://www.chicagotribune.com/coronavirus/ct-covid-19-chicago-public-schools-reopen-20210111-kiquou54urcclp5mnkyxvbm4zm-story.html>
- Ruark, J. (2020, December 13). Live coronavirus updates: Here's the latest. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. <https://www.chronicle.com/article/live-coronavirus-updates-heres-the-latest>
- World Health Organization (WHO). (2020, September 10). *Timeline: WHO's COVID-19 response*. <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/interactive-timeline#event-16>
- World Health Organization (WHO). (2021, January 11). *Weekly Operational Update on COVID-19 11 January 2021*. <https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/weekly-operational-update-on-covid-19---11-january-2021>



## **DISENGAGED AND NEARING DEPARTURE: STUDENTS AT RISK FOR DROPPING OUT IN THE AGE OF COVID-19**

*The purpose of this review article was to examine the turbulence of the current educational context in light of COVID-19 and the associated school closures, for disengaged high school students, often over-aged, who are nearing the end of their academic journeys. In this review, I provide a concise overview of the way that the high school dropout problem has been conceptualized, the theoretical framework of turbulence theory, and the relevant barriers that disengaged high school students, marginalized and subjected to pushout, are currently experiencing. I assert that even with established supports in place, more attention is needed to developing approaches that consider the turbulence that disengaged students experience nearing high school departure during this period of school closure and remote instruction. Next, I analyze the turbulence experienced by such students by using the turbulence gauge to assess the three drivers and the general level of turbulence. I conclude by offering recommendations for further supporting disengaged students at-risk for pushout or dropout.*

Keywords: High school dropout, pushout, chronic absenteeism, turbulence theory, COVID-19

### **Introduction**

High school dropout remains a critical concern for researchers, educators, policymakers, and community leaders, and with good reason. Well established in the literature is the litany of unfavorable quality of life outcomes that dropping out of high school is connected to, including increased criminal involvement and incarceration (Moretti, 2007; Backman, 2017), higher levels of unemployment (Sweeten, Bushway & Paternoster, 2009), lower lifetime earnings and income tax payments (Rouse, 2007) and increased risk of health conditions and mortality (Muenning, 2007). Indeed, dropping out of high school has a devastating impact on individuals, families, and communities, but it is also a painfully loud signal that a system, or set of systems, has failed.

In past work, dropping out of high school has been widely conceptualized as a decision that students make, related to either the investment of rewards and effort (Rosen, Warkentien & Rotermund, 2019; Lessard, Butler-Kisber, Fortin, Marcotte, Potvin & Royer, 2008) or a myopic individual disposition (Oreopoulos, 2007). In recent years, an alternate conception of the dropout phenomenon, the pushout, has emerged. Changing

the locus of control from the student to the system, researchers have begun to illuminate the complex structural processes school leaders use to push out students who are conventionally understood by school leaders as difficult. A substantial body of research on exclusionary practices documents the significant disparities in the rate of suspension between students of color and their white counterparts (Anderson & Ritter, 2020; Ritter & Anderson, 2018), as well as the deleterious effects of suspension and other exclusionary practices have on the graduation outcome (Chu & Ready, 2018; Noltenmayer, Ward, & McCoughlin, 2015).

Additionally, while an array of factors, such as students' failure to achieve acceptable levels of attendance and course credit or to comply with behavioral expectations, are well established early warning signs for high school dropout (Mireles-Rios, Rios, & Reyes, 2020; Lukes, 2014; Tuck, 2012, Battin-Pearson et al., 2002; Rumberger, 1995), other researchers have tried to contextualize these reasons, positing that dropping out of high school is better understood to be related to an array of domains: individual, family, school, and community factors (Atwell et al., 2019; Rumsey & Milson, 2017; Hammond et al., 2007), with multiple risk factors interacting in complex ways, with factors compounding (Hammond et al., 2007) over the course of a student's pathway to graduation.

Decades of research on early withdrawal from high school identifies chronic absenteeism as a primary early warning sign for student dropout and pushout (Rumberger, 1995; Battin-Pearson et al., 2002; Kearney, 2008; Gubbels, van der Put, & Assink, 2019). Related to how absenteeism contributes to the dropout process is the role that misbehavior, truancy, and suspensions play in the trajectories of students placed at risk for dropout. To this end, Lessard and colleagues (2008) found that students often utilize a pattern of stopping and restarting, only to stop again, on their pathway to high school dropout, or pushout positing dropout as a process, rather than an event. Specifically, Lessard et al. (2008) found that marginalized students placed at risk for dropout further disconnected and sabotaged their own educational journeys with the ways they responded to external factors like school policy and peer influence in a teetering process over the course of weeks or months. With COVID 19 changing the type of instruction and the levels of academic and emotional support that students are receiving (Pesiero et. al, 2020; Lake, 2020), impacting two school years, the potential for students nearing the end of high school during this pandemic to teeter through the stages of disengagement represents a critically important warning system for educational leaders.

This disengagement process has begun to be documented in the early work looking at the impact COVID-19 related school closures have had on historically underserved students. When COVID-19 hit school systems less than a year ago, typically disengaged students were missing from remote and distance learning in record numbers (Boston Globe, 2020; Dorn et al., 2020), missing significant quantities of instructional time. Moreover, with COVID-19 forcing districts to start the current school year with

largely remote programs (United Nations, 2020; Ed Week, 2020), that can vacillate rapidly as COVID-19-related concerns and needs arise (Pensiero et al., 2020), over-aged and disengaged students nearing the end of their high school pathway are at particular risk for dropout now more than ever. In what follows, I briefly review the conception of turbulence that addresses how school systems can respond to inevitable turbulent forces such as a pandemic. After a concise discussion of methodology of this literature review, I examine key barriers that students placed at risk for dropping out encounter as they near the end of their high school journeys. The findings of this review suggest that there are important resources and supports that these marginalized students may easily miss out on during a pandemic. Based on these findings, I propose recommendations for ways to focus usage of the turbulence gauge to the special considerations that supporting these students will entail.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework that informs my discussion of disengaged students nearing the end of their high school pathways during the pandemic rests on the notion of the ubiquity of turbulence as a driving force in the personal lives of students and families, the professional lives of teachers and educational leaders, and the organizational lives of schools and districts (Gross, 2020). Specifically, I use Gross's concepts of the four degrees of turbulence (light, moderate, severe, extreme) and the three forces (positionality, cascading, and stability) that impact the levels of turbulence experienced by a school system, stakeholder group, or person (Gross in Shapiro & Gross, 2013) to analyze the current challenges people and systems are experiencing, and to discuss possible solutions. As is the case with complex dynamic systems found within natural phenomena, and certainly when considering how a school system might address a pandemic involving a novel corona virus, small and thoughtful changes can yield important shifts, perhaps made possible by the very turbulence typically understood to be a threat to the system.

### **School Closures, Disengaged Students, and Turbulence**

Turbulence theory can be applied to students, teachers, schools, districts, communities, and organizational systems. Designed to illuminate the contextual forces, degree of turbulence, and the ramifications associated with a changed level in turbulence, this model is applicable to the ways that disengaged students nearing the end of their high school journeys, often over-aged and under-credited, experience the school closure. Moreover, the model is also applicable to the educational leaders that serve these disengaged students, simultaneously subjected to heightened levels of turbulence as expert guidance, expectations, and constraints continue to change and swirl around them. To gain perspective on how

an organization or stakeholder is impacted by turbulence, Gross (2013, 2019, 2020) recommends looking at the contextual variables that influence any given situation with a “rapid, well-considered response” (Shapiro & Gross, 2013, p. 46).

In the case of closure related to COVID-19, the events that cascade including the rapidly changing guidance about COVID-19, community concerns about learning, engagement, and the emotional wellbeing of students, the economic devastation that families are experiencing in real time, and the ongoing discussion about how school will operate for the various stakeholders. A third force, degree of stability, varies by family, school, and community, keeping in mind that marginalized students pushed to drop out disproportionately experience poverty (Battin-Pearson et al., 2000), absenteeism (Balfanz & Byrnes, 2012), and student mobility (South, Haynie, & Bose, 2007). Equally important is establishing the degree of turbulence. When school closed unexpectedly and continue to struggle to fully reopen due to COVID-19, the turbulence level for many struggling students and families is severe to extreme, depicted by students’ “feelings of crisis” and “damage to the institution’s normal operation” (Shapiro & Gross, 2013, p. 55).

## Methods

I employed a review of the literature, looking for any studies exploring attendance and graduation outcomes related to school closures associated with COVID-19, specifying the dates of March through December 2020, using Education Source, APA Psych Info, and ERIC databases. Because I wanted to review articles that investigated the dropout outcome during this current pandemic, I used the search term COVID-19 as the first search term, followed by educational attainment, student engagement and school closure, alternating as the second term. While there are a few studies estimating the percentage of students dropping out as a result of the pandemic, because graduation typically occurs at the end of the school year, the volume of research on this year’s graduation rate has yet to occur. Lastly, I sought other sources (i.e., *The Hurt Could Last a Lifetime*, an educational leadership report from the Welty Center, Education Week articles, and newspaper articles and editorials from the *Boston Globe* and the *New York Times*) exploring how school closures and subsequent re-openings associated with COVID-19 influenced related student outcomes. In the next section, I detail current work exploring the barriers that marginalized students nearing the end of their high school journeys experience, including the digital divide and a lack of mental health support, while advancing the conversation on the emergent topic of special considerations for these students during a pandemic.

## **Discussion and Implications**

### **School Closures, Disengaged Students, and Turbulence**

While the devastating impact of COVID-19 to educational processes is only beginning to be explored by researchers, to date, there are some alarming trends that have begun to be documented regarding student engagement and learning after school systems quickly transitioned to distance and virtual learning in the Spring of 2020 and continuing through the subsequent summer and fall. In an effort to track the school closure and remote learning plans for the thirty largest districts across the nation, the Center on Reinventing Public Education (Lake, 2020) has identified a continuum of how much curriculum, instruction, and monitoring was occurring, at different points of time. Their analysis of the thirty largest districts' plans for closure and remote instruction, Seattle's Center on Reinventing Education (Lake, 2020) found that 90% of the thirty largest districts across the nation provided students varying levels of exposure to curriculum with no instruction or monitoring components when schools first closed in March 2020; by the end of May, that percentage was down to 34%, indicating that even by the end of Spring about a third of districts were not yet providing online instruction, monitoring, or attendance collection (Lake, 2020). Correspondingly, in May 2020, the *Boston Globe* reported that more than 20% of Boston's public-school students had not logged on to their online learning program or picked up their physical, paper assignments two months after schools had closed and switched to distance learning (Tonnes, 2020). Importantly, the district's African American and Latinx student groups are disproportionately represented in that number, as compared to their White counterparts. Likewise, according to a *New York Times* article from July, in Los Angeles, a third of students failed to participate in learning after school was closed, represented by student failure to log on or complete their physical work (New York Times Editorial Board, 2020). By the same token, a third large urban public-school system, Washington D.C., a district with 80% of its students that are African American and Latinx and a similar majority who are economically disadvantaged, closed schools three weeks early (New York Times Editorial Board, 2020) amounting to significant loss in instructional time.

More recently, Dorn, Hancock, Sarakatsannis and Viruleg (2020) explored long term consequences to economic and racial disparities in student achievement using statistical models estimating the effects of school closures, based on prior investigating the efficacy of studies of remote learning (Woodworth et al., 2015). Importantly, Dorn et al. (2020) found that despite the quality level of the remote instructional program, across the board, all students progressed less through remote instruction than through face-to-face instruction, with students coming from low quality remote programs stagnating in their learning progress most significantly. Again, students from lower socio-economic backgrounds and students of

color experience the burden of low teaching and program quality related to remote instruction disproportionately (Toth, 2020; Dorn et al., 2020), with only 14% of Black students and zero percent of students from lower socio-economic backgrounds receiving high-quality remote instruction (Dorn et al., 2020), experiencing dips in learning that are markedly more severe versions of typical summer regressions (Toth, 2020). Pensiero et al. (2020) estimate similar losses of learning associated with quality of remote instruction and home and family factors including socioeconomic status, parental educational and professional backgrounds, and access to digital resources. Once again, students coming from marginalized backgrounds shoulder the burden of being provided less instruction, as well as diminished access to the home-based supports that their higher income counterparts access consistently, including computer ownership, one or more parents working from home, and adequate learning spaces (Pensiero et al., 2020).

While the practice of pushing out the struggling student is by no means new, with the turbulence that COVID-19 has brought to educational settings across the board, students who are vulnerable to the pushout phenomenon under typical circumstances seem to be facing even greater barriers to attainment of a high school diploma. For older students who struggle to attain high school graduation under typical circumstances, school closures can magnify the sense of disengagement and disconnection these students feel towards school. Although there have been no studies to date on how the COVID-19 closures have impacted graduation rates, recent work has illuminated the challenges that school, families and students are currently facing in terms of learning and engagement. Notably, Dorn and colleagues (2020) estimate that 2 to 9% of students could drop out of school as a result of COVID-19 and associated school closures, with total students estimated to be anywhere from 232,000 to 1.1 million. This study provides clues to what we may be facing, a secondary pandemic of sorts related to dropping out, or arguably, pushout efforts towards highly disengaged students from high schools that have physically closed due to COVID-19.

While there have not been any published studies to date on this emergent phenomenon, educational leaders are beginning to identify critical barriers students are facing. One issue continues to be the digital divide and a host of closely related challenges. Across the United States, seven million school-aged children are currently living in homes without internet connectivity (Walters, 2020), with a reported 35% of low-income households with school aged children operating without a broadband internet connection (Anderson & Kumar, 2019). In a recent Federal Communications Commission (FCC) report (FCC, 2020), the FCC confirmed that significant income differences exist between households with broadband internet and their counterparts without this service, an inequity experienced most profoundly in rural and tribal communities but is also regularly experienced by people from lower socio-economic backgrounds in



urban areas as well. Related to the issue of access to a high-quality Internet connection, technological device (e.g., computer, tablet, smartphone) ownership is also increasingly associated with income, among other factors, with 26% of Americans with income under \$30,000 limited to the use of a smartphone for internet-based usage, a logistical constraint when the higher speeds associated with broadband Internet service or larger screens are needed for specific academic, personal or social tasks. (Anderson & Kumar, 2019). Similarly, in a recent survey of three thousand high school students, the Hispanic Heritage Foundation (2020) found that Latinx and African American students were more likely to use a smartphone to complete coursework than a computer. Most compelling, perhaps, was that nearly half of all students surveyed reported not being able to complete coursework, with a similar percentage reporting receipt of a diminished grade, because of a lack of access to adequate digital resources.

All things considered, many marginalized students still lack consistent access to the adequate speed for Internet connection and the appropriately size and type of device to launch conventional online learning programs and applications, culminating in what was known as a homework gap prior to the pandemic. Since face-to-face instruction was halted last spring and subsequently continues to be limited at the start of the current school year, this homework gap, created by unequal access to digital resources, may need to be re-conceptualized and more broadly understood as an overall student engagement gap that has serious, far-reaching implications for vulnerable students. In the next section, I explore some of the unique logistical barriers that students face that are often absent in discussions of the digital divide and the homework gap.

## **Beyond the Digital Divide**

Beyond the digital divide, there are broader inequities that surface during an unprecedented school closure such as this. Students are without an array of support services that have traditionally been coupled to their physical school buildings (Lipari et al., 2016; Ali et al., 2019) and have been shown to support students who are placed at risk for dropping out (Chappell et al., 2015; Rumsey & Milsom, 2017). To enumerate, services that address the logistical and mental health needs of students by providing individualized instruction, trauma-informed intervention, family engagement, mentoring, and behavioral and career counseling are largely unaddressed during times of school closure but have been established to be important supports for students who are placed at risk for dropout (Chappell et al., 2015; Rumsey & Milsom, 2017). As has been noted, it is these unique and pervasive barriers, above and beyond those that exist in face-to-face programs, that require expedient attention in discussion and research so that existing disparities in the attainment of the high school diploma do not increase.

## **Logistical Barriers When Out of School Time is All Day**

While the ongoing discussion regarding the digital divide experienced by marginalized students during the current pandemic, especially initially, tended to focus on the distribution of devices and accessories for connectivity (i.e., hot spots), this emphasis neglects some fundamental and logistical barriers that school leaders are often not aware of but exert a significant toll on their high school students' engagement with distance learning. Amongst other barriers, high school students are often tasked with additional responsibilities within the family unit that educational leaders may not adequately understand, both in terms of how the tasks may influence the student's learning and engagement and what the roles might mean in terms of the student's own role identity system. In recent work illuminating the perspectives of high school students learning from home after the pandemic closed schools, Marstaller (2020), for instance, provides a rare snapshot of how an under-credited and over-aged student, born and educated in a refugee camp prior to coming to her Utah school system, experiences her own schooling and senior year after schools closed in Spring 2020. Amongst other observations, one student describes the experience of assisting her younger siblings and cousins with their own academic and logistical challenges, while attending to her own senior year coursework in their shared home, often with limited space for the demands of multiple students engaged in home learning simultaneously.

During all of these study-at-home weeks, I am pretty busy, helping my siblings, making sure they are done with their work or meeting with their teacher. But also I like it because I am learning new things from them while we are studying together.

The challenges that this student sparsely mentions are commonplace in households across the country. What is remarkable is her unique ability to understand these challenges as a mutually beneficial interaction, not taking away from, but rather contributing to her efficacy as a learner. While this snapshot provides but one marginalized student's experiences during her school's closure due to COVID-19, it serves to illuminate the unforeseen logistical challenges that engaging with remote instruction entails for historically underserved students.

## **Lack of Mental Health Supports**

One of the most difficult, often unseen, barriers to learning and student engagement that vulnerable students face are related to the unmet emotional and mental health needs of the students and their families. During this pandemic, these challenges have been amplified. In a general review, Kontoangelos, Economoy and Papageirgiou (2020) looked at the psychological effects of COVID-19 pandemic on children, among other groups, across studies, finding that children are placed at risk for increased levels of anxiety and fear as responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. In-



herently, the ability for school professionals to engage in the existing identification process for students with mental health and behavioral needs are greatly limited when schools are closed. Unfortunately, identification is an essential to facilitate early steps in diagnosis and timely treatment and to aid in the prevention of an array of negative health and quality of life outcomes associated with untreated mental health issues (Golberstein, Wen & Miller, 2020).

Prior work documented the role school services have in the delivery of mental health and other forms of health care, for students (Ali, West, Teich, Lynch, Mutter, & Dubenitz, 2019; Lovenheim, Reback, & Wedenoja, 2016; Lipari, Hedden, Blau, & Rubenstein, 2016; Reback, 2010), with recent attention to how school-based health care services may be a promising avenue to address chronic absenteeism (Graves, Weisburd, & Salem, 2019). Data from a nation-wide survey, the *National Survey of Drug Use and Health*, documents that 3 million adolescents, or 13.2%, received mental health services at an educational setting (Lipari et al, 2016). Similarly, among all adolescents who received mental health services, 57% of students received some component through the school setting (Ali et al., 2019). A recent study found that school-based health centers, a more comprehensive, accessible, model than conventional school-based health services, reduced teen pregnancies (Lovenheim, Reback, & Wedenoja, 2016), while earlier work documented that access to school mental health services decrease student behaviors disruptive to learning (Reback, 2010).

Certainly, this discussion needs does not thoroughly cover all the unaddressed needs that students placed at risk for dropout are experiencing when schools are closed. Rather, they represent two common kinds of under-addressed needs that students experience. In the next section, I look at some of the efforts to address the barriers disproportionately experienced by low-income students and students of color.

## **Early Efforts to Address the Digital Divide**

Together with multiple levels of government, technology companies, and nonprofits, districts have attempted to address this undisputed digital divide and provide digital resources to vulnerable students and families in several different ways. Early on, in an effort to expediently provide instruction to digitally stranded students immediately following the school closures, some districts opted to provide printed instructional materials for students, such as the Seattle Public Schools (Institute of Education Sciences, 2020). This stop gap measure did not suffice for long; by the middle of spring, and into the summer, the push, instead, was for devices and internet access for every student for the reopening in September (Seattle Public Schools, 2020). Other districts capitalized on partnerships with area companies to supplement instruction trying to sidestep the digital access gap. One unique illustration of this approach comes from Los Angeles's Unified School District, where the district is partnering with the

public broadcasting station, PBS SoCal/KCET, to provide instructional and extracurricular programming via television to students this fall. Utilizing three separate channels identified by developmental age, the approach also serves to comply with district's public health mandates concerning large gatherings with spectators (Kohli & Blume, 2020). While television as the platform is less than cutting edge considering the potential of internet-based learning applications, the approach provides an immediate solution for the inequities in access and is adaptable to be employed alongside print materials and online instructional options (Kohli & Blume, 2020; Institute of Education Sciences, 2020).

Other districts attempted to tackle the digital divide in-district while pursuing federal programming for funding broader efforts. For instance, in South Bend, Indiana, where 15 percent of students lack internet access, the district joined others like it (i.e., Austin Independent School District, Charleston County School district to name a few) by equipping their school busses with Wi-Fi. Broadening an initiative that the school board started pre-Corona virus, the busses are parked in neighborhoods where families experience the digital divide most significantly (ABC News, 2020), supporting the students living in the closest proximity and the students mobile enough to get to the locations. While not a complete solution, the district, to date, continues to pursue additional funding through the E-rate federal program so that more busses can be equipped with Wi-Fi and reach more students.

Not surprisingly, increasing access to digital technology for students and families has relied on a variety of funding sources. One such source has been internet and wireless providers, mostly in the form of short-term and piecemeal solutions. In the immediate aftermath of the outbreak, Comcast and AT&T offered free Wi-Fi, and Charter offered free broadband to families with students. In terms of data, T Mobile and Comcast offered additional smartphone data, while Verizon provided economic relief in the form of moratoriums on late fees and disconnections (Associated Press, 2020).

A second funding source for improving access to digital technology has been government-funded and nonprofit programs. Lifeline, a federal government program, brings higher cost broadband services to low-income families if they qualify for programs such as Medicaid, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Headstart, the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations and others (Reviews.com, 2020). Moreover, nonprofits like Every-oneOn, partnering with Frontier, offered affordable and accessible broadband, while another nonprofit, Human I-T reused donated technology and offered discounted internet connection for those who qualify for federal assistance programs (i.e., SNAP) (Reviews.com, 2020).

While these programs aid with connecting low-income people (of color) to important digital resources, the reality is that it may still not be adequate to re-engage struggling students when schools are closed and

truly close the homework gap, especially when coupled with other substantive barriers that over-aged students and their families are facing. In a recent advocacy paper, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (2020) estimated a 3% increase in secondary students not returning to education institutions in 2020 due to COVID-19 using an estimation model covering 180 countries, citing socioeconomic barriers, including the need to generate income, increased familial responsibilities, and fear of the virus. Not surprisingly, students of color and students who live in poverty are hit the hardest by school closures, with estimates ranging from a loss of ten months of learning for Black students (Dorn et al., 2020) to a full year of learning for impoverished students (Pensiero et al. 2020; Dorn et al., 2020) who disproportionately experience a lack of teaching and program quality associated with remote instruction (Toth, 2020; Dorn et al., 2020). While the reasons for the “lost COVID-19 generation” (Toth, 2020, p. 10) are numerous and exceedingly complex, the fact remains that barriers to learning and engagement for students placed at risk for dropout continue to exist, and seem to be magnified, according to estimates, when schools are bound to remote instruction. In the next section, I look at the degree to which attendance intervention and support have been adapted during school closures and remote instruction.

### **Attendance Collection and Intervention: More than Just a Ubiquitous Practice**

Although attendance practices during the pandemic have received little research attention to date, attendance collection represents one of the basic school processes that had to be quickly adapted following the initial school closures. As widely used attendance practices such as routinized calls, letters and emails to parents, as well as discussions and meetings about student and chronic absenteeism were quickly realized to be ill adapted to school systems that were closed. These practices, not to mention related supports, were largely halted after schools closed due to COVID-19.

Moreover, changes in leadership practices concerning attendance and absenteeism were not limited to less precise and regular collection and subsequent communication. How districts responded to and intervened with chronically absent students also changed. Prior to the COVID-19 closures, accountability around absenteeism had increased in importance in recent years, fueled by the passage of Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 which allowed for a broader scope for accountability systems that could include absenteeism as a key component (Rafa, 2017; Bauer et al., 2018). Adopted by thirty-six states and the District of Columbia as of 2020 as a school quality or student success indicator (Attendance Works, 2020), ESSA required states to collect and report absenteeism data on state report cards (Attendance Works, 2020). Districts were also required to develop interventions to improve attendance which typically entailed fam-

ily engagement and student mentoring components designed to increase the schoolwide attendance rate. Unfortunately, much of this intervention work was ill adapted to schools that were closed for the pandemic.

Well established to be a problem disproportionately experienced by low income students and students of color, peaking during a student's last year of school (Hough, 2019; Balfanz & Byrnes, 2012), chronic absenteeism conventionally requires a host of intervention choices from schools including engagement with families, incentives for students, case management services, peer mentoring, schoolwide positive behavior systems, and in the most severe absentee cases, referral to applicable community agencies including Mobile Response Services and Child Protective Services. In these cases, referrals such as these can yield additional intervention and support services for students and families struggling with compliance with attending school. Moreover, agencies who receive reports from sources outside the school rely on background information provided by school officials to monitor existing cases. Without adapted school processes that consider attendance, absenteeism, and engagement during school closures, students may be missing critical services and supports from agencies, in addition to those from schools. In the next section, I analyze the turbulence experienced by historically underserved students nearing the end of their school journeys by assessing the three drivers of turbulence, followed by the general level of turbulence.

### **Analyzing the Degree of Turbulence**

This turbulent moment in school systems while clearly a crisis, can also be understood as an opportunity to advance toward more equitable outcomes (Gross, 2020). The turbulence gauge, a simple tool to identify degree of turbulence in any situation, is utilized to analyze the cascading events, positionality, stability, and finally, the general level of turbulence. This tool can be adapted to specific situation or case from a specific school community or can be used to generally assess the turbulence of a widespread issue, as is the case in this paper.

In considering positionality, school and district leaders are tasked with assessing if people are seeing the situation in shared or factious ways. Examples of such questions can include: Have teachers been made aware of which students lack adequate digital resources? Has the district provided any support in how to use new learning management systems? What resources have been provided to over-aged students who perceive the utility in working as opposed to engaging in distance learning?

Cascading entails looking at the forces that are elevating or reducing the feeling of turbulence experienced by students struggling to attain graduation. Here, leaders may find it useful to assess how prior supports that have shown to help to prevent dropout, such as mentoring, counseling, individualized instructional support, and credit recovery (Rumson & Milsn, 2017; Chappell et al., 2015; Atwell et al., 2019) have been adapted

to – or stripped away from – students at risk for dropout, and these events may drive up the turbulence that such students feel, above and beyond what may be happening in their own families and communities due to the pandemic (e.g., closures of outside agencies servicing families, job loss, food insecurity, homelessness).

Lastly, stability relates to the belief of stability permeated through the school community. Questions that guide the analysis of stability include: What has the community shared about how they are perceiving school closing or reopening in an adjusted way? What processes related to accountability measures like high school exit exams or attendance policies have changed and how has this been shared with students and parents disproportionately impacted by such measures?

While the answers to these questions will certainly vary by school community and may be related to factors such as the socioeconomic need of the school or district, percentage of mobility and absenteeism among students, and teacher and principal effectiveness, a general analysis of the degree of turbulence for marginalized students for dropout, based on Gross’s (2013; 2019) model of the turbulence gauge is shown in Table 1.

**Table 1**

*Turbulence Gauge for Students Placed at Risk for Dropout During the Pandemic*

<b>Degree of turbulence</b>	<b>General Definition</b>	<b>Turbulence as applied to students placed at risk for dropout or pushout</b>
Light	Ongoing issue, with minimal disruption to normal environment	
Moderate	Widespread awareness of the issues and origins	
Severe	Fear for entire enterprise, a feeling of crisis	<p>Communication with and from students at-risk for dropping out may be minimal or non-existent.</p> <p>Students may be minimally performing in classes, experiencing increased levels of absenteeism.</p> <p>Parents of disengaged students may be expressing feelings of being overwhelmed, confused and angry at what they perceive as teacher and leadership’s expectations.</p>
Extreme	Structural damage to normal operation likely	

## Recommendations

Deeply committed to providing tools for educational leaders to gain perspective in trying situations, Gross (2019) provided the turbulence gauge, a simple table that can be applied to multiple situations across a setting, and optimally completed from a variety of stakeholder perspectives. The tool allows leaders to be both collaborative and reflective in the throes of sweeping turbulence and change. While the tool can be applied to systems experiencing problems in complex, interrelated ways, as is the case with the emergence of COVID-19 on school districts, the tool can also be applied to specific components of larger problems as well.

Thus, one recommendation is for educational leaders to use the turbulence gauge to advance an equitable understanding of engagement, attendance, and absenteeism in hybrid or remote programs for students at-risk for dropping out and other vulnerable students (Gross, 2019). This review of the literature on disparities in quality of remote instruction for marginalized students (Toth, 2020) and the subsequent student disengagement and absenteeism during the pandemic (Toth, 2020; Dorn et al., 2020; Pensiero et al., 2020) offers support for rethinking existing programming with an increased emphasis on student disengagement and absenteeism for a variety of stakeholders on the frontlines of chronic absenteeism: teachers, parents, and the students themselves. For central office and school-based leaders, asking critical questions presents an opportunity to reformulate what is currently in place for marginalized students with the highest rates of chronic absenteeism as compared with their younger counterparts (Balfanz & Byrnes, 2012). Key questions can be used to evaluate the turbulence experienced by marginalized students nearing the end of their academic journeys. Considering what the expectations were just a few short months ago – when the pandemic began and schools first closed - how are different groups of students experiencing the shift from asynchronous to synchronous instruction? What are the students' feelings of self-efficacy as it relates to engaging in online learning? The families? Certainly, ubiquitous notions of what it means to attend, be absent from, and engage in school have changed so substantively even from the start of the pandemic to now (Lake, 2020). Hence, a closer look into what different stakeholder groups' experiences and beliefs about attending and engaging with school, using the turbulence gauge, is warranted.

A second recommendation is for educational leaders to gain a nuanced understanding of how the current pandemic shifts or adds to what are widely known to be high school dropout risk factors (Atwell et al., 2019; Rumsey & Milson, 2017; Chappell et al., 2015; Hammond et al., 2007) and the way these risk factors cascade and combine to create higher levels of dropout risk for the students experiencing them (Rumsey & Milson, 2017; Hammond et al., 2007). With attention to the pandemic exerting an influence over an array of risk factors in the individual, family, and



school domains, there remains the need to reformulate existing dropout prevention programming to address the critical needs of students nearing the end of their academic journeys. This may entail district and school leaders to better personalize programs for students (Chappell et al., 2015) that can still achieve behavioral support and engagement with family during the pandemic, key strategies for dropout prevention (Chappell et al., 2015; Hammond et al., 2007). Therefore, questions to be considered using the turbulence gauge include: Which neighborhoods are disproportionately experiencing additional trauma, a well-established risk factor for dropout (Rumsey & Milson, 2017) related to COVID-19? What student groups are inequitably shouldering the burden of the digital divide which relates not only to student engagement and attendance but also to access to medical care (Bakhtiar et al., 2020) and mental health care (Liang et al., 2020)? What do the district's existing divides look like broken down by grade level? As Krueger (2015) notes, an assessment regarding digital inequity experienced by students is ironically simple to implement and incurs no additional cost to educational leaders but has the potential to yield so much valuable insight into parent and students lived experiences.

Certainly, the pandemic has shown school systems to be ill-adapted to providing education equitably during this turbulent time, a bleak reverberation of what has come before COVID-19. A final recommendation relates to the supports needed for disengaged students nearing the need of their high school journeys during a school year where systems are relying on hybrid or remote delivery of instruction. As is the case during a conventional school year, students placed at risk for dropping out need specific supports that address the stop-and-start nature that characterize those final months. In a pandemic, these students and their families are even harder to engage. School leaders need a plan for how to address common barriers to attaining graduation for at-risk students nearing the end that considers the hybrid, remote, and shifting nature of the programs with which students are contending. Such considerations include students maximizing time during a school closure to work, taking care of familial responsibilities, and students and their families struggling with mental health and wellness. It may require different ways to communicate with families about attendance, financial incentives for to boost attendance, and more personnel dedicated to case management to address some of the cascading events in the lives of historically underserved students at risk for dropout during a pandemic.

## **Conclusion**

In severely turbulent times, leaders have a choice to utilize an increased awareness about what their students, families, and communities are experiencing to strategically improve the ways they engage with at-risk students or to muddle through without a strategy on how to gain per-

spective from the turbulence. Grappling with the contextual forces, drivers, and level of turbulence that the COVID-19 pandemic has ushered in for disengaged students affords school leaders the opportunity to gain understanding of our students' unique, complex barriers to engaging with school. Indeed, the school closure has exacted a host of tolls on high school students that are placed at risk for dropout that relate to learning, attendance, attainment, and other quality of life outcomes. While some leadership practices have yielded important gains in addressing the digital divide and other areas of need, more work is clearly needed to address the specialized needs of older students reaching the end of their high school journeys during this pandemic. Lastly, student absenteeism continues to be a problem with far-reaching implications, and perhaps especially during times of school closures. Absent an effort to reconceptualize intervention efforts for student absenteeism that considers what disengagement and absenteeism means once schools are closed, educational leaders are certainly missing an important component to the addressing the personal, social, and academic problems of disengaged students. While much of the portrait of what this pandemic will leave behind in its wake will be fleshed out in the months and years to come, it is imperative that research and policy attention include those students that are nearing departure, often too quickly and quietly, to alter their trajectories.

## References

- ABC News. (2020, September 4). *Indiana's school district's WiFi buses ease virtual learning for students at home*. [Video file]. In Good Morning America. <https://www.goodmorningamerica.com/living/story/indiana-school-districts-wi-fi-buses-ease-virtual-72626209>
- Anderson, K. P., & Ritter, G. W. (2020). Do school discipline policies treat students fairly? Evidence from Arkansas. *Educational Policy*, 34(5), 707-734.
- Anderson M. & Kumar M. (2019). *Digital divide persists even as lower-income Americans make 101 gains in tech adoption*. Pew Research Center. <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact102tank/2019/05/07/digital-divide-persists-even-as-lower-income-americans-make-gains-in-103tech-adoption/>.
- Ali, M.M., West, K., Teich, J. L., Lynch, S., Mutter, R., & Dubenitz, J. (2019). Utilization of mental health services in educational setting by adolescents in the United States. *Journal of School Health*, 89(5), 393-401.
- Associated Press. (2020, March 14). U.S. providers offer free wifi for sixty days. *Fortune*. *Attendance works*. (2020). ESSA brief. Attendance Works. [https://attendanceworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/ESSA-Brief\\_083016-revised.pdf](https://attendanceworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/ESSA-Brief_083016-revised.pdf).
- Atwell, M. N., Balfanz, R., Bridgeland, J., & Ingram, E. (2019). *Building*



- a grad nation: Progress and challenge in raising high school graduation rates.* Annual Update 2019. Civic.
- Bäckman, O. (2017). High school dropout, resource attainment, and criminal convictions. *Journal of Research in Crime & Delinquency*, 54(5), 715–749.
- Bakhtiar M., Elbuluk N., Lipoff J.B. (2020). The digital divide: How covid-19's telemedicine expansion could exacerbate disparities, *Journal of the American Academy of Dermatology*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jaad.2020.07.043>.
- Balfanz, R., & Byrnes, V. (2012). The importance of being in school: A report on absenteeism in the nation's public schools. *The Education Digest*, 78(2), 4.
- Battin-Pearson, S., Newcomb, M. D., Abbott, R. D., Hill, K. G., Catalano, R. F., & Hawkins, J. D. (2002). Predictors of early high school dropout: A test of five theories. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 92, 568–582. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-0663.92.3.568>.
- Bauer, L., Liu, P., Schanzenbach, D. W., & Shambaugh, J. (2018). *Reducing Chronic Absenteeism Under the Every Student Succeeds Act*. Strategy paper for the Hamilton Project, Brookings Institute, (April 2018). [https://www.brookings.edu/wpcontent/uploads/2018/04/reducing\\_chronic\\_absenteeism\\_under\\_the\\_every\\_student\\_succeeds\\_act2.pdf](https://www.brookings.edu/wpcontent/uploads/2018/04/reducing_chronic_absenteeism_under_the_every_student_succeeds_act2.pdf).
- Chappell, S.L., O'Connor, P., Withington, C., & Stegelin, D.A. (2015). *A meta-analysis of dropout prevention outcomes and strategies: A technical report in collaboration with The Center for Educational Partnerships at Old Dominion University*. <http://dropoutprevention.org/meta-analysis-dropout-prevention-outcomes-strategies/>
- Chu, E. M., & Ready, D. D. (2018). Exclusion and urban public high schools: Short-and-long-term consequences of school suspensions. *American Journal of Education*, 124(4), 479-509.
- District of Columbia Public Schools. (2020). *DCPC at a glance: Enrollment*. <https://dcps.dc.gov/page/dcps-glance-enrollment>
- Dorn, E., Hancock, B., Sarakatsannis, J., & Viruleg, E. (2020). COVID-19 and student learning in the United States: The hurt could last a lifetime. *McKinsey & Company*.
- Federal Communications Commission. (2020). *Broadband deployment report*. Federal Communications Commission. <https://docs.fcc.gov/public/attachments/FCC-20-50A1.pdf>
- Graces, J., Weisburd, S., & Salem, C. (2019). The ills of absenteeism: Can school-based health centers provide the cure. In M.A. Gottfried & Hutt E.L. (Eds.) *Absent from School: Understanding and Addressing Student Absenteeism*. pp. 35-51. Harvard Education Press
- Golberstein, E., Wen, H., & Miller, B. F. (2020). Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) and mental health for children and adolescents. *JAMA pediatrics*. 174(9), 819-820.

- Gross, S. J. (2019). *Applying turbulence theory to educational leadership in challenging times: A case-based approach*. Routledge.
- Gross, S.J. (2020). Webinar for 2020 Delaware Valley Consortium for Excellence and Equity Summer Leadership Institute. *A time of crisis and opportunity: Applying turbulence theory to educational leadership in an era of racial injustice and COVID-19*. July 9, 2020.
- Gubbels, J., van der Put, C. E., & Assink, M. (2019). Risk factors for school absenteeism and dropout: A meta-analytic review. *Journal of youth and adolescence*, 48(9), 1637-1667.
- Hispanic Heritage Foundation. (2020). *Hispanic Heritage Foundation, my college options: Survey 3k students*. <https://hispanicheritage.org/hispanic-heritage-foundation-mycollegeoptions-family-online-safety-institute-and-other-partners-announce-findings-of-new-study-titled-taking-the-pulse-of-the-high-school-student-experience/>
- Hough, H. (2019). Roll call: Describing chronically absent students, the schools they attend, and implications for their accountability. In M.A. Gottfried & Hutt E.L. (Eds.) *Absent from school: Understanding and addressing student absenteeism*. pp. 15-33. Harvard Education Press.
- Institute of Education Sciences (2020, March 20). *How can districts support families' access to technology during school closures*. [https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/northeast/Docs/Blog/FAQ\\_COVID19\\_TechnologyAccess\\_508c.pdf](https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/northeast/Docs/Blog/FAQ_COVID19_TechnologyAccess_508c.pdf)
- Kearney, C. A. (2008a). An interdisciplinary model of school absenteeism in youth to inform professional practice and public policy. *Educational Psychology Review*, 20, 257–282. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-008-9078-3>.
- Kohli, S. & Blume, H. (2020, March 12). LAUSD to teach students via television amid coronavirus concerns. *Los Angeles Times*.
- Krueger, K. (2015, September 9). *Scoping the digital equity problem*. Consortium for School Learning. <https://cosn.org/blog/scoping-digital-equity-problem-or-homework-gap>
- Lake, R. (2020). What's happening with distance learning? *The Learning Professional*, 41(4), 19-21.
- Lessard, A., Butler-Kisber, L., Fortin, L., Marcotte, D., Potvin, P., & Royer, É. (2008). Shades of disengagement: High school dropouts speak out. *Social Psychology of Education: An International Journal*, 11(1), 25-42. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s11218-007-9033-z>
- Lipari, R. N., Hedden, S., Blau, G., & Rubenstein, L. (2016). Adolescent mental health service use and reasons for using services in specialty, educational, and general medical settings. *The CBHSQ Report*. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (US).
- Lovenheim, M. F., Reback, R., & Wedenoja, L. (2016). *How does access to health care affect teen fertility and high school dropout rates? Evidence from school-based health centers* (No. w22030). National Bureau of Economic Research.

- Lukes, M. (2014). Pushouts, shutouts, and holdouts: Educational experiences of Latino immigrant young adults in New York City. *Urban Education, 49*(7), 806-834.
- Marstaller, M. (2020) Student experiences of the Covid-19 lockdown, *Changing English, 27*(3), 231-234. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1358684X.2020.1777533>
- Mireles-Rios, Rios & Reyes (2020). Pushed out for missing school: The role of social disparities and school truancy in dropping out. *Education Sciences, 10*(4), 108.
- Moretti, E. (2007). Crime and the costs of criminal justice. In C.R. Belfield & H.M. Levin (Eds.), *The Price We Pay: Economic and Social Consequences of Inadequate Education*, (pp. 142-159). Brookings Institution Press.
- Muenning, P. (2007). Consequences in health status and costs. In C.R. Belfield & H.M. Levin (Eds.), *The price we pay: Economic and social consequences of inadequate education*, (pp. 125-141). Brookings Institution Press.
- New York Times Editorial Board. (2020, July 11). Reopening schools will be a huge job [Editorial]. *New York Times*. <http://libproxy.temple.edu/login?url=https://www-proquest-com.libproxy.temple.edu/docview/422306907?accountid=14270>
- Noltemeyer, A. L., Ward, R. M., & McLoughlin, C. (2015). Relationship between school suspension and student outcomes: A meta-analysis. *School Psychology Review, 44*(2), 224-240.
- Oreopoulos, P. (2007). Do dropouts drop out too soon? Wealth, health, and happiness from compulsory schooling. *Journal of Public Economics, 91*(11-12), 2213-2229.
- Pensiero, N., Kelly, A. & Bokhove, C. (2020). Learning inequalities during the COVID-19 pandemic: How families cope with home schooling. University of Southampton research report. <http://doi.org/10.5258/SOTON/POO25>
- Rafa, A. (2017). Chronic absenteeism: A key indicator of student success. *Policy Analysis*. Education Commission of the States.
- Reback, R. (2010). Schools' mental health services and young children's emotions, behavior, and learning. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management, 29*(4), 698-725.
- Reviews.com. (2020, September 7). *Internet options for students with low income*. <https://www.reviews.com/utilities/internet/internet-options-for-students/>
- Ritter, G. W., & Anderson, K. P. (2018). Examining disparities in student discipline: Mapping inequities from infractions to consequences. *Peabody Journal of Education, 93*(2), 161-173.
- Rosen, J. A., Warkentien, S., & Rotermund, S. (2019). Stopping out versus dropping out: The role of educational resilience in explaining on-time completion of high school. *American Journal of Education, 125*(2),

259-287.

- Rouse, C. (2007). Consequences for the labor market. In C.R. Belfield & H.M. Levin (Eds.), *The price we pay: Economic and social consequences of inadequate education*, (pp. 99-124). Brookings Institution Press.
- Rumberger, R. W. (1995). Dropping out of middle school: A multilevel analysis of students and schools. *American Educational Research Journal*, 32, 583–625. <https://doi.org/10.3102/00028312032003583>.
- Rumsey, A., & Milsom, A. (2017). *Dropout prevention and trauma: Addressing a wide range of stressors that inhibit student success* [White paper]. Clemson, SC: National Dropout Prevention Center/Network. <https://www.dropoutprevention.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/dropout-prevention-and-trauma-2017-10.pdf>.
- School Districts’ Reopening Plans: A Snapshot (2020, October 22). Education Week. Retrieved from <https://www.edweek.org/ew/section/multimedia/school-districts-reopening-plans-a-snapshot.html>
- Seattle Public Schools (September 10, 2020). *Seattle Public Schools remote learning FAQ*. <https://www.seattleschools.org/resources/faq>
- Shapiro, J. P., & Gross, S. J. (2013). *Ethical educational leadership in turbulent times:(Re) solving moral dilemmas*. Routledge.
- South, S. J., Haynie, D. L., & Bose, S. (2007). Student mobility and school dropout. *Social Science Research*, 36(1), 68-94.
- Sweeten, G., Bushway, S. D., & Paternoster, R. (2009). Does dropping out of school mean dropping into delinquency? *Criminology*, 47(1), 47-91.
- Tonnes, B. V. (2020). One in five Boston public school children may be virtual dropouts. *The Boston Globe*.
- Tuck, E. (2012). Urban youth and school pushout: *Gateways, get-aways, and the GED*. Routledge.
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (2020, July 30). *How many students are at risk of not returning to school*. <https://en.unesco.org/covid19/educationresponse>
- United States Department of Education. (2020, November 26). *States report new high school graduation rates using more accurate, common measure* [Press release]. <https://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/states-report-new-high-school-graduation-rates-using-more-accurate-common-measur.htm>
- Walters, A. (2020). Supporting youth and families during COVID-19. *Brown University Child & Adolescent Behavior Letter*, 36(6), 8. <https://doi.org/10.1002/cbl.30472>
- Woodworth, J. L., Raymond, M. E., Chirbas, K., Gonzalez, M., Negassi, Y., Snow, W., & Van Donge, C. (2015). *Online charter school study 2015*. Center for Research on Educational Outcomes. Accessed September 7, 2017.

**Jennifer Antoni is a School Counselor at the City of Burlington School District in Burlington, New Jersey and an adjunct assistant professor at Temple University in Philadelphia.**



## THE (IM)POSSIBILITIES OF EQUITABLE EDUCATION OF MULTILINGUAL EMERGENT BILINGUALS IN RE- MOTE TEACHING: A SURVEY OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS IN THE GREAT LAKES REGION

*The purpose of this study is to identify how teachers of Emergent Bilinguals labeled “English Language Learners” (EL teachers) responded to the sudden shift to emergency remote teaching and learning (ERTL) due to COVID-19 in March 2020. Emergent Bilingual teachers from Indiana, Minnesota, and Wisconsin were surveyed during ERTL and this paper details how these specialized teachers responded to ensure continued instruction for Emergent Bilingual students. We highlight what tasks EL teachers were asked to do by their schools, colleagues, and administration, as well as what was needed from students and families. Specifically, we organize their responses in terms of instructional and service-oriented activities. Data offer insights into existing disparities and demands placed on EL teachers (instructional and non-instructional services) which were exacerbated and made more visible by the ERTL condition. Findings suggest that districts are overwhelmingly out of compliance with requirements to provide equitable access to education as mandated by Title VI and the Equal Educational Opportunities Act.*

With the implementation of emergency remote teaching and learning (ERTL) (Milman, 2020) across most of the United States in March 2020 due to the spread of COVID-19, schools shifted from physical settings to distant ones. Because some form of remote teaching and learning continued to be implemented during the 2020-2021 school year, we identify this time period as “early COVID-19 ERTL” and refer to later and future remote teaching and learning as “RTL.” Teachers, administrators, and paraprofessionals, alongside students and families, assumed emergency response roles to maintain school-based education in its many instructional and social service dimensions, while physically distancing. English language (EL) teachers of multilingual English learners (hereafter referred to as “Emergent Bilinguals”) were tasked with the role of mitigating barriers that restricted Emergent Bilinguals from experiencing fair and equitable education. This included bridging school language and cultural practices and, at times, serving as points of contact to address access to food and healthcare. This article focuses on this distinct group of EL educators, who teach in both stand-alone settings or as integrated group partners (e.g. co-teachers), working with their general education colleagues to ensure access to grade level and subject area content.

U.S. public schools are mandated to provide equitable educational



opportunities to Emergent Bilingual students. These mandates stem from Supreme Court rulings on *Lau v. Nichols* (1974) and *Castañada v. Pickard* (1981) which ruled that districts must provide students identified as English language learners with appropriate programming to remove barriers to accessing education in monolingual English schools. These mandates include providing adequate resources and personnel to ensure Emergent Bilingual programming. During ERTL, pre-existing social and educational inequities for Emergent Bilinguals became more visible and exacerbated. For example, access to computers and sufficient internet speed amongst Emergent Bilinguals living in rural areas and/or who live with restricted economic circumstances were not new issues. For instance, the U.S. Department of Education's (Zehler et al., 2019) study about supporting Emergent Bilinguals through technology found that seventy-eight percent of teachers reported that students' lack of internet access at home to [digital learning resources] was a barrier to their use of [digital learning resources] for instructing [Emergent Bilingual] students" (p. xv). However, uneven access to technology and high speed WiFi amongst Emergent Bilingual households became alarmingly apparent and shifted to a major equity issue as schools and districts scrambled to respond to these as necessities to maintain school attendance and access to teaching and learning. As primary points of contact with Emergent Bilingual youth and their families, EL teachers moved into action, taking on instructional and service dimensions of educational access and outcomes. With these conditions in mind, our research questions were:

- 1) What roles did EL teachers play during early COVID-19 ERTL?
- 2) How did EL teachers serve the instructional and non-instructional needs of Emergent Bilingual learners during early COVID-19 ERTL?

Using descriptive quantitative analysis of a survey of 405 EL teachers from three Great Lakes states (Indiana, Minnesota, and Wisconsin), we explored how EL teachers (and by way of this, schools and districts) specifically addressed both instructional and non-instructional services for Emergent Bilinguals. EL teachers in these represented states reflect similar (im)migration community histories and growth where social and school infrastructures for (im)migrant and refugee families are under-developed (Hilburn, 2014). When such programs are underdeveloped, then the focus tends to be on compliance with capacity growing as the immigrant community grows (Morita-Mullaney & Stallings, 2019). Findings point to the need for a (1) clearer understanding of the challenges with remote teaching and learning in relationship to Emergent Bilingual students' access to education provided by public schools and (2) the need for schools and districts to evaluate its programming, resourcing, and personnel (instructional and bilingual non-instructional) in order to rectify barriers Emergent Bilinguals are required to navigate to access education



which are both made more visible during (emergency) remote teaching and learning.

### **Emergency Remote Teaching & Learning**

ERTL is education implemented during governmental, national security, economic, social, and/or environmental instability that disrupts the primary model of an in-person public education (Davies & Bentravato, 2011). As Hodges, et al. (2020) explain, “[t]he primary objective... is not to re-create a robust educational ecosystem, but rather to provide temporary access to instruction and instructional supports in a manner that is quick to set up and is reliably available during an emergency or crisis” (para. 13). During the COVID-19 pandemic, ERTL applies to the K-12 public education effort to maintain access to school-as-education despite physical school closures. As the pandemic continued into the 2020-2021 school year, the continuation of remote teaching and learning takes multiple shapes, including physical school closures and limited attendance in school settings, paired with continued virtual instruction.

Within ERTL, teachers must provide care and support for youth and families in holistic and integrated ways (Bozkurt & Sharma, 2020), which we define as ‘service’ or non-instructional activities. This service aligns with the ethics of critical care (Nieto, 2018) regularly invoked by EL teachers prior to COVID-19. These ethics result in EL teachers taking on roles, responsibilities, and positions that extend beyond discrete language and literacy instruction, or access to content area instruction (Ajayi, 2011; Morita-Mullaney & Stallings, 2018). In the context of COVID-19, EL teachers provide access to both the ongoing and acute instructional and non-instructional needs that schools are required to meliorate in some cases (instructional), and positioned to support the navigation of in others (institutional and socioeconomic barriers).

Pre-COVID-19, EL teachers were already positioned as marginalized and peripheral, positioned as educational aides and language assistants to content area and grade-level teachers, not considered as primary and fully legitimate educators (Harvey & Teemant, 2012; Morita-Mullaney, 2019). This peripheralization accompanies the marginalization of Emergent Bilinguals in U.S. schools (Gitlin et al., 2003; Pettit, 2011). Further, EL teachers’ preparation often fixates on discrete language instruction and strategies for accessing academic content (Hansen-Thomas et al., 2016; Morita-Mullaney, 2019; Morita-Mullaney & Stallings, 2018), reducing focus on preparation for non-linguistic elements of teaching. However, in practice, EL teachers often take on roles, responsibilities, and identities that are subversive, creative, and adaptive in response to the needs and interests of Emergent Bilinguals and their families (Kanno & Norton, 2003). Thus, they are positioned in times of situational crisis (e.g. ERTL) to respond in meaningful ways to their students’ immediate needs. EL teach-

ers' responses and insights assist us in identifying the specific instructional and non-instructional supports, referenced hereafter as *instruction* and *service*. Thus, EL teachers highlight both the wider social support system needs that are transferred to public education, as well as the shortcomings of K-12 schools and teacher preparation programs in supporting EL teachers in navigating the demand that they perform these roles in order to support Emergent Bilingual students.

### EL Teachers' Multiple Roles

EL teachers provide both direct *instruction* and *service*. Instruction is specific language/literacy support that facilitates academic success. Service includes supports that facilitate material, cognitive, and social-emotional access to instruction. For example, EL teachers serve students in accessing school through facilitating home/school communications or transportation (Harvey & Teemant, 2012). Service may also include acquiring technology and internet connections, or connecting youth and families to health and human services.

Although EL teachers embody multiple roles and identities, attending to both instruction and service, service is often construed as tangential to instruction (Harvey & Teemant, 2012; Morita-Mullaney, 2019). Services, however, are the institutional barriers within and outside of school that foreclose on access to instruction in schools (Palmer, 2019). Whether ascribed or assumed, these instructional and service-oriented roles differ from those of general education teachers (Farrell, 2011; 2012). Further, the distribution of these roles is impacted by teacher racialization (e.g. Flores, 2011; Rauscher & Wilson, 2017), with teachers of color and multilingual teachers of color asked and expected to do additional labors, both explicit and invisible (Amanti, 2019). For example, when Spanish-speaking Latinx or Hmong EL teachers are asked to do translation and interpretation for the school, removing them from providing instruction with Emergent Bilingual students.

With the closure of physical schools and the quick pivot to distance learning, EL teachers' roles expanded to address the urgent challenges faced by Emergent Bilinguals. Institutional disparities, reflecting historic marginalization of multilingual communities with recent (im)migration experiences, are further exacerbated during times of crisis. Given the move to ERTL and restrictions on many essential resources, how schools operate has shifted, revealing underlying instabilities as they quickly assemble instruction for students (Hodges, et al., 2020). This study illuminates the needs of Emergent Bilinguals and their families during this crisis, thereby informing more responsive preparation and support of all educators to meet the distinct needs of Emergent Bilinguals and their families.

## Methodology

We analyzed 405 survey responses from EL teachers in three U.S. Great Lakes states: Indiana, Minnesota, and Wisconsin. The survey was administered from May 18 through June 5, 2020 and findings detail the many roles EL teachers took on during ERTL.

### Participants

Survey participants were recruited from practicing K-12 EL teachers in public or charter schools in Indiana, Minnesota, and Wisconsin who served as EL teachers before and during ERTL. Participants in these states share similarly growing EL and (im)migrant populations, yet their states' infrastructures to support their newer (im)migrant communities are still developing. Additionally, EL teacher preparation across these states have similar components of primary focus on language and literacy instruction, an inclusion of 'advocacy' as a standard of effective teaching practice, and limited inclusion of service elements in preparation coursework (Morita-Mullaney, et al., 2019). K-12 EL teachers were recruited through listserv and social media for Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) affiliates in each state, where membership consists of 619 educators in Indiana, 908 in Minnesota, and 647 in Wisconsin. The survey was shared via hyperlink, allowing for word-of-mouth sharing amongst EL teachers, beyond affiliate membership.

**Table 1**

#### *State-level and Total Survey Participants*

State	Respondents	Rural %	City %	Suburban
Indiana	113	15.9%	56.6%	27.4%
Minnesota	189	9.0%	42.3%	46.6%
Wisconsin	103	22.3%	48.5%	27.2%
TOTAL	405	14.3%	47.9%	36.3%

A total of 405 EL teachers responded (see Figure 1): 113 Indiana teachers, 190 Minnesota teachers, and 103 Wisconsin teachers. Fifteen percent of respondents taught in rural schools (state-level breakdown: 16% Indiana, 9% Minnesota, 24% Wisconsin). Forty-eight percent of respondents taught in city schools (state-level breakdown: 56% Indiana, 43% Minnesota, 48% Wisconsin). Thirty seven percent of respondents taught in suburban schools (state-level breakdown: 28% Indiana, 48% Minnesota, 28% Wisconsin). Teachers taught across elementary, middle school, high school.

## **Survey**

The survey was divided into three distinct sections: teacher and school-level demographic information, instruction provided before and during ERTL, and services provided before and during ERTL. Items related to instruction focused on the methods for delivery of instruction, the platform and materials used, and the frequency of both instructional planning and instruction itself. In the area of service, items detailed how EL teachers provided services for Emergent Bilinguals, families of Emergent Bilinguals, and teacher and administrator colleagues at the school. EL teachers also contrasted the percentage of time they spent on instruction and service before and during ERTL. The electronic survey was done on Qualtrics, which could be completed by computer, tablet, or smartphone. Participants were given the opportunity to volunteer for a follow-up interview. Data from these interviews are part of Phase 2 of the study, and are outside the scope of this paper.

## **Data Analysis**

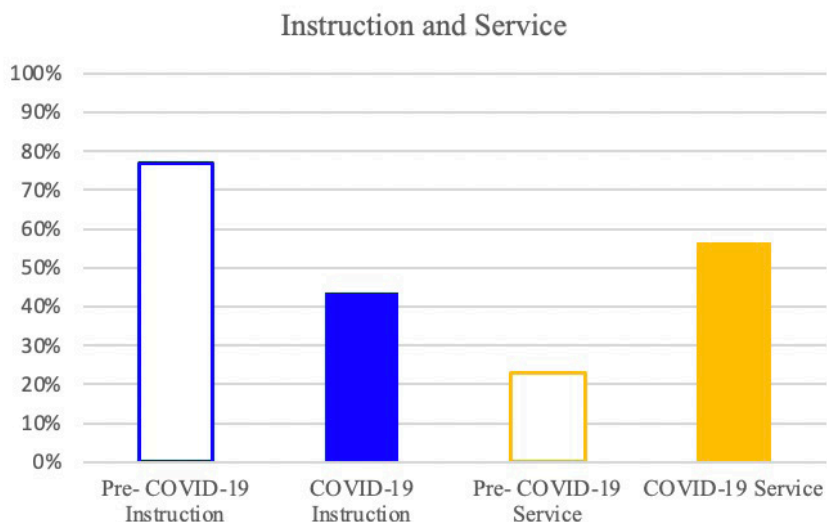
Using descriptive statistics, we analyzed the raw data and looked for the percentage of completion. Surveys with completion rates less than 33% were purged. Based on survey responses, we analyzed the types, frequency and effectiveness of 1) instruction; and 2) services provided by, and requested of, EL teachers pre- and during ERTL. Data were then disaggregated by state to examine patterns across these demographically similar contexts.

### **EL Teacher Survey Findings**

Survey results offered insights into how EL teachers' time and labor were distributed across instruction and service pre-COVID-19-induced ERTL and during ERTL. This included self-reporting of how EL teachers spent their time between providing instruction and meeting socioeconomic and material needs of Emergent Bilinguals and their families ("service") (Figure 1).

**Figure 1**

*State-level and Total Survey Participants*



EL teachers were asked to provide what proportion of their time had been spent on instruction and what proportion of their time had been spent on service prior to COVID-19 school closures. They were then asked to provide what proportion of their time was spent on instruction and what proportion of their time was spent on service during ERTL. These distributions were then averaged. Prior to physical school closures due to COVID-19, EL teachers reported that 77% of their time and energies were spent on instruction and 23% was spent on providing services. With the implementation of ERTL, time spent on instruction was reduced to 43.6%, with time spent on providing non-instructional services increasing to 56.4%. In this section, we outline findings connected to EL teacher instruction and non-instructional service

### Service

During COVID-19 ERTL, EL teachers shifted away from the majority of their time being spent on Emergent Bilingual student instruction. Instead, the majority of their time was spent identifying and facilitating services that they (1) recognized their students required; (2) learned their students or families needed; and/or (3) were asked to do in place of instruction by their schools or districts (e.g. their teaching colleagues or administration).

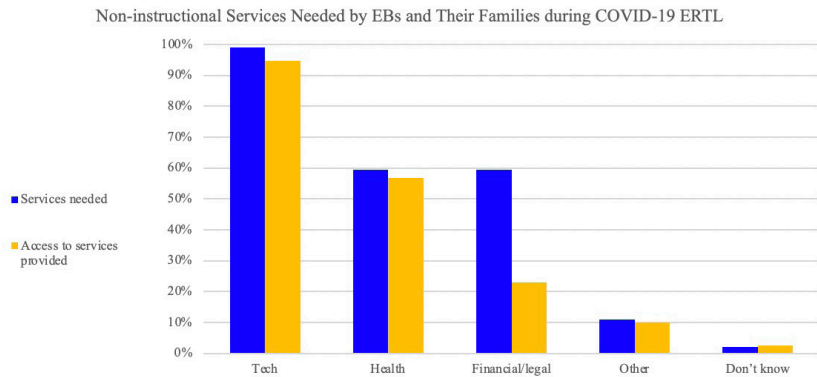
### What services were EL teachers providing?

EL teachers identified what services (non-instructional) their Emergent Bilingual students and their families were in need of immediately after, and in the three subsequent months, of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as how they learned of their need for support accessing these services (Figure 2). Services were related to accessing school-based education in the form attempted by schools following their closures, as well as other factors related to stay-at-home orders in their states and communities.

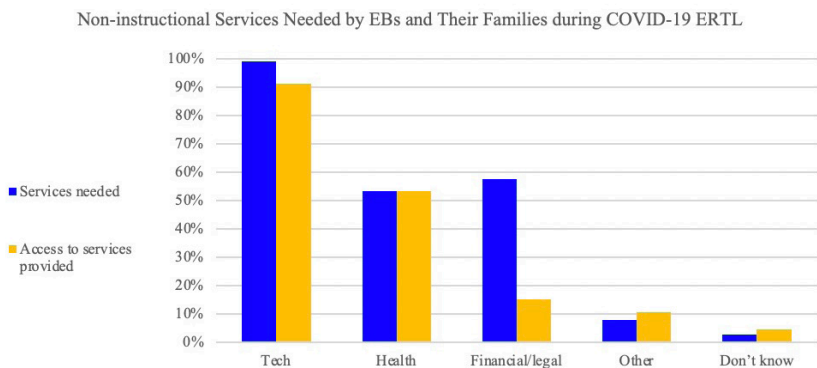
**Figure 2**

#### Non-Instructional Services Needed and Provided

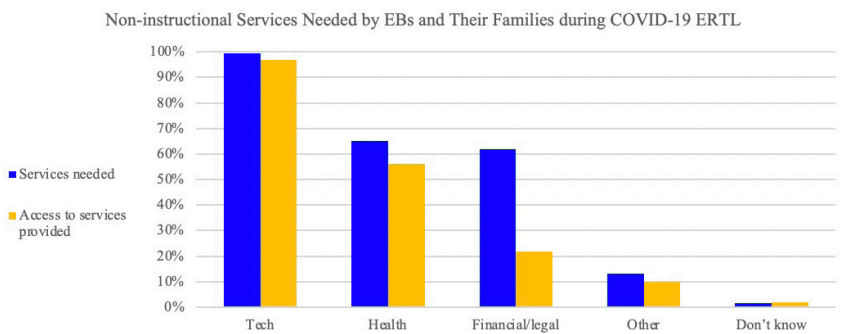
Indiana, Minnesota, & Minnesota combined



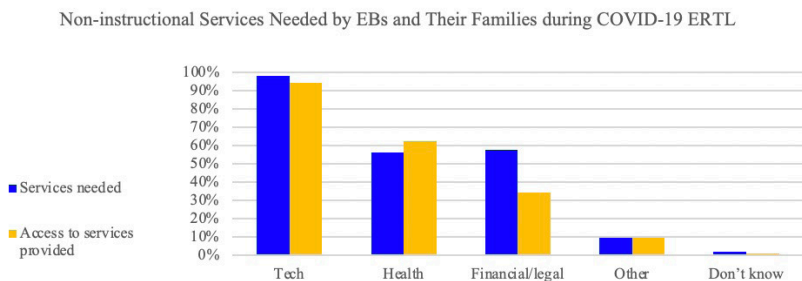
Indiana



## Minnesota



## Wisconsin



Technology access was a large proportion of EL teachers’ time, with 99% of EL teachers reporting that their Emergent Bilingual students required technology support and 94.6% identifying that their time was spent providing access to school-required technology. These technology supports included connecting families with Internet access, WiFi, and hotspots; resolving technology issues when and if their services did not work; getting electronic devices that were needed to access instruction to students (e.g. computers, tablets); creating, translating, and interpreting community-based language resources; and anything related to virtual schooling.

EL teachers also spent a great deal of time determining and connecting families with health and wellness services. Nearly 60% (59.5%) of EL teachers identified this as a need, and 56.8% successfully facilitated access to these services. These services included sharing, translating, and interpreting rapidly changing information about COVID-19; connecting families with medical services; identifying mental health concerns and connecting children and families with mental health resources; providing resources for physical activity; food access; housing stability and safe living environments; connections with religious and spiritual communities central to the lives of some of their Emergent Bilinguals; connecting children and families

with reading and entertainment materials; and connecting with opportunities for physically-distanced social interactions.

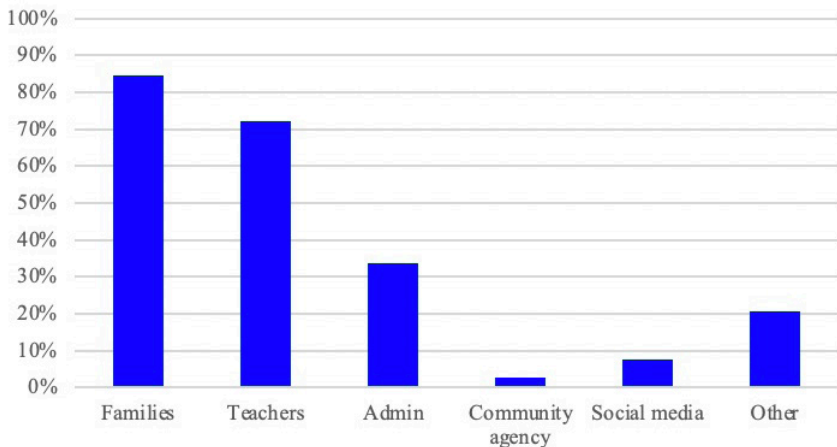
The greatest disparity EL teachers reported between which services Emergent Bilinguals and their families were in need of and what they spent their time providing were financial and legal services. Fifty-nine and a half percent (59.5%) of teachers reported the families of their Emergent Bilinguals were in need of financial and legal services to ensure stability and security that is important to participating fully in school. Only 23% of EL teachers reported that these services were provided or that these needs were addressed. Financial and legal services included income-based services due to loss of family member employment and income, school-aged youth taking on additional employment to supplement family income, school-aged youth taking on additional childcare responsibilities for younger family members, community services related to employment and/or unemployment benefits, services related to immigration processes, legal services, access to transportation, and services in response to family separations.

### ***How did EL teachers learn about needed non-instructional services?***

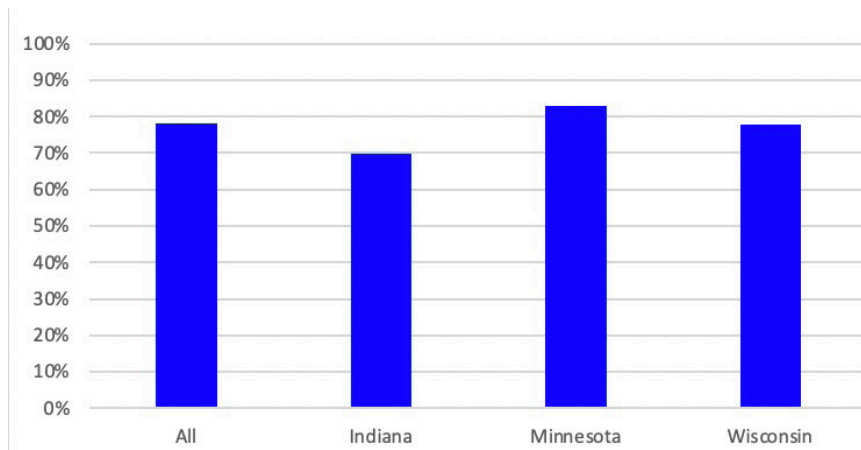
EL teachers also identified how they learned of the services their Emergent Bilingual students and their families required, whether they were able to successfully facilitate access to these services, and the pulls they experienced from other teachers and administrators to provide services on behalf of colleagues, schools, and their district beyond individual discrete support for specific students (Figure 3).

**Figure 3**

#### *Means of Discovering Services Needed by EBs and Their Families During COVID-19*





**Figure 4***EL Teachers Providing Non-Instructional Services for Other Teachers*

Teachers primarily learned about the services Emergent Bilinguals and their families were in need of directly from family members (84.7%), followed by other teachers who approached them to provide these services (72.3%), school administration (33.6%), information shared through social media (7.7%), reports from community agencies (2.7%), and a range of other sources (20.7%). Notably, a large percentage of EL teachers across all three states reported that they were not only spending their time providing direct service with their own Emergent Bilingual students and their families, they were also assisting other teachers in their communication with Emergent Bilingual students, so students would have access to the general education teacher's distance and/or virtual classrooms (Figure 4).  
Instruction

EL teachers reported how instruction was attempted, frequency and length of attempts at instruction, and their instructional goals and concerns. Identifying these instructional attempts is also related to understanding what Emergent Bilinguals experienced in terms of access to school-based education during ERTL.

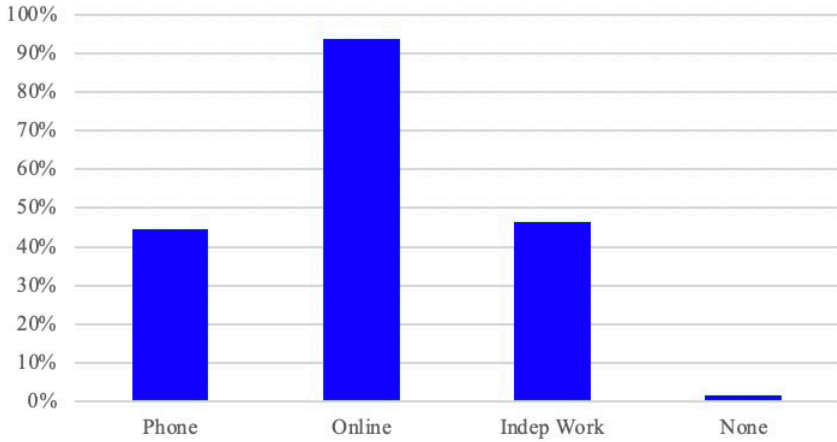
***Were EL students provided access to instruction?***

EL teachers reported they attempted to provide instruction through a combination of phone calls with students (45%), online platforms (92%), and giving Emergent Bilinguals independent work (e.g. packets) (47%) (Figure 5).

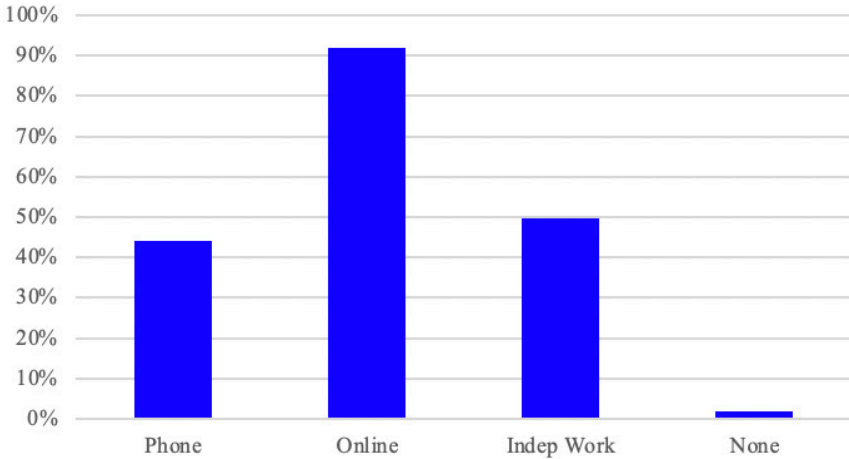
**Figure 5**

*Ways EL Teachers Attempted to Provide Instruction*

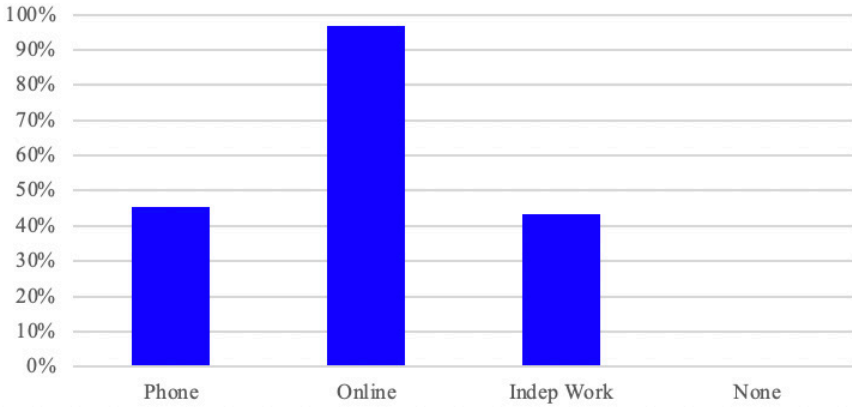
Indiana, Minnesota, & Minnesota combined



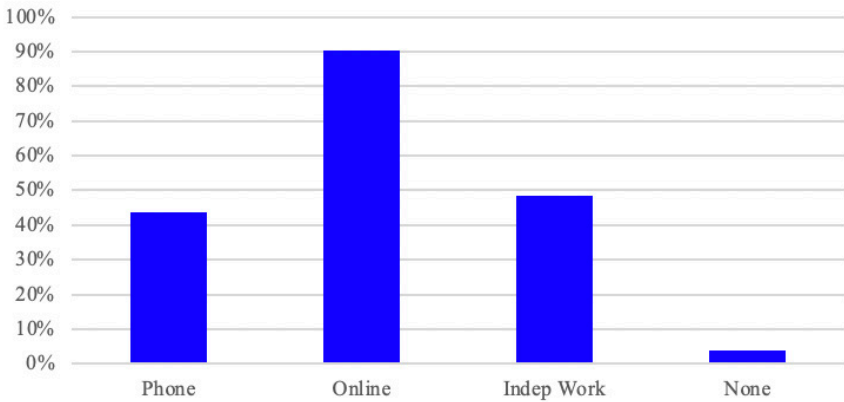
Indiana



Minnesota



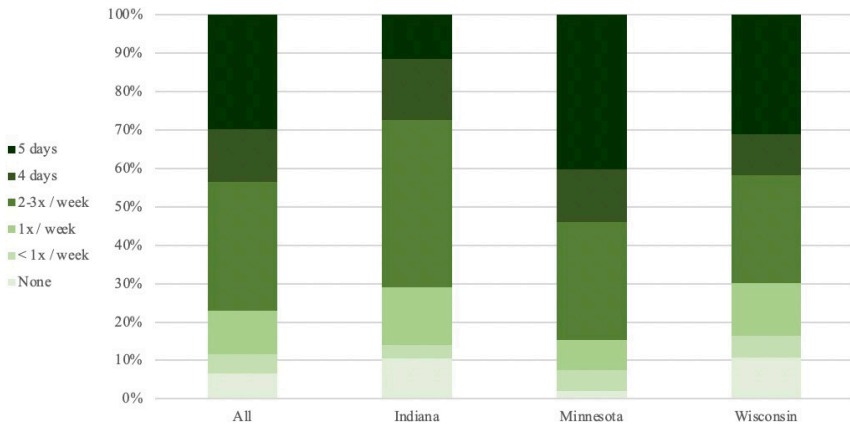
Wisconsin



Three percent of EL teachers reported providing no instruction to Emergent Bilinguals once physical school buildings closed. EL teachers who attempted to provide instruction identified that there was a wide range in the degree and amount of instructional contact with students (Figure 6).

**Figure 6**

*Frequency of Instruction with EB Students*

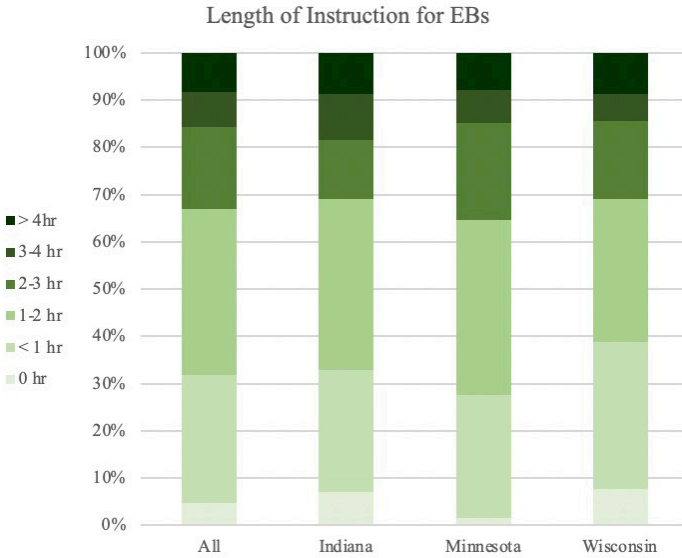


Just over a third of EL teachers (33.5%) reported they provided instruction for Emergent Bilinguals at least once a day on four or five days of the week. Another third of EL teachers (33.6%) reported that they did not provide consistent instruction in terms of daily contact, instead providing instruction for Emergent Bilinguals two to three times per week only. Nearly a quarter (23%) of EL teachers reported that they never provided instruction for Emergent Bilinguals and another 6.7% of teachers only did so on occasion (once per week, inconsistently). However, there were variances across states in terms of providing and not providing daily instruction. Both Indiana and Wisconsin EL teachers had higher percentages of never providing instruction for Emergent Bilinguals or providing instruction only once per week, but inconsistently. Twenty-nine point one percent (29.1%) of Indiana teachers, compared to 23% across the three states reported this, with 10.6% never providing instruction (compared to 6.7% across the three states). Nearly a third (30.1%) of Wisconsin teachers, compared to 23% across the three states reported this, with 10.7% never providing instruction (compared to 6.7% across the tri-state area). Minnesota EL teachers reported providing more instructional contact overall. Even so, 15.3% of EL teachers reported never providing instruction for Emergent Bilinguals or only provides instruction once per week (compared to 23% across the three states), with 2.1% of Minnesota EL teachers never providing instruction.

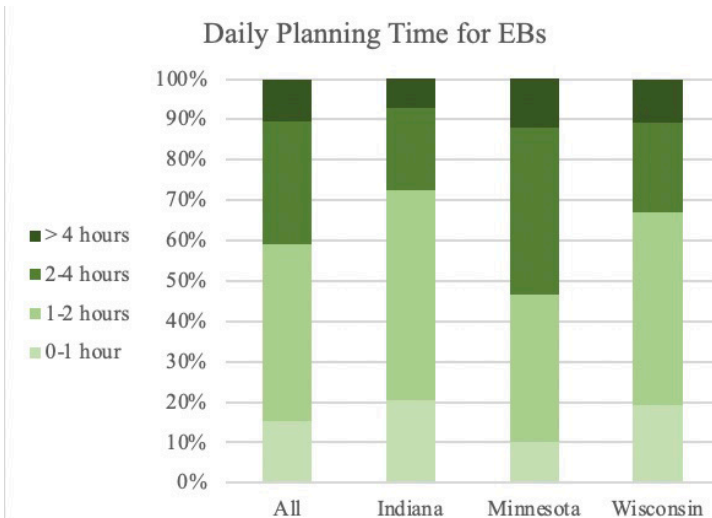
EL teachers reported spending as much, if not more, of their daily time in planning for instruction and behind the scenes preparation (Figure 7).

**Figure 7**

*Time Spent on Instruction and Time Spent Planning and Preparing Instruction*



**Figure 7 (cont.)**



Here, we highlight what teachers reported as daily time spent on planning and preparation, as compared to time spent on instruction. Ten point four percent (10.4%) of EL teachers identified spending more than four

hours every day on planning and preparation. Almost half (41%) of EL teachers reported spending between two to more than four hours on planning and preparation every day. Recalling that 45% of teachers reported providing instruction only one to three days per week (see Figure 7), teachers reported spending significantly more time in preparing instructional materials and supports than engaging in instruction itself.

On days when EL teachers did provide instruction with Emergent Bilinguals (Figure 8), 31.9% of EL teachers reported the total amount of this instructional time across all of their students in a day was less than one hour, with 35.1% reporting they spent between one to two hours of time on instruction, 17.3% spending two to three hours of time on instruction, 7.4% spending between three and four hours of time on instruction, and 8.4% spending more than four hours of time on instruction. The survey question did not disaggregate for direct instruction and instructional planning. Regardless of time that EL teachers were spending on attempting to provide instruction, though, only 7.9% reported that all of their Emergent Bilinguals were participating in instruction when it was happening, and most notably, in Indiana, only 2.7% reported all of their EL learners participated in instruction when it did occur.

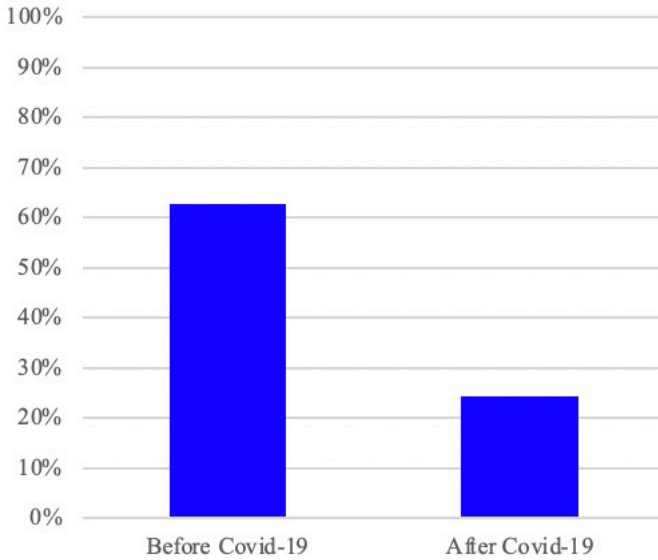
### ***What kinds of instruction were EL teachers able to provide?***

EL teachers reported striking shifts in the type of instruction they were able to provide Emergent Bilinguals and, thus, EL students' access to education regardless of the language barriers in place due to an English-dominant or English-only school environment. Pre-ERTL, 62.7% of EL teachers reported that they were able to partner with content area teachers to provide co-taught content-based language and literacy instruction. During ERTL, the number of EL teachers who were able to provide this long-standing, research-based best practice (e.g., Brinton, Snow, & Wesche, 1989; Wesche, 1993) for Emergent Bilinguals academic success decreased 38.4 percentage points to only 24.3% reporting they were able to provide co-teaching content-based language and literacy instruction (Figure 8).

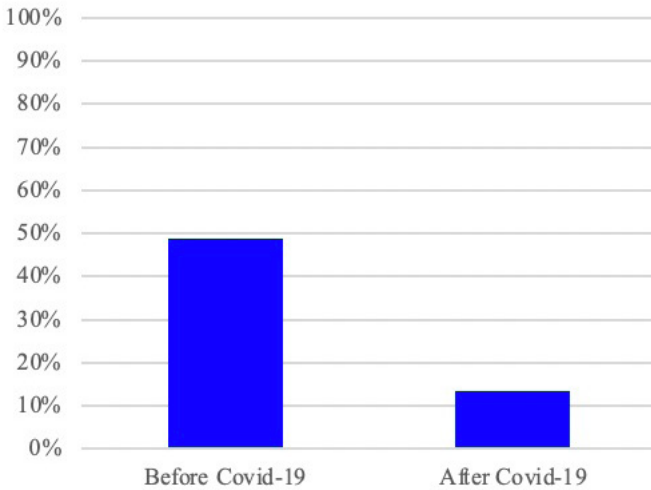
**Figure 8**

*Reported Before and During ERTL Language/Content Teacher Co-teaching*

Indiana, Minnesota, and Wisconsin combined



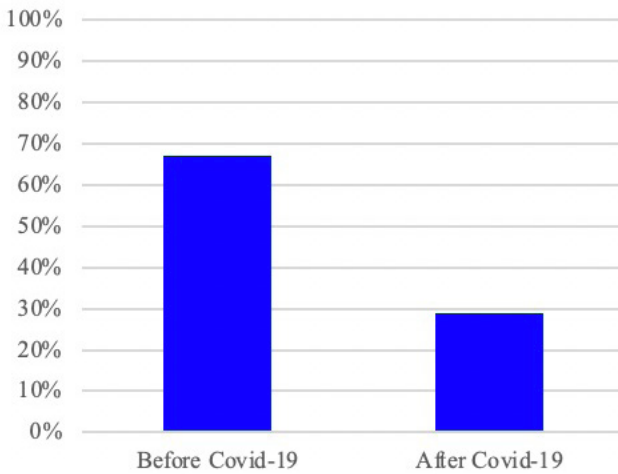
Indiana



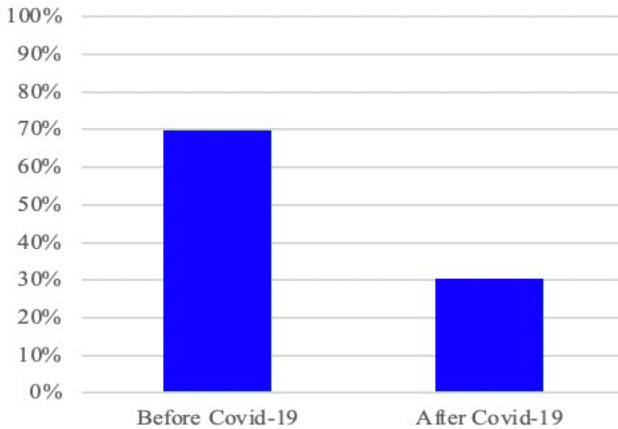


**Figure 8 (cont.)**

Minnesota



Wisconsin



Co-teaching was a highly reported practice prior to ERTL, with 48.7% of Indiana teachers, 67.2% of Minnesota teachers, and 69.9% of Wisconsin teachers reporting they were able to provide co-taught content-based language and literacy instruction. During ERTL, EL teachers able to continue co-taught, content-based language and literacy instruction decreased amongst Indiana teachers by 35.1 percentage points, amongst Minnesota teachers by 38.4 percentage points, and amongst Wisconsin teachers by 39.4 percentage points.

In the instruction that EL teachers reported they were able to of-

fer within the severely restricted instructional environment of ERTL, they identified a range of instructional goals they attempted to maintain (Figure 10). These goals included: supporting students in understanding content created by general education/content area colleagues who had Emergent Bilinguals in their classes (i.e. “general education”); developing English literacy and biliteracy (i.e. “develop English”); academic test preparation (i.e. “academic test prep”); explicit language development, including holistic, academic talk and discussion, language specific to content areas, reading and writing across content areas (i.e. “language development), and sustaining bilingualism and biliteracy in languages other than English (i.e. “bilingualism”). Respondents were able to select all goals that applied to their instructional efforts.

**Figure 9**

*Instructional Goals of EL Teachers During ERTL*

Indiana, Minnesota, and Wisconsin combined

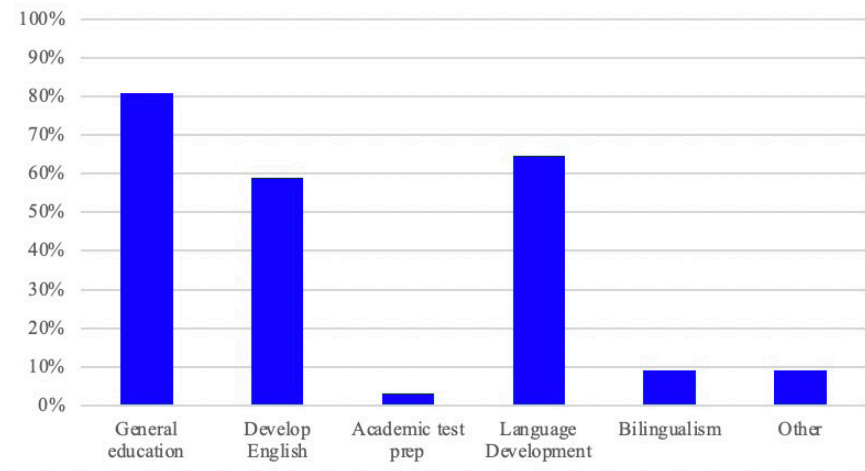
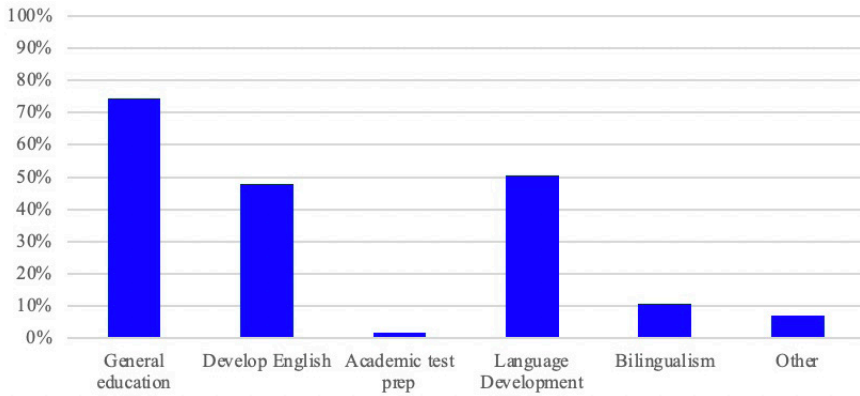
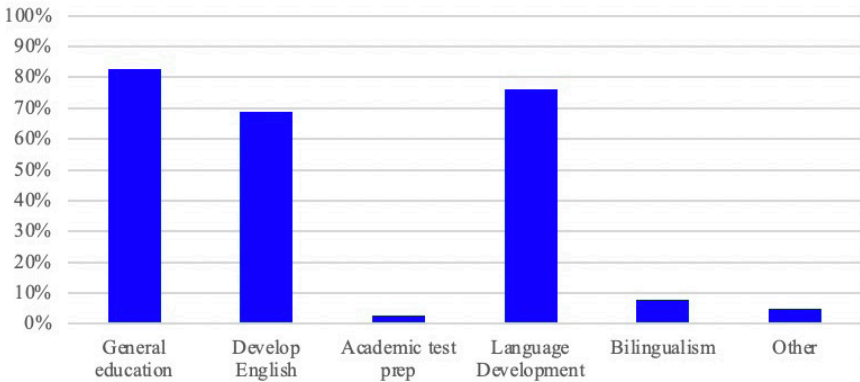


Figure 9 (cont.)

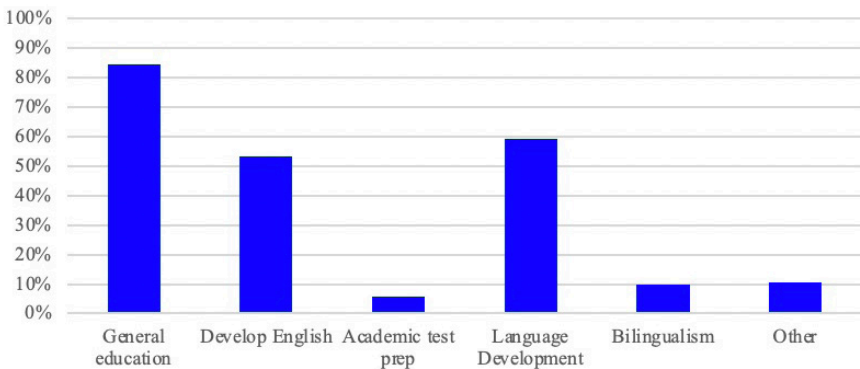
Indiana



Minnesota



Wisconsin



Supporting students in understanding content created by general education/content area colleagues was the primary instructional goal reported across all three states, with 80.7% of teachers identifying this goal. The absence of explicit language and literacy instruction opposes research-based approaches to support Emergent Bilinguals' academic success and English language development (Goldenberg, 2008). This was followed by "developing English" (21.7 points lower), content-area "language development" (16 points lower), "academic test prep" (77.5 points lower), "bilingual maintenance" (71.6 points lower), and focusing on other instructional areas (71.6 points lower).

Maintenance of bilingualism and development of biliteracy are research-based approaches to support Emergent Bilinguals' academic success and English language development (Genesee & Lindholm-Leary, 2012; Goldenberg, 2008). All states had sizable distinctions between EL teachers' supporting general education content in non-language specific ways and providing bilingual/biliteracy instruction. Indiana EL teachers reported supporting bilingual/biliteracy maintenance 67.2 percentage points lower than supporting general education colleague's content in non-language specific ways. Wisconsin teachers reported this at 73.8 percentage points lower, and Minnesota teachers reported this with 77.7 percentage points lower.

State level variances showed that EL teachers in different states spent more or less time - though still markedly less than general education colleague support - across the two remaining research-based approaches to Emergent Bilingual academic access and success: content-based language and literacy development (e.g., Brinton, Snow, & Wesche, 1989; Wesche, 1993) and explicit English language development. Indiana and Minnesota EL teachers reported providing much less content-based language and literacy instruction than the tri-state total, with Indiana teachers reporting this at 23.9 percentage points lower and Wisconsin teachers reporting this at 25.3 percentage points lower (compared to the tri-state total of 16 points lower than general education colleague support). Minnesota teachers reported providing content-based language and literacy instruction 6.3 percentage points lower than supporting general education colleagues - far more than Wisconsin and Indiana. Minnesota teachers also reported providing more explicit English language and literacy instruction, though they still reported this 13.7 percentage points lower than general education colleague support. The tri-state total distinction between general education support and explicit English language instruction was 21.7 percentage points lower. Indiana EL teachers' reported this at 26.5 percentage points lower, and Wisconsin EL teachers reported this far less commonly at 31.1 percentage points lower.

## **Implications for Schools/Districts**

Findings demonstrate that, in large part, EL teachers were not providing (or able to provide) language, literacy, and content-based language instruction, placing schools and districts in direct violation with federal law (Equal Educational Opportunities Act and Office of Civil Rights Title VI Policy on Language Minority Students) and accompanying state laws. Specifically, the 1981 Supreme Court ruling on *Castañeda vs. Pickard* requires adequate ESL programming (as a form of bilingual/bicultural education and educational access for language minoritized students, as established by *Lau vs. Nichols*, 1974). Program adequacy is determined across three dimensions: (1) that it is based on expert-recognized sound educational theory; (2) that programming, practices, resources, and personnel are sufficient to effectively implement this expert-recognized-as-sound educational theory; and (3) that the school district evaluates its programming and makes adjustments as needed to ensure that barriers that limit access to education for Emergent Bilinguals are removed so they have full access to educational offerings.

All states had sizable distinctions between EL teachers' supporting general education content in non-language specific ways and providing bilingual/biliteracy instruction, fundamental to sustainable multilingual English language and literacy development that is evidence-based theory to support academic access and success amongst Emergent Bilinguals. States where there were sizable differences in relationship to explicit instruction that is research-based as supporting Emergent Bilinguals in accessing academic content and developing language and literacy skills necessary to navigate barriers to equal opportunities for education in an English-dominant school context.

In place of providing effective language and literacy instruction, as well as instruction that supports accessing content provided primarily in (disciplinary specific) English, EL teachers served as school-family translators and interpreters, technology support, advocates for myriad needs of EL learners, and providers of myriad services needed to alleviate pre-existing economic stressors that have been exacerbated by the pandemic. Because of the proximity to when these stay at home orders and school closures occurred, EL teachers' rapid identification of particular challenges highlights that access to these necessary services was already precarious, tenuous, or non-existent amongst Emergent Bilinguals and their families. This range of services, while non-instructional, are also necessary for accessing and participating in school, particularly in a remote or virtual environment.

## **Conclusion**

EL teachers in Indiana, Minnesota, and Wisconsin reflect states

with similar (im)migration community histories and growth, and where social and school infrastructures for (im)migrant and refugee families are under-developed (Hilburn, 2014). Findings have significance for (1) clearer understanding of the challenges of remote teaching and learning in relationship to Emergent Bilingual students' access to education provided by public schools; (2) the need for schools and districts to evaluate programming, resourcing, and personnel in order to rectify the barriers Emergent Bilinguals are required to navigate to access education, which are both made more visible and created by contexts that result in (emergency) remote teaching and learning; and (3) preparation of remote teaching infrastructures that may become a future reality for our Emergent Bilingual students, families, and teachers, including the roles that social workers, guidance counselors, and other support staff take on during ERTL.

If schools and districts are to remain in compliance with federal and state laws, these findings point to key measures that are needed, regardless of state or district type. Our findings demonstrate that schools and districts need to evaluate their programming in relationship to Emergent Bilinguals, with specific attention to the realities made apparent through both early-COVID-19 ERTL and ongoing remote teaching and learning that continues into the 2020-21 school year. Specifically, program evaluation and subsequent changes must span the range of instructional and service areas that directly shape and impact Emergent Bilinguals ability to access content and instruction. Drawing from the positive relationships that Emergent Bilingual teachers have fostered with their Emergent Bilingual families can illuminate how such connections can be broadened across multiple players in the school and community.

Example need for programming change - language-conscious technology support: EL teachers reported serving as technology support (in place of providing language, literacy, and content-based language instruction). This shows a need to hire bilingual service technology support personnel who are able to communicate in languages spoken amongst families of emergent bilingual students. Similarly, it highlights the need to develop programming infrastructure that creates pre-existing materials and access to shared services that facilitate the school's ability to serve myriad potential technology needs, gather immediate information from families about specific needs and for troubleshooting technology needs as they arise, and to create both information sharing resources and materials, as well as plans for rapid development, in languages other than English.

Example need for programming change - colleague support overwhelming student support: In the case of EL teachers primarily serving as assistants to general education and content-area colleagues without providing explicit language and literacy instruction, this points to a need for increased training and support of general education and content area teachers in providing language and literacy instruction across content areas, with an understanding of sustainable multilingual English language

development. We suggest that Minnesota EL teachers reporting they were able to provide more language and literacy instruction than was reported by EL teachers in Wisconsin or Indiana is directly related to the fact that Minnesota requires content area and general education teachers to have explicit preparation and ongoing professional development in language and literacy instruction across content areas. In working with content area and general education colleagues who already have been skilled in supporting language and literacy development of Emergent Bilinguals, EL teachers are able to direct more of their attention towards their students, and less so in supporting other teachers.

Example need for programming change - existence of robust bilingual/biliteracy support: In the event of ERTL, we recognize that instructional services shift, transform, and are likely to become restricted to those that are considered most central and essential to the education a school is able to provide. The extreme disparity between support of general education colleagues and provision of bilingual and biliteracy supports amongst EL teachers highlights a pre-existing void of sustainable multilingual approaches to English language development programming. We recognize that not every school is equipped for comprehensive dual or bilingual language education. However, bilingual and biliteracy instruction is not relegated to only dual language programming. If these sustainable bilingual and biliteracy approaches to English language development were fully integrated in existing EL teacher instruction and content-area teacher understandings of best practice teaching, then a sudden shift to ERTL would see bilingual and biliteracy development continue to be available through school-based mechanisms facilitating academic success of Emergent Bilinguals.

Lastly, ERTL and current virtual teaching is not just a problem to be solved at the site of school. Collaboration and communication is needed across multiple systems and stakeholders to address systemic infrastructures that foreclose on the inequities experienced by EL educators and their Emergent Bilingual students and families. Schools are not the panacea for such solutions and need to include internet service providers, public institutions, such as libraries and local universities, housing, and health care. The virtual and distance-learning environments that were put in place as emergency responses in spring 2020 are increasingly likely for the 2020-2021 academic year, as calls for distance learning and hybrid teaching were rolled out in states and districts looking toward Fall 2020 opening weeks, and reports of likely vaccination availability stretch further into the months of 2021. Thus, lessons learned from ERTL-to-date must inform ongoing Emergent Bilingual education realities, and can inform necessary changes to ensure Emergent Bilingual access to education more broadly.



## References

- Ajayi, L. (2011). How ESL teachers' sociocultural identities mediate their teacher role identities in a diverse urban school setting. *The Urban Review*, 43(5), 654-680.
- Amanti, C. (2019). The (invisible) work of dual language bilingual education teachers. *Bilingual Research Journal*, 42(4), 455-470.
- Bozkurt, A., & Sharma, R. C. (2020). Emergency remote teaching in a time of global crisis due to CoronaVirus pandemic. *Asian Journal of Distance Education*, 15(1).
- Brinton, D., Snow, M., & Wesche, M. (1989). *Content-based second language instruction*. Harper & Row.
- Davies, L. & Bentrovato, D. (2011). Understanding education's role in fragility: Synthesis of four situational analyses of education and fragility in Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cambodia, Liberia. *UNESCO*. Retrieved from: <http://education4resilience.iiep.unesco.org/en/node/957>.
- Farrell, T. S. (2011). Exploring the professional role identities of experienced ESL teachers through reflective practice. *System*, 39(1), 54-62.
- Farrell, T. S. (2012). Exploring the professional role identity of novice ESL teachers through reflective practice. *The European Journal of Applied Linguistics and TEFL*, 1(1), 5-19.
- Flores, G. M. (2011). Racialized tokens: Latina teachers negotiating, surviving, and thriving in a white woman's profession. *Qualitative Sociology*, 34(2), 313-335.
- Genesee, F., & Lindholm-Leary, K. (2012). The education of English language learners. In K. Harris, S. Graham, & T. Urdan (Eds), *APA Handbook of Educational Psychology*. Washington DC: APA Books. pp. 499-526
- Goldenberg, C. (2008). Teaching English language learners: What the research does - and does not - say. *American Educator*, 32, 8-23, 42-44.
- Harvey, L., & Teemant, A. (2012). Who does what and why?: ESL administrators' perspectives on the roles of ESL specialists and mainstream teachers. *INTESOL Journal*, 9(1), 35-50.
- Hilburn, J. (2014). Challenges facing immigrant students beyond the linguistic domain in a new gateway state. *The Urban Review*, 46(4), 654-680.
- Hodges, C.B., Moore, S., Lockee, B.B., Trust, T., & Bond, M.A. (2020, March 27). The difference between emergency remote teaching and online learning. *EduCause Review*. Retrieved March 27, 2020: <https://er.educause.edu/articles/2020/3/the-difference-between-emergency-remote-teaching-and-online-learning>
- Kanno, Y., & Norton, B. (2003). Imagined communities and educational possibilities: Introduction. *Journal of Language Identity and Education*, 2(4), 241-249.

- Milman, N.B. (2020, March 25). Pandemic pedagogy. *Phi Delta Kappan*. Retrieved March 25, 2020: <https://kappanonline.org/pandemic-pedagogy-covid-19-online-milman/>
- Morita-Mullaney, T. (2019). At the intersection of bilingual specialty and leadership: A collective case study of district leadership for emergent bilinguals. *Bilingual Research Journal*, 40(1), 31-53.
- Morita-Mullaney, T., & Stallings, L. (2018). Serving Indiana's Emergent Bilingual Immigrant (EBI) youth: A collective case study of EBI teacher educators. *The Teacher Educator*, 53(3), 293-312.
- Morita-Mullaney, T., Stallings, L., Greene, M., Cushing-Leubner, J., & Stone, K. (2019). EL teacher preparation for immigrant youth: Scaffolding discomfort. Symposium presented at TESOL International, Atlanta, GA.
- Nieto, S. (2018). *Language, culture, and teaching: Critical perspectives* (3rd ed). Routledge.
- Rauscher, L., & Wilson, B. D. (2017). Super heroes and lucky duckies: Racialized stressors among teachers. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, 23(2), 220.
- Wesche, M. B. (1993). Discipline-based approaches to language study: Research issues and outcomes. In F. Ryan (Ed.), *Language and content: Discipline-and content-based approaches to language study* (pp. 57-82). D.C. Heath and Company.
- Zehler, A. M., Miyaoka, A., Chaney, B., Orellana, V., Vahey, P., Gibney, D. T., Yee, K., & Yilmazel-Sahin, Y. (2019). Supporting English learners through technology: What districts and teachers say about digital learning resources for English learners. Volume 1: Final Report. *U.S. Department of Education Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development Policy and Program Studies Service*. Retrieved from <https://www2.ed.gov/rschstat/eval/title-iii/180414.pdf>

**Jenna Cushing-Leubner is an assistant professor at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater.**

**Trish Morita-Mullaney is an assistant professor at Purdue University in West Lafayette, Indiana.**

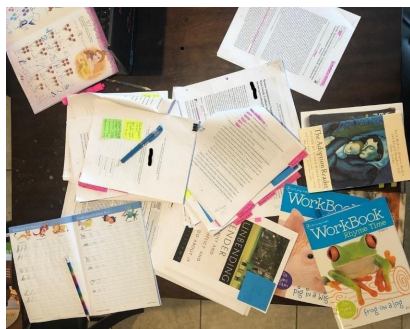
**Michelle C. S. Greene is a visiting clinical assistant professor at Indiana University-Purdue University at Indianapolis.**

**Amy Stolpestad is the project director of English Learners in the Mainstream (ELM) at Hamline University in St Paul, Minnesota.**

**Michelle Benegas is an assistant professor at Hamline University in St Paul, Minnesota.**

## MOTHER SCHOOL LEADERS NEGOTIATE ‘BLURRED LINES’ BETWEEN WORK AND HOME DURING COVID-19

*The COVID-19 pandemic that began in late 2019 but grew into a national crisis during the first three months of 2020 provides a unique context for researching how educational leaders respond to precarity. For leaders who are also mothers, a group that scholars commonly call mother/leaders (Grzelakowski, 2005), the intersections of personal and professional identities create specific constraints relative to their positioning. This study explores the experiences of ten K-12 school mother/leaders (e.g. principals, assistant principals, and curriculum leaders).*



### Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic that began in late 2019 but grew into a national crisis during the first three months of 2020 provides a unique context for researching how educational leaders respond to precarity. For leaders who are also mothers, a group that scholars commonly call mother/leaders (Grzelakowski, 2005), the intersections of personal and professional identities create specific constraints relative to their positioning. This study explores the experiences of ten K-12 school mother/leaders (e.g. principals, assistant principals, and curriculum leaders) during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. In the wake of the seismic shift in our day-to-day embodied realities wrought by COVID-19, mother/leaders face a range of challenges, including increased workloads and “blurred boundaries” between work and home. As the photograph above represents (Figure 1)—with its overlapping leadership readings and children’s workbooks—for many women, home spaces have dissolved into workspaces and vice versa. Although a long history of research on working mothers indicates the diverse conflicts and pressures they navigate (e.g. Castaneda & Isgro, 2013; Collins, 2019; Hochschild, 2012), and female school lead-

ers negotiate particular issues unique to their roles (Loder, 2005; Lumby, 2015), pandemic conditions have profoundly amplified and altered these navigations. Moreover, conditions have also shifted mother/leaders' sense of leadership authority, embodied realities, workspaces, roles, daily tasks, and time boundaries in ways that require adjustments at work as well. Such shifts invite new theorizing and visions of school leadership and the structural supports that might enable actualizing such visions. As they re-define essential and nonessential tasks during crises, mother/leaders experience anew the routine inequities that prevail in times of normalcy. Pandemic conditions produce and require new ways to mother and lead. As mothering and schooling practices are re-imagined, so too, is leadership.

In the sections that follow, we situate our study in scholarship on mother/leaders and the contextual forces and cultural norms that shape motherhood. We detail our methodology, findings, and conclude with significance. Like Lumby (2015) found in her study of principals, we encountered agential leaders deploying varied strategies in their leadership roles and refusing a stance of victimization. Although all were wrestling with an array of pressures, their narratives suggest they were taking charge of their environments as best they could in these conditions.

### **Mothers in School Leadership**

Scholarship is replete with evidence about cultural norms shaping motherhood and the lived experiences of working mothers (Collins, 2019). Despite high numbers of working women and numerous gains in workplaces, processes within homes have remained mostly static. As sociologist Arlie Hochschild (2012) notes in her classic research on *The Second Shift*, "The influx of women into the [formal] economy has not been accompanied by the cultural understanding of marriage and work that would make this transition smooth" (p. 12). The conditions shaping the second shift include cultural norms and ideologies to which mothers themselves often adhere, whether intentionally or unconsciously, contributing to their own pressures.

Additionally, research on pre-COVID public school environments points to the turbulent, uncertain, and risky nature of leading in an era of rapid change (Burke et al., 2012; Grimmett et al., 2008; Hameiri, et al., 2014; Reed & Blaine, 2015). In their study of leadership responses to uncertainty and risk in public schools, Hameiri et al. (2014) found that these forces "are relevant and significant characteristics of public-school environment [sic]" (p. 48). Leaders in these challenging school contexts, then, have an increased need for resilient leadership (Reed & Blaine, 2015), transformational skills, soft power bases (Hameiri et al., 2014), and high levels of technical and adaptive expertise (Burke et al., 2012; Grimmett et al., 2008). Resilient leadership involves the ability to encounter adversity and not only survive, but thrive (Reed & Blaine, 2015). According to

Hamieri et al. (2014), transformational leaders inspire others by promoting a shared vision for change, embracing rather than avoiding risk. Using soft power bases, such as persuasion, collaboration, and charisma instead of coercion and punishment, transformational leaders empower followers in times of uncertainty (Hameiri et al., 2014). “Core aspects of transformational leadership such as intellectual stimulation, inspirational motivation, and individualized consideration are highly significant when organizations experience crisis” (Hameiri et al., 2014, p. 53). The required leadership skills needed in profoundly risky situations, such as the pandemic, are correspondingly more intense.

For mother/leaders in education, scholarship has found three significant factors that influence how mothers experience the turbulence of school leadership and negotiate the dual roles of mothering and leadership. 1) The staunch patriarchal norms of educational institutions create obstacles for mothers in leadership careers. 2) As women negotiate gender ideologies within these systems, they experience both agency and constraint in relation to work-home balance. 3) Some mother/leader border crossers (Clark, 2000; Jordan, 2012) successfully navigate their challenges by integrating their identities and establishing clear boundaries regarding both roles. We outline each of these themes below.

### **Patriarchal Norms**

Although the number of women school leaders has grown substantially in recent decades, entrenched perceptions of leadership as a predominantly male and masculine realm continue to limit opportunities for women within educational leadership in varied contexts (Kruger et al., 2005; Lumby, 2015). Despite this dominant masculine ideology, studies of gender in educational leadership indicate that women use transformational leadership practices more often than men (Choge, 2015; Hallinger et al., 2016; Kruger et al., 2005; Lumby, 2015; Lumby & Azaola, 2014). Additionally, a recent study of resilience in educational leadership concludes, “...women are more resilient leaders and possess higher levels of [Leader Resilience Profile] skills than men (Reed & Blaine, 2015, p. 467). These skills include optimism, support, values, adaptability, perseverance, and courageous decision making (Reed & Blaine, 2015). Lumby and Azaola (2014) articulate the conundrum gender stereotypes create for mothers in school leadership. “Women taking up a school principal role may [...] face persistent and prescriptive stereotypes which mean, whether competent or not, nurturing or not, they will be transgressing one prescription or another, as woman or leader” (p. 33).

### **Agency and Constraint**

Another nuance of the mother/school leader scholarship indicates

mother/leaders experience both agency and constraint in relation to work-life balance as they negotiate gender ideologies—institutional as well as personal. Research is clear that school leaders and academic mothers, like other working mothers, retain primary responsibility for child-rearing and domestic work (Baker, 2016; Bradbury & Gunter, 2006; Brown & Wynn, 2004; Clark, 2017; Jordan, 2012; Litmanovitz, 2010; Loder, 2005; Lumby, 2015; Lumby & Azaola, 2014). In addition, school leaders encounter unique professional demands. Mirroring the ideology of intensive mothering (Hays, 1996), which requires ‘good mothers’ to cater to needs of the child no matter the cost, Baker (2016) uses the term intensive leadership to describe the role of the school principal. Intensive leadership “advises leaders to expend a tremendous amount of time, energy, and money leading their schools” (p. 140). Unrealistic demands of both home and professional work create dilemmas for mother/leaders as they experience feelings of guilt and inadequacy while seeking the elusive balance between sometimes competing roles (Baker, 2016; Bradbury & Gunter, 2006; Choge, 2015; Jordan, 2012; Loder, 2005; Lumby, 2015; Lumby & Azaola, 2014).

Bradbury and Gunter (2006) found at times, mother/leaders in English primary schools accept the socio-cultural constraints and imbalance that accompany a demanding career as well as their complicity and guilt for allowing the imbalance to usurp family commitments. At other times, mother/leaders demonstrate agency, leveraging their gendered positions to challenge dominant social narratives of mother/leaders (Bradbury & Gunter, 2006). The ongoing, cyclical nature of mother/leaders’ negotiations and identity constructions indicate the challenges they encounter in transgressing dominant cultural ideals—and their own encultured gender ideologies—related to mothering and leadership. The social context in which women navigate these complexities, such as mothering during “precarious times” (Dolman et al., 2018), may be salient for understanding the contours of these navigations.

### **Border-Crossers**

A third theme in scholarship indicates that some successfully navigate the challenges of mothering and leading by integrating their identities and establishing acceptable boundaries. For example, in their studies of female principals in Kenya, Lumby and Azaola (2014) and Choge (2015) found that despite an oppressive male hegemony in school leadership, female principals integrated their mothering and leadership identities. Similarly, Bradbury and Gunter (2006) found headteachers in English primary schools “merge” (p. 496) their mother and leader identities, in some cases, allowing them to establish themselves professionally as both leaders and mothers to win the confidence of stakeholders. Regardless of the ongoing negotiations, mother/leaders in this study felt confident in their dual roles



and found the interactions of these roles beneficial to them as mothers and headteachers. As Bradbury and Gunter (2006) note,

The identities of mother and headteacher are not combined or integrated but coexist in a flexible state, with one sometimes growing and encroaching on the territory of the other, at other times vice versa, and at yet other times overlapping, underpinning, or supporting each other, always balanced on their profile as women (pp. 498-499).

Some mother/leaders, including several participants in our current study, articulate such fluidity and interaction among roles rather than using “balance” to describe their navigations. Similarly, Jordan (2012) describes mother leaders as border crossers who experience significant permeability between the domains of motherhood and school leadership, language we adopt here. She found “complementary factors as well as competing factors when one is a headteacher and a mother, revealing the interplay between agency and structure as women negotiate both roles” (p.17).

Available research suggests the most successful mother/leaders had a firm sense of personal agency, strong boundaries, and beliefs that integrating work and home life provided more satisfaction than separating them (Baker, 2016; Jordan, 2012). These studies demonstrate the interplay between career and family life that influence and complicate identity construction for women in both roles.

Furthermore, some research on gender and leader resilience indicates that women possess higher leadership resilience than men. The resilient leader “demonstrates the ability to recover, learn from, and developmentally mature when confronted by chronic or crisis adversity” (Reed & Blaine, 2015, p. 460). Proficiency in thinking skills, capacity-building skills, and action skills set the resilient leader apart from the reactionary leader (Reed & Blaine, 2015). However, in times of extreme precarity, uncertainty, and risk, leaders must employ “a slightly different set of professional tools to better enable efficient coping” which could include swift reactions to an ever-changing landscape (Hameiri et al., 2014).

## **Methodology**

In the best of times, mother/leaders navigate demanding expectations, their own gender ideologies, and embodied experiences. With the pressure to develop new systems of instruction to support children, teachers, and parents—and be good caregivers for their own children—feelings of guilt and inadequacy are common among mother/leaders even in non-pandemic times (Baker, 2016; Jordan, 2012; O’Reilly, 2016). In the intensely uncertain and risky COVID-19 conditions, such feelings and navigations might be amplified. As Kitchener (2020) suggests of the COVID-19 context, “It’s an impossible situation for caregivers who...now work from home. There is not enough time to do everything” (p. 5).



As part of a larger, ongoing autoethnographic investigation (Jones, Adams, & Ellis, 2013) of mother/leadership (Crosslin, in process), we conducted a qualitative study using photo-elicitation and semi-structured interviews with ten mother/leaders. The interviews were conducted during late summer and early fall (2020) to understand how women navigate their roles during these times of peril. We sought to understand:

- 1) Mother/leaders' experiences;
- 2) How women were navigating their border crossings—what one participant calls “blurred lines” during the pandemic; and
- 3) What lessons for leadership these navigations reveal.

In our autoethnographic design, the researcher first serves as the “site and subject of these [embodied and] discursive struggles” to provide a unique way of exploring the self within a given cultural context (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005, p. 38). The researchers' analysis then becomes a springboard to research “with” rather than “on” (Lather & Smithies, 1997) other leaders to advance broader insights into women's leadership strategies and theorize leadership itself—the focus of the current essay on mothering and leading in a pandemic.

## Procedures

The first author's experiences as a mother/leader propelled this study. After collaborating on study design, piloting questions, and obtaining IRB approval, both authors reached out to their networks for contacts who fit study criteria: being a full time leader in a K-12 school and being a mother/care-giver of children. Women from several states in the south-central United States responded, with others in the queue; we focus on ten participants to highlight some commonalities we found in their experiences.

## Methods

We used two primary methods. First, we conducted dialogic, semi-structured interviews of between one and two hours with each participant, asking open-ended questions related to their unique challenges, self-care, and strategies. We conducted these primarily through video conferencing applications, recording with permission. Second, we used photo elicitation, a method in which we invited participants to take photographs to represent their lives (see Figures 2 and 4). We also incorporated our own (Figures 1, 3, and 5). When situated alongside interview data, photo-elicitation adds a unique dimension to the process of crystallizing knowledge (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005) and understanding and representing experience (Harper, 2002), augmenting and evoking memories, emotions, stories, or reactions that can facilitate understanding and enhance validity.

As Richardson & St. Pierre (2005) explain, the metaphor of a crystal conveys multidimensional perspectives. While not everyone elected to take photographs, some offered powerful glimpses of their mother/leader roles. A third, supplemental method was observing women during interviewing. Although observations were brief and fixed in comparison to traditional fieldwork that occur in varied spaces over time, we found some of these organic opportunities to observe a working woman in her home/school environment enhanced our insights into her navigations.

## **Analysis**

Following new directions in embodied qualitative methods (e.g. Ellingson, 2017), we relied on aural, sensory, verbal, and written data processing. Although conventional methods rely on transcribing as a necessary translation method for analysis, methodologists have noted that this process extracts and flattens a dynamic exchange to words on the page (Kvale, 1990). Using an inductive analytic stance, we thus listened to, watched, and read data multiple times, wrote jottings and memos, sorted and re-sorted data units into emerging themes, and processed collaboratively. We also created visuals that reflected emerging metaphors in the data, such as waves filled with sharks and circles of swirling colors to capture the collapse of boundaries in home/work life. We returned to the themes with deductive analysis to answer the research questions.

## **Participants**

Ten mother/leaders participated, representing diverse school contexts in the mid-Southwestern United States. Like the first author, all are full time workers, with many years of experience in schools. Three identified as women of color (e.g. BIPOC, Black, Indigenous or People of color); two did not identify; and five were White. The mothers each cared for between one and four children, ranging in age from toddlers to young adulthood, and one was 8.5 months pregnant at the time of interviewing (Table 1). Kinship support inside and outside the home varied; one relied selectively on an ex-husband or extended networks, while others had spouses working from home, providing financial or some domestic support. Several have health conditions; several had children with special needs.

**Table 1***Study Participants*

Pseudonym	Years in education	School setting	Size of school	Ages of dependents
Angie	20+	High school	2500+	Teens
Debbie	10+	Elementary	700+	6 Years
Diana	10+	Elementary	350+	8 & 11 Years
Gabby	15+	Elementary	700+	8 & 12 Years
Grace	10+	Elementary	800	6 & 9 Years
Julie	20+	High school	1500+	Teen & college
Kathy	15+	Elementary	300	7 Years to teens
Rachel	10+	Early childhood	700+	6 months & 1 year
Sarah	15+	Elementary	700+	4 Years
Amy	12+	Elementary	500+	4 Years to teens

**Findings**

The analysis surfaced varied themes, three of which we focus on here: (1) triage leadership and mothering; (2) reframing, adjusting, and letting go; (3) leadership as care work. Each of these themes speak directly to the second research question, “How did mother/leaders navigate their border crossing?” An overview of each theme and related analysis follows.

**1) Triage Leadership**

The term triage leadership conveys a sense of leading within uncertainty and constantly shifting priorities and giving the onlway as waves of demands ebb and flow. Nearly two decades ago, policy researchers used “triage” (Bascia, 2003) to describe narrow and incomplete public education reform systems that lack a big picture understanding of the challenges of complex and changing education contexts (Bascia, 2003; Grimmert et al., 2008). The intensity of the COVID-19 pandemic evokes similar sentiments as unsettled conditions intrude on participants’ authority as leaders at home and work, surfacing the question: what does “leading” look like in constantly shifting global, national, and school terrain? Sarah’s photograph (Figure 2) of her toddler son’s precarious stacking project, constructed while she was on a videoconference, captures visually the essence of triage leadership. One participant remarked, “I don’t know how to do this job.” Similarly, Amy said, “it’s a hot mess...I really put out fires, honestly.” As the pandemic began unfolding in spring 2020, it generated ambiguities about finishing the school year. However, as spring morphed

into summer and pandemic conditions persisted, “planning” for fall school openings unleashed new challenges. Familiar routines gave way to constant changes that prevented planning. As predictability undulates, responsiveness and reprioritizing in the moment are forms of leadership.

## **Figure 2**

### *Participant’s Symbolic Photograph of Precarity*



Constant change suffused the data. For example, Debbie recalls receiving an email in March 2020 inviting her and some teachers to a district instructional planning meeting.

That was the first meeting that I heard for the first time, our district had no plan. We, like, we were part of the plan. And this is a district that is so prepared, always ahead of the game, and when I was hearing these leaders ask these questions to teachers, I was like, ‘oh...oh, we really don’t know what we’re doing.’

Another principal (mid-July 2020) explained the uncertainty surrounding the plan for school starting in August.

I’m betting we’re going remote [...] but at what point do we say, “we just need to jump in and open these schools and see what happens?” [...] Are we going to wait until there’s a vaccine? Are we going to wait until all people have the vaccine? Is this a year plan? Is this a two-year plan? Are we going to wear masks and be at home for the rest of our lives? The bigger implications are kind of what freak me out.

The constant wondering ranged from existential questions about the meaning of the pandemic for children’s learning to quests for criteria that would signal concrete action items for schools.

These common questions demanded a form of leadership as triage: prioritizing, acting, shifting, making decisions quickly, and reversing course in moments when new priorities emerged. These decisions were

sometimes health related. For Rachel, having students return to the building created the responsibility of evaluating symptoms, sending students home, contact tracing, and documenting COVID. She described escorting a young girl to the clinic who said she was not feeling well:

I've trained for this. I'm ready...I have my face shield on, my gown, I take her to our quarantine room...I'm fully suited up, looking like a goober. And she comes out and she's crying. And, I was like, "Honey, what's the matter?" She's like, "I really just miss my mom." I'm like, "Oh, my!" Take it all off. [...] It was totally just a kid saying she doesn't feel good because she missed her mom. [...] That's where I feel inadequate. I don't know. Like, these kids are so little. They say they don't feel good. You take them at their word.

Some were wary as they scrutinized the landscape for signs of the virus, working to tease out the 'normal' from the 'dangerous.' Suiting up and then casting off the protective gear was triage leadership—prioritizing to meet the demand of the moment. Similarly, Kathy felt the weight of the pressures on her older teachers as they grappled with decisions about their jobs and health, paraphrasing their concerns: "You know, I'm over 60 years old and I'm still teaching because I love what I do, but if I get COVID I could die." One participant expressed fear of the virus for herself, which was directly related to underlying family health conditions and their race, given that U.S. people of color have been disproportionately affected by the virus.

In addition to grappling with health risks of the virus as non-health practitioners, participants enacted triage leadership to meet students' and teachers' immediate physical and emotional needs and to minimize the negative impact of the pandemic on student learning. They deployed food, supplies, and technology, while managing novel school operations—remote instruction, social distancing, masks, sanitizing busses, and contact tracing—all while taking necessary action without the benefit of planning ahead for long-term needs. Despite intense triage, half of participants voiced concerns that the pandemic will have long-term negative effects, anticipating a post-COVID world that would bear the reverberations of the conditions of 2020 for their roles and the children they serve.

**Figure 3**

*Author's Children 'Doing School' at Home*



**Triage Mothering**

Mother/leaders enacted some triage leadership at home as well. With the spring 2020 lockdown of schools, businesses, and entertainment, mothers found themselves with limited options for childcare. This issue was most pressing for mothers with younger children. Meanwhile, school leaders scrambled to reinvent teaching and learning. Most women with young children developed strategies—allowing more screen time, buying toys, or using the pool as a babysitter—to occupy children so they could work and parent simultaneously. While most expressed that the urgencies of triage leadership made these decisions necessary, they thought their constrained choices were not beneficial to their children. All but the two mothers responsible for older children/dependents described working with their children—sometimes in unconventional settings—on schoolwork, as Figure 3 represents.

Debbie had to shift priorities as well. Faced with her son's subpar learning environment, provided by apathetic, inattentive campus support staff during fall remote instruction, she describes how after three painful days she felt she had no other choice but to stop working from school and bring her son back home because "...the paras truly let our kids down, which is not OK." Although the decision increased her stress, she thought it was better for him. Rachel implemented survival strategies as well. Skeptical of daycare safety, because, "it was kind of scary at first," Rachel kept her newborn and young sons home during the spring and hired an in-home babysitter for busy workdays. This created challenges when her babysitter regularly cancelled or her male principal called a last minute meeting. She laughs about the triage mothering experience of hiring her six-year old neighbor to watch her two young boys while she attend-

ed an important video conference: “I come out of the office after my hour meeting, and there are goldfish everywhere. I mean, [the babysitter] is a first grader.”

Other responses evoked emotion as participants described mothering circumstances at odds with their values and preferences. Amy said, “everything is just a checklist,” and “I just feel like I’m not in the moment...that’s really, really hard.” Diana, too, found herself constantly distracted when engaged in activities with her children. Sarah lamented that her four-year-old son would miss the birth of his baby sister. “It does crush me that [my son] can’t be there...I want that for him, and he will never get it back because we won’t have another [child].” Another recalls shameful acts of maternal violence—yelling, smashing toys, and chasing her daughters with a flyswatter—which, in reflection, she attributes to the pressures of mothering and leading in spaces in which the boundaries had completely dissolved.

Gabby presented sobering evidence of triage mothering as her own as well as her daughter’s underlying health conditions prompted her family to take drastic preventative action. Within minutes of receiving the news that she was denied an accommodation to work remotely, she had no time to process; she simply submitted to the mounting wave. Falling back on kinship support, she packed her daughter’s things and sent her to live with family several hours away. Gabby’s potential exposure to the virus at school has necessitated limited in-person contact with her daughter. Currently, she is visiting only after receiving a negative COVID-19 test result, a few times per month. Crying, she expressed:

It’s been extremely difficult as a parent, also as a working parent, to come to the school and, um, be around other kids, and not get to be around my own. [...] That’s really hard. When do I get my baby back?”

Several participants negotiated feelings of regret or guilt around these difficult choices, fueling a sense of inadequacy in structural and national conditions outside of their control. Sarah explains that she would cry to her principal when she felt guilty about being impatient with her three-year-old son. “I had a lot of guilt...I just felt so guilty about the fact that maybe I sent him to his room when he was throwing a fit in the middle of my Zoom.” Mother/leaders can face serious decisions, in some cases, decisions that feel like life and death. As Gabby explained, she had her “back against the wall.” Despite amplified pressures, these mother/leaders exercised agency by taking action.

Their narratives demonstrated all components of “Leader Resilience Action Skills—perseverance, adaptability, courageous decision making, personal responsibility” (Reed & Blaine, 2016, p. 461) even as the waves continued to swell. As Diana noted, “I’m here, here, then here, then here....” During some interviews, researchers noted the frenetic en-



ergy in the pace and volume of participant voices in sharing experiences. Debbie's voice raised an octave as she described hierarchizing and re-hierarchizing her mothering and leading roles in one long, breathless comment.

The only real break I get is lunch, and I give him his plate and let him watch a little cartoon while I come back to answer emails or get on a Zoom, which stinks because now I feel like I'm struggling because I can't have my child have a crappy education, but I'm not going to have this new position that I have fought to get, die either. So, I am literally juggling super high every day and it's exhausting!

## **2) Reframing, Adjusting, and Letting Go**

How women balanced intensive mothering (Hays, 1996) and intensive leading (Baker, 2016) involved constant reframing, adjusting, and letting go, whether of previous norms and expectations about "good enough" mothering (Winnicott, 1973), optimistic and pragmatic framing, or through sheer exhausted necessity. In contrast to scholarship on mother/leaders' pre-pandemic navigation in which they established boundaries between work and home to help manage, the majority described—and some demonstrated—constant permeability in boundaries. Concerned with caring for their children during the pandemic, most mother/leaders found themselves frequently unable to negotiate leading or mothering the way they preferred. Half the participants described adjusting parenting expectations to help manage work and home concurrently. Only three described establishing clear boundaries between the work day/week and evenings/weekends.

Some strategies were relatively benign: electronics, less at-home studying, endless peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, later dinners, and more independent play. Amy, for example, allowed her youngest child to stay up later to increase family time. Others were more challenging. For most mother/leaders, the loss of time with children was a constant difficulty. One commented, "The time constraints have been hard because it's just, it's come home, read with them, help with homework, cook dinner." As Kathy noted,

[the work demands have] sucked hours and hours and hours out of my time with my kiddos...that's the hardest...Yeah dude, I miss out on picking them up...I was in hopes that this year would be a little more settled, and I would be able to leave prior to, you know, 5, 6, 7 o'clock more often. But I don't.

While motherwork remained a priority for participants, their inability to meet the demands of intensive mothering caused them to let go of certain usual mothering practices.

One key observation was the pace and fluidity in which sever-

al women carried out their roles, sometimes border crossing effortlessly multiple times in minutes. One researcher's children interrupted an interview multiple times, while, in turn, the interviewee's baby was crying. In another interview, the researcher tracked ten different almost seamless movements as the principal interviewed first walked with her video screen around her office, then variously brushed her hair on screen, checked her watch for texts about a laptop delivery to children in a quarantined house, left the room to retrieve her children from a friend, responded cheerfully several times to their needs as they joined us on screen, checked her phone for messages, and took a quick break, each time returning to the flow of the conversation as if no "interruption" had occurred. This embodied movement seemed to reflect a form of "habitus" in Bourdieu's (1986) terms. Her actions conveyed a set of deeply embodied dispositions and skills (Bourdieu, 1986) that seemed so engrained that she barely paused in her navigations between her mother/leader practices and interviewing, giving generously of her time to us in this intense period.

Pandemic conditions seemed to leave little time for sustained reflection about their circumstances. They just kept going, doing, and letting go. One participant commented, "It has really, it has really changed me.... I just want to do, I just want to work and do everything I can to the best of my ability. But I don't have a lot to give in regards to...this district." Julie said it has "been very much a 'from the hip' kind of environment," while Diana said, "it's been a blur." Figure 4 shows how one participant's laundry found a semi-permanent home in the mudroom, while another participant, referencing her messy desk, remarked, "I just don't come up here on the weekends, because I just don't care. I just don't care." Angie discussed silly policies that schools needed to ignore in crisis circumstances, such as the dress code. She asked, "Who cares about their belly buttons showing if they are in their chairs in math class?"

**Figure 4**

*Participant's Weekend Laundry*



During a remote principal meeting, one participant rolled her eyes off-screen as colleagues at more affluent schools complained about parents faking COVID symptoms to take vacations. Several principals suggested these students shouldn't be allowed to take their Chromebooks and access remote assignments, which other principals found punitive. They emphasized the necessity of prioritizing: "So what if students are on vacation? If a few kids desire to do school while they are at the beach in these extreme circumstances, why should we prevent them?" Gabby expressed, "Fear has been a big part of the conversation, as well as letting go of the things you can't control. Like, we can't control this pandemic."

### **3) Leadership as Care Work**

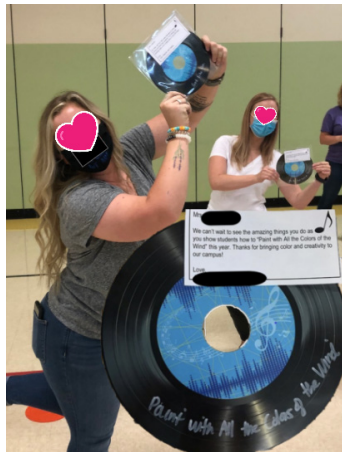
One response to this lack of control was amplifying care work (Lanoix, 2013), which emerged as fully embodied and emotional labor in the narratives. Women described prioritizing the care of others and engaging in impression management (Goffman, 1959) at work and at home. We read this care work as a form of leadership amid triage circumstances in helping others when normal routines seemed out of control. Despite their own heavy workloads, many expressed empathy for the teachers and children they served, trying to serve as resources and take on duties where they could. Kathy said, "I think my job is always stressful all the time, but my biggest stress has been my worry about teachers...I've never been a teacher during a global pandemic." She consulted teachers in making some decisions, emphasizing, "at the end of the day, my job as the principal is to support the teachers. I mean, someone has got to take care of them."

Care work took varied forms. The added time demands on teaching and leading remotely prompted one principal to question the need for staff meetings. She said, "I think that the stress level of the teachers was as bad as mine was. And so, I am going to take 30 minutes for a staff meeting? I felt guilty doing that to them." As teachers navigated new technology and their fears, they often felt overwhelmed and ill-equipped, leading to tearful, emotional responses. During these times, principals described varied efforts to support teachers. All principals described offering a listening ear to teachers. Rachel, for example, one of several leaders with a male supervisor, regularly empathized with teacher-mothers when the male principal called last-minute meetings that left them scrambling for childcare or, regarding work/home conflicts, flippantly told them to "just figure it out" as he had done when his kids were young.

...and then, I just asked him, "Well, so how did you do that?" He was like, "Actually, my wife did it, and she was late to school." And I was like, wait, so you really didn't do that? [...] I told him, "You have to stop saying that."

## Figure 5

### *Care Work: Teacher Theme Songs*



One leader shifted her preferred leadership style to meet teachers' needs. Sarah, proud of her typical collaborative leadership style, became more bureaucratic when she recognized her operations team wanted her to "just tell us what to do." Despite her own hectic schedule, she created dismissal plans, safety protocols, and lunch schedules to relieve pressure on teachers. Julie said, "I've always been a leader that strives to be positive and to find the bright side, but I find myself doing that, even more so." She regularly sent out positive messages and reminded them, "It's going to be okay. One way or another we are going to get through this." As seen in Figure 5, the first author worked with her administrative team to select individualized "theme songs" for 72 teachers to lift their spirits. Debbie, a teacher leader who transitioned out of the classroom during the pandemic, stifled her excitement to implement new plans, recognizing, "We are not there; we are in a pandemic" Gabby recalled the difficulty of asking staff to cover classes when they couldn't find substitute teachers.

Teachers were scared... there were even some tears from teachers that day that I... asked to step into these classrooms. [...] I just said, "Hey, you can do this. You know, you can do it"... kind of built that teacher up.

Several leaders wanted to show more care than circumstances permitted. Grace said,

As a leader... we struggle [in] really showing our appreciation [for our teachers]. But when I can't even sit in a room with you, or I can't give you all that you deserve, it's heartbreaking...I don't know that with COVID if it was necessarily tasks that were hard.

I think it was the people connection...because you can't connect on Zoom correctly.

Most leaders described the desire to undertake teacher and student carework, efforts to do so, and the weighty recognition. These actions only offered partial comfort.

### ***Impression Management***

Care work at times meant impression management. Goffman's (1959) classic concept captures people's labor in social interactions to shape others' impressions of them. For leaders whose sense of control and certainty were undermined by the pandemic, they often sought to be a stable force for their schools. Some described putting on a "brave face" or "game face" to prioritize teachers' feelings over their own or opening their office doors to be a steady source of support. In these cases, impression management was thus a form of care work. Amy, for example, felt 'comforted' that her empathic leadership style provided teachers needed support even though, "in my head I feel like I'm frazzled." Most leaders described upset or confused parents, crying, angry, struggling, or anxious teachers, and complex school dynamics. Several had teachers resign during the crisis, yet personnel constraints meant leaders "could not tell their side of the story."

At home, several described trying to create stability for their children. Kathy remarked that "the things I say have great power...I want my children to know that they are safe and taken care of...and any problem, no matter what, we can talk about it." Gabby describes her mothering:

I allow [my kids] to see my strengths as well as my struggles. I don't hide a lot from them because I want them to understand the joys of life, but I also want them to understand how to navigate rocky waters. And so, I am a very authentic person with them...I talk about everything with my kids, and I allow them to ask me questions, tough questions. There is really not anything that is off limits with them. [...] I refuse to give everybody else my best and give them the last of me.

### ***Negotiating Self-Care***

Notably, when asking leaders about their self-care, a number responded, "I need to exercise, but I don't," or, "I used to exercise but I am usually too exhausted; I just want to sit on the couch." One had no answer for the question. Grace summed it up powerfully when she said, "I'm terrible at self-care. And I always have been, and I think that that is the gift of being a mom and a principal." Accepting poor self-care as part of principal and mother job descriptions, the first author recalls the hectic pace of the

first day of in-person learning in September, 2020. With nothing to eat or drink the entire day except a few Slim Jims and a cup of coffee at 10 am, she was convinced that what turned out to be her COVID-19 infection was nothing more than dehydration. Debbie observed, “I can’t work out,” and “cook dinner, clean house, be a great wife, great mother, great teacher... I can do three or four, but I can’t do it all.”

Women described some efforts toward self-nourishment as a way of coping with stressors. Several mentioned spending time with family, erecting as firm-as-possible boundaries between the working week and the weekends. One texted a trusted friend daily, and another had regular manicures. Debbie recognized the value of self-care:

I have my own grounding techniques that make me feel stable... I do things that bring me joy. I know that sounds so silly, but it works for me. [...] And it makes you a better person; it makes you a better mom; it makes you a better teacher if you can have that self-care and that balance and say, “Nope, it’s my turn.”

Whether through a breathing technique, stretching, a Brené Brown book or podcast, or simply repeating a mantra, Debbie enlisted varied tools to cope with anxiety. Two shared that their faith and regular prayer strengthened them to face risk and uncertainty. Gabby, a firm believer in self-care and boundaries, remarked, “I love taking care of me. I love pampering myself. [...] So that part of it, you know, I miss that side of it. [...] I’ve just, I’ve grounded myself in prayer...and that has been able to sustain me.”

Some managed with medication or alcohol. Rachel, who gave birth early in the pandemic, proactively began anti-anxiety medicine based on a previous Post-Partum Depression Diagnosis. Instead of weaning off the medicine as she did with her oldest child, she increased her dosage during the pandemic and has maintained this as a helpful intervention during COVID. One participant took her blood pressure medicine more regularly than in pre-pandemic times. Two joked that alcohol consumption increased since the pandemic, and another, who was diagnosed in her late 40s with Attention Deficit Disorder, increased the dose of her medicine during the pandemic.

Notably, of the ten women we interviewed about their sources of support and self-care, only four mentioned regular exercise. One diligently arose most days to run and lift weights; one walked; one was dressed in workout clothes during our conversation, poised to dash to the gym the second we finished. Another managed to practice yoga a few days per week. Primarily, even as women recognized its importance, their own self-care was displaced to care for others.

## **Discussion and Implications**

The COVID-19 pandemic is a remarkable context for exploring



how mother/leaders negotiate their roles during unprecedented times. The interviews highlight the gendered practices constitutive of mother/leaders' navigations and the triage leadership practices and care work they have performed at home and in schools. In response to our inquiry questions focused on women's experiences, their navigations of border crossings, and the leadership lessons their experiences reveal, several findings and lessons emerged. At this writing, leaders are still adapting, responding, changing course as conditions unfold, with more lessons yet to come. We focus on three cumulative findings and lessons emerging from these leaders' experiences that can inform leadership practices and framing of mother/leaders' care work.

First, mother/leaders primarily expressed intense stress as well as narrated resilience in navigating their home and work lives. As individuals, they described exercising adaptability, flexibility, and perseverance (Reed & Blaine, 2015) as well as "inspirational motivation" and "individualized considerations" that are essential transformative leadership skills (Hameiri et al, 2014, p. 53). Notably, mother/leaders primarily framed their navigations and schools' responses in individualistic terms. There is little structural attention to the gendered dimensions of care work in women's narratives or examples of structural support that help foster women's resilience, self-care, and agential leadership practices. Their embodied, material isolation due to COVID-19 combined with minimal, if any, institutional awareness or support for their gendered experiences as mother/leaders, could accelerate the precarity of the pandemic for mothers. One leader, in fact, recognized that her own male leader's insistence that teachers manage their children—as his family (wife) had—obscured the gendered differences in their lives. His messaging reflects a false gendered neutrality in the effects of COVID conditions on leaders. This might be a common phenomenon in other schools and contexts. Similarly, the denial of Gabby's request to work from home to protect both her and her child meant additional machinations for an already stressed leader. Institutional framing of Gabby's situation as her responsibility to address raises important questions about the availability of policies to support mother/leaders' gendered needs. How widespread or visible are policies and flexible work arrangements to support women's needs? What other structural supports were available?

While feminist labor scholarship has long critiqued the mismatch between patriarchal norms (Kruger et al., 2005; Lumby, 2015), structural support, and women's needs as educational workers (e.g. Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2012), the pandemic has amplified the necessity of institutional policies and practices that take gendered positioning into account to advance the well-being of women leaders. Although some described support from family, friends and co-workers, participant interviews showed no evidence of substantive structural support in their work lives, so ensuring a modicum of self-care meant relying on family or carving out space

on their own. As mothering scholar Andrea O'Reilly (2020) insists the pandemic has unleashed a crisis for mothers that is primarily invisible; we must "render audible what has been silenced—the labour of mother-work under COVID-19—in order to inform, support, and empower mothers through and after this pandemic" (p. 8).

The second finding is that mother/leaders reframed their navigations of blurred boundaries as agential triage leadership in conditions that pushed and pulled them to respond to pressing, immediate, and multi-dimensional needs in the best ways they could. Participants' leadership experiences were anchors in "uncontrollable" circumstances, and they engaged in impression management as care work to support children/teachers when they could not lead/mother in conventional ways. While literature indicates that women can and do reform and integrate their understanding of themselves as mothers and leaders (Bradbury & Gunter, 2006; Jordan, 2012; Loder, 2005; Lumby, 2015; Lumby & Azaola, 2014), there has been insufficient time for the women in this study to reflect deeply on the meanings of these times for their identities. Yet, even so, they recognize changes. As Grace commented, COVID has "blurred my home lines, it has blown them out...I feel like I'm cheating on my husband with work." Instead of engaging in conceptual vision work, leaders spent their time triaging immediate needs, including attending to at-risk children, setting up home spaces (couches, tables, desks) for work, learning unfamiliar technologies, providing support to stressed teachers, frantic cleaning of buses to follow health protocols, and cumbersome contact tracing.

Our data analysis reflects women's agential movement and adaptability within waves of shifting demands consistent with the literature as necessary interventions when navigating risky, turbulent, and changing educational contexts (Burke et al., 2012; Hameiri et al., 2014; Hallinger et al., 2016). While the majority cried during the interviews (five of the women with younger children), and some described the circumstances as "really hard," the interviews all reflected mother/leaders' agential grappling with the conditions. Several were clear that good leadership mattered tremendously, and they loved their jobs, even in circumstances in which the stakes were so high. Looking ahead, as perilous COVID conditions persist, mother/leaders must "learn their way forward" (Burke et al., 2012, p. 117). Educational leadership preparation, professional development, and structures that emphasize the importance of tapping resilience (Reed & Blaine, 2015) and adaptability (Burke et al., 2012; Hameiri et al., 2014; Reed & Blaine, 2015)—skills identified in the literature as more often practiced by women than men—offers promise for creating more equitable spaces for women in educational leadership.

The third finding, echoing finding two, is that virus conditions have necessitated new forms of leadership. Leaders' narratives foreshadow potential transformations in educational practices wrought by the pandemic likely to shape the future of education that leaders have yet to process or



concretize. Just as the pandemic has forced or invited people worldwide to re-envision their daily lives—for often heartbreaking reasons—it similarly has required leaders to respond quickly and enact new practices. These forced changes unleash possibilities for reconceptualizing leadership and American public education. Some leaders have dispensed with “normal” practices (scheduled meetings, Type-A expectations, strict home rules) because they do not meet the needs of the moment. As Kathy said, “Everything we do is in response to COVID” right now.

Yet some “usual” practices continue (daily school announcements, hiring, academic planning, professional development, teacher/leader orientation, and parent/community outreach) while novel duties surface and morph (leading online, virtual collaboration, digital platforms, and constrained physical environments), often with children under foot at home. Thus, what leaders consider dispensable and necessary are shifting. As one noted, “I don’t think things will ever be the same.” Catapulted into new delivery methods, some schools may continue to implement them, while some believe remote learning will have serious long-lasting consequences for children. One shared, “I am very scared of the path we’re on...I would rather be wearing a mask every day with children in this building than... the remote idea...what scares me the most is what kind of kids are we going to get back?” In contrast, another noted the virus’ ongoing threats, with hundreds of quarantined children, family losses, and challenges in hiring substitutes who don’t want to “work in a petri dish.”

The reverberations of the pandemic have underscored the educational inequities for differently-positioned students that weigh heavily on leaders. Several were kept “up at night” worrying about children under their care. Amy said, “most of my stress comes from...not having control over decisions and not having control over our students that are in very hopeless situations... Some kids are not having their basic needs met.” Most found their own families affected by the challenges of remote learning; two mother/leaders of children with special learning needs simply could not get their children’s needs met through school resources, a distressing circumstance that highlights already challenging school inequities. This was a sobering and weighty aspect of pandemic circumstances that triage leadership could not address. As mother/leaders respond to the reverberations of COVID-19, they strategized to address student and parent needs. However, pandemic conditions underscore the enormous structural inequities that continue to shape children’s learning and the mother/leaders guiding their schools. One lesson remains clear: unless drastic corrective action at institutional and structural levels ensues, school leadership will continue to unjustly burden mothers.

## References

- Aching, M. C. & Granato, T. M. M. (2016). The good enough mother under social vulnerability conditions. *Estudo de Psicologia*, 33(1), 15-24. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0013161X04273847>
- Albrecht, L. (2020, August 22). *COVID-19 forced working mothers to take time off work - rather than fathers*. <https://www.marketwatch.com/story/child-care-duties-forced-working-moms-to-take-time-off-work-at-the-beginning-of-the-pandemic-while-dads-werent-affected-2020-08-20>.
- Baker, S. J. (2016). *#Leadingmamas: A visual ethnography*. [Doctoral dissertation, Texas State University]. <https://digital.library.txstate.edu/handle/10877/7834>
- Bascia, N. (2003). *Triage or tapestry? Teacher unions' work toward improving teacher quality in an era of systemic reform: A research report*. Seattle, WA: Center for the Study of Teaching and Policy.
- Blount, J. M. (2000). Spinsters, bachelors, and other gender transgressors in school employment, 1850-1990. *Review of Educational Research*, 70, 83-101. <https://journals-sagepub-com.argo.library.okstate.edu/doi/pdf/10.3102/00346543070001083>
- Bradbury, L., & Gunter, H. (2006). Dialogic identities: The experiences of women who are headteachers and mothers in English primary schools. *School Leadership & Management*, 26(5), 489-504. <http://www.informaworld.com.argo.library.okstate.edu/openurl?genre=article&id=doi:10.1080/00220620701194341>
- Brown, K. M. & Wynn, S. (2004). Why leadership-skilled women teachers are saying “no” to the principal’s role: A matter of individual choice or institutional constraint? *Journal of School Leadership*, 14, 686-711. <https://journals-sagepub-com.argo.library.okstate.edu/doi/pdf/10.1177/105268460401400604>
- Burke, W., Marx, G. E., & Lowenstein, E. (2012). Leading, leadership, and learning: Exploring new contexts for leadership development in emerging school environments. *Planning and Changing*, 43(1/2), 113-126. <http://education.illinoisstate.edu/planning/articles/vol43.php>
- Buzzanell, P. M., Meisenbach, R., Remke, R., Liu, M., Bowers, V., & Conn, C. (2005). The good working mother: Managerial women’s sensemaking and feelings about work-family issues. *Communication Studies*, 56(3), 261-285. <https://www-tandfonline-com.argo.library.okstate.edu/doi/pdf/10.1080/10510970500181389>
- Castaneda, M. & Isgro, K. (Eds.) (2013). *Mothers in academia*. Columbia University Press.
- Choge, J. R. (2015). Gender factor in decision making: Challenges facing women leadership development in primary schools’ management in Kenya. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 6(12), 30-37. <https://eric-ed-gov.argo.library.okstate.edu/?id=EJ1080616>

- Christopher, K. (2012). Extensive mothering: Employed mothers' constructions of the good mother. *Gender & Society*, 26(1), 73-96. <https://journals-sagepub-com.argo.library.okstate.edu/doi/pdf/10.1177/0891243211427700>
- Clark, C. (2017). *Mothering academics: Women's perception of the intersectionality of academic leading and rearing underage children in a midwestern urban community college*. [Doctoral dissertation: The University of Toledo]. [https://etd.ohiolink.edu/pg\\_10?0::NO:10:P10\\_ACCESSION\\_NUM:toledo1513309636205349](https://etd.ohiolink.edu/pg_10?0::NO:10:P10_ACCESSION_NUM:toledo1513309636205349)
- Clark, S. C. (2000). Work/family border theory: A new theory of work/family balance. *Human Relations*, 53, 747-770. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0018726700536001>
- Collins, C. (2019). *Making motherhood work: How women manage career and caregiving*. Princeton UP.
- Dolman, A., Schwartz-Bechet, D. & Davis, D. J. (2018). (Eds.). *Motherhood in precarious times*. Demeter Press.
- Douglas, S. J., & Michaels, M. W. (2004). *The mommy myth: The idealization of motherhood and how it has undermined all women*. Free Press.
- Ellingson, L. L. (2017). *Embodiment in qualitative research*. Routledge.
- Goffman, E. (1959). *The presentation of self in everyday life*. Doubleday.
- Grzelakowski, M. (2005). *Mother leads best*. Dearborn Trade Publishing
- Grimmett, P. P., Dagenais, D., D'Amico, L., Jacquet, M., & Ilieva, R. (2008). The contrasting discourses in the professional lives of educators in Canada. *Journal of Educational Change*, 9, 101-121. <http://dx.doi.org.argo.library.okstate.edu/10.1007/s10833-007-9039-5>
- Hallinger, P., Dongyu, L., & Wang, W. C. (2016). Gender differences in instructional leadership: A meta-analytic review of studies using the principal instructional management rating scale. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 52(4), 567-601. <https://journals-sagepub-com.argo.library.okstate.edu/doi/full/10.1177/0013161X16638430>
- Hameiri, L., Nir, A., & Inbar, D. E. (2014). Confronting uncertainty and risk: The contribution of leadership to school outcomes. *Planning and Changing*, 45(1/2), 48-82. <http://education.illinoisstate.edu/planning/articles/vol45.php>
- Harper, D. (2002). Talking about pictures: A case for photo elicitation. *Visual Studies*, 17(1), 13-26. <https://web-a-ebSCOhost-com.argo.library.okstate.edu/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=10&sid=1ae22b58-fd2c-4f21-90a1-be138d87ac3f%40sessionmgr4007>
- Hays, S. (1996). *The cultural contradictions of motherhood*. Yale University Press.
- Hochschild, A. R. (2012). *The second shift*. Penguin Group.
- Johnston, D. D., & Swanson, D. H. (2006). Constructing the "good mother": The experience of mothering ideologies by work status. *Sex Roles*, 54(7/8), 509-519. <https://link-springer-com.argo.library.okstate.edu/article/10.1007/s11199-006-9021-3>

- Jones, S. H., Adams, T. E., and Ellis, C. (Eds.). (2013). *Handbook of autoethnography*. Taylor & Francis.
- Jordan, J. S. (2012). Why can't we have it all? The conflict between the principalship and motherhood. [Doctoral dissertation, The University of North Carolina]. <https://doi.org/10.17615/9zbp-p526>
- Kitchener, C. (2020, August 3). 'I had to choose being a mother': With no child care or summer camps, women are being edged out of the workforce. <https://www.thelily.com/i-had-to-choose-being-a-mother-with-no-child-care-or-summer-camps-women-are-being-edged-out-of-the-workforce/>.
- Kruger, M. L., van Eck, E., & Vermeulen, A. (2005). Why principals leave: Risk factors for premature departure in the Netherlands compared for women and men. *School Leadership & Management*, 25(3), 241-261. <http://taylorandfrancis.metapress.com.argo.library.okstate.edu/link.asp?target=contribution&id=W06X45222673TN86>
- Kvale, S. (1996). *The 1,000-page Question*. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/107780049600200302>.
- Lanoix, M. (2013). Labor as embodied practice: The lessons of care work. *Hypatia. J. Fem. Philos.* 28, 85-100. <https://web-a-ebcohost-com.argo.library.okstate.edu/ehost/detail/detail?vid=12&sid=1ae22b58-fd2c-4f21-90a1-be138d87ac3f%40sessionmgr4007&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWhvc3QtbGl2ZQ%3d%3d#AN=PHL2202899&db=phl>
- Lather, P. & Smithies, C. (1997). *Troubling the angels: Women living with HIV/AIDS*. Westview.
- Litmanovitz, M. (2010). Beyond the classroom: Women in educational leadership. *Harvard Kennedy School Review*, 11, 25-28. <https://web-a-ebcohost-com.argo.library.okstate.edu/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=34&sid=1ae22b58-fd2c-4f21-90a1-be138d87ac3f%40sessionmgr4007>
- Loder, T. L. (2005, December 1). Women administrators negotiate work-family conflicts in changing times: An intergenerational perspective. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 41(5), 741-776. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0013161X04273847>.
- Lumby, J. (2015). School leaders' gender strategies: Caught in a discriminatory web. *Education Management Administration & Leadership*, 43(1), 28-45. <http://dx.doi.org.argo.library.okstate.edu/10.1177/1741143214556088>
- Lumby, J., & Azaola, M. C. (2014). Women principals in South Africa: Gender, mothering, and leadership. *British Educational Research Journal*, 40(1), 30-44. <https://web-a-ebcohost-com.argo.library.okstate.edu/ehost/detail/detail?vid=36&sid=1ae22b58-fd2c-4f21-90a1-be138d87ac3f%40sessionmgr4007&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWhvc3QtbGl2ZQ%3d%3d#AN=94576397&db=slh>
- McNamara, P. (1970, January 1). Feminist ethnography: Storytelling that makes a difference. *Social Work*, 8(2), 161-177. <https://journals.sage->

- pub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1473325009103373
- Okimoto, T. G., & Heilman, M. E. (2012). The “bad parent” assumption: How gender stereotypes affect reactions to working mothers. *Journal of Social Issues, 68*(4), 704-724. <https://web-a-ebSCOhost-com.argo.library.okstate.edu/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=38&sid=1ae22b58-fd2c-4f21-90a1-be138d87ac3f%40sessionmgr4007>
- O’Reilly, A. (2016). *Matricentric feminism*. Demeter Press.
- O’Reilly, A. (2020). “Trying to function in the unfunctional:” Mothers and COVID-19. *Journal of the Motherhood Initiative, 11*(1), 7-24. <https://jarm.journals.yorku.ca/index.php/jarm/article/view/40588>
- Pascopella, A. (2008) State of the superintendency: Stress and satisfaction in a changing profession. *District Administration, 2*, 32-36. <https://web-a-ebSCOhost-com.argo.library.okstate.edu/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=41&sid=1ae22b58-fd2c-4f21-90a1-be138d87ac3f%40sessionmgr4007>
- Reed, D. E. & Blaine, B. (2015). Resilient women educational leaders in turbulent times: Applying the Leader Resilience Profile® to assess women’s leadership strengths. *Planning and Changing, 46*(3/4), p. 459-468. <http://education.illinoisstate.edu/planning/articles/vol46.php>
- Richardson, L. & St. Pierre, E. A. (2005). Writing: A method of inquiry. In Denzin, E. K. & Lincoln Y. S. (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed., pp. 959-978). Sage.
- Ward, K., & Wolf-Wendel, L. E. (2012). *Academic motherhood*. Rutgers Press.
- Winnicott, D. W. (1973) *The child, the family, and the outside world*. Middlesex.

**Lisa Crosslin is a school principal/doctoral student at Oklahoma State University in Stillwater, Oklahoma.**

**Lucy Bailey is the director of gender and women’s studies at Oklahoma State University in Stillwater, Oklahoma.**



## **“BUILDING THE PLANE WHILE TRYING TO FLY:” EXPLORING SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER NARRA- TIVES DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

*In March of 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic ushered in unprecedented changes in public education. This study employed a qualitative narrative inquiry research design to explore special education teacher narratives related to their experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic. Analysis of data from daily internship experience journals and virtual focus group sessions yielded three overarching themes, which are described using participant quotes to provide a framework for narrating the shared experience of these teachers. The collective narrative gathered from these teachers' stories is critical to assisting teacher educators and school administrators in understanding practical considerations to inform preparation of special education teachers for future pandemics, similar crisis events, and/or for teaching special education from a distance (virtually).*

### **Introduction**

At the time of this writing, the year 2020 is but halfway through, and it has been a historic few months of uncertainty, fear, and change. The COVID-19 pandemic ushered in unprecedented changes in all aspects of American life (Robinson, 16 March 2020), none more dramatically than in public education. The authors of this study are faculty in a graduate program for special education in a large midwestern city. The state in which the university is located was the first in the nation to close public schools on March 17, 2020 (Dwyer, 2020).

The World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a global emergency on January 30, 2020 and a global pandemic on March 11, 2020. It was not long after that schools across the U.S. began to shutter their doors for in-person instruction. The most recent pandemic from which education professionals had experience was the 2009 H1N1 influenza pandemic. During the H1N1 influenza pandemic, just over 700 schools in the United States closed as a non-pharmaceutical intervention (Klaiman, Kraemer, & Stoto, 2011). On April 26, 2009, the Center for Disease Control (CDC) issued guidance that schools with 2009 H1N1 cases close for at least seven days. On May 1st of that year the CDC changed this guidance for schools with cases to remain closed for 14 days. However, on May 5, 2009, the CDC guidance changed again, stating that school closure was not necessary (Klaiman, Kraemer, & Stoto, 2011). By contrast, when school closure was used as a non-pharmaceutical intervention



during the COVID-19 pandemic, the majority of schools across the country only closed for in-person instruction, and school professionals were expected to continue in their various roles to support student learning. In addition, the length of time schools were closed was longer than the H1N1 influenza pandemic as many schools in the U.S. closed their buildings in March for the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year.

After the H1N1 pandemic, only a few studies were conducted that examined the experiences of school professionals, such that some researchers made it a point to stress the importance of conducting further research on the experiences of school professionals in order to create more effective pandemic preparedness strategies (Howard & Howard, 2012). To date, there appear to be no peer-reviewed studies available related to teachers' experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **Problem Statement and Research Questions**

During this unparalleled time, the authors of this project wanted to explore how our graduate students, who were also full-time special education teachers, navigated the transition from teaching special education in-person to teaching from a distance. More specifically, we wanted to explore both the challenges and victories special education teachers experienced during the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic so that we might identify lessons that could be learned to inform the field. As such, the research questions guiding this current study were:

- 1) How do special educators describe their teaching experiences during the COVID-19 Pandemic?
- 2) What lessons can be learned from teachers' experiences for teacher educators and school administrators?

### **Method**

A qualitative narrative inquiry research design (Clandinin, 2013) was employed to explore special education teacher narratives related to their experiences during the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic. More specifically, narrative inquiry methodology allowed researchers to capture the voices of special education teachers through storytelling. It is grounded in the notion that story represents a way of knowing and thinking, which is particularly suited to clarifying the issues teachers deal with (Carter, 1993). Moreover, Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1990) highlighted the power of hearing from teachers when they stated,

What is missing from the knowledge base of teaching... are the voices of the teachers themselves, the questions teachers ask, the ways teachers use writing and intentional talk in their work lives, and the interpretive frames teachers use to understand and



improve their own classroom practices (p. 2).

Giving teachers a voice by creating ways for their stories to be heard (i.e., daily journaling), is key to identifying lessons that can be learned from experience (Yoder-Wise & Kowalski, 2003).

## **Setting and Participants**

Participants were recruited from three practicum courses that are required for completion of a special education graduate program at a Mid-western university. Most graduate students enrolled in the special education master's degree program teach full time during the day. More specifically, the majority of graduate students teach special education on emergency waivers, with only a few exceptions, where students are working as general educators. Upon completion of the special education graduate program, students will be eligible to take the appropriate Praxis exam and add the special education teaching endorsement to their initial teaching license. Courses within the program are primarily taught asynchronously to allow students flexibility with their busy work schedules. All three practicum courses were taught by the co-investigator. The courses are designed to be an observation, field-based course providing a supervised opportunity for students to evaluate and implement learning experiences, including application of educational interventions that are effective in meeting the language and literacy needs of students. In a typical semester, graduate students are observed teaching in their own classrooms by a member of the faculty. When the pandemic closed K-12 public schools throughout the state, it was determined that observing these graduate students in their classrooms would be an impossibility. The course syllabus was updated, and an alternative assignment was created for all students in which they were asked to write daily in an "Internship Experience Journal" in order to capture their thoughts, emotions, and general experiences during this historic time. This assignment also allowed researchers to explore how special education teachers experienced the world during the pandemic as they were living it (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990).

More specifically, each graduate student was asked to write their own self-narratives from their perspective as a teacher during the COVID-19 pandemic. Each graduate student completed a minimum of 37 daily journal entries from March 20 through May 12, 2020. Following IRB approval, graduate students were recruited via an announcement sent through Blackboard, which is the university's Learning Management System. All announcements are also automatically sent to the email addresses graduate students have linked to Blackboard which in most cases is their university student account. In the announcement (email), information about the study was shared, including that participation was strictly voluntary. The students were also informed that if they chose not to participate in the study, it would not impact their grade. If interested, students provided consent electronically via a Qualtrics link to the consent form. This procedure resulted in a to-

tal of 12 participants; 10 females and 2 males. All student participants were adults, current special educators over the age of 21-years and not part of a vulnerable population (see Table 1).

**Table 1**

*Participant Gender, Experience, & Current Teaching Position*

Participant	Gender	Years of teaching special education	Year of teaching	Emergency waiver?
1	Female	<u>≤1</u>	Public elementary school (K-5); low-incidence self-contained special education	Yes
2	Female	<u>≤1</u>	Public elementary school (K-5); low-incidence self-contained special education	Yes
3	Female	<u>≤1</u>	Public middle school (6-8); science and math special education for students with EBD	Yes
4	Female	<u>2</u>	Public elementary school (K-8); gifted education	Yes
5	Female	<u>1</u>	Public elementary school (K-8); high-incidence, inter-related special education	Yes
6	Female	<u>≤1</u>	Public elementary school (K-5); high-incidence, inter-related special education	Yes
7	Female	<u>0</u>	Public elementary school (K-5); kindergarten general education	No
8	Male	<u>≤1</u>	Alternative public high school (9-12) for students with EBD	Yes
9	Female	<u>0</u>	Public elementary school; preschool general education	No
10	Male	<u>1</u>	Public elementary school (K-5); high-incidence, inter-related special education	Yes
11	Female	<u>≤1</u>	Public elementary school (K-5); low-incidence self-contained special education	Yes
12	Female	<u>≤1</u>	Public high school (9-12); special education social studies for students with high-incidence disabilities.	Yes

## Data Collection

Data were collected from both the daily internship experience journals and two 30-45-minute follow-up focus group sessions. The intent of focus group sessions was to collect data to complement and expand upon data obtained from journal entries. For the daily internship experience journal, students were asked to respond to this prompt:

You will maintain a daily reflective journal that you use to write freely on a daily basis about your experiences from your perspective as a teacher during this time of uncertainty and transition. Your experiences will likely all be different, and there is a lot that you (and future teachers) can learn from all that is going on right now. Please feel free to share your feelings, emotions, and responses to your daily experiences. I will be the only one who reads what you write, and it will be kept confidential. I would also like for you to be sure to reflect on what you learn each day about teaching and learning in general (both positive and negative).

Student journal entries were either uploaded to Blackboard as a word document or written directly into a textbox on Blackboard using Blackboard's journal feature. Participant journal entries were copied from Blackboard and stored into a secured study database. Participant names were removed, and entries were stored using assigned participant numbers.

Two separate focus group sessions were scheduled at the end of the semester, after course grades had been entered to ensure participants felt their answers would not impact course grades. The first group contained four participants in attendance, and the second group had a total of three. The first author conducted the focus groups. A semi-structured interview protocol was followed to guide focus group sessions (see Table 2).

**Table 2**

*Focus Group Interview Questions*

	<b>Question</b>
1.	What was your initial reaction when they closed schools?
2.	What has been the biggest challenge for you?
3.	What was the easiest transition?
4.	How did you navigate the demands at home and teaching online?
5.	How can you apply what you learned to your in-person classroom
6.	What do you see as the benefits of online instruction?
7.	Do you think schools should reopen in the Fall?

The questions were developed after both researchers conducted

the first round of read-throughs or preliminary analysis of data collected from the journal entries. Two separate focus groups were conducted through a cloud-based video conferencing platform (i.e., Zoom). The interview protocol was followed to guide the focus group discussion. The questions used also served as prompts to obtain more in-depth information from participants related to the study research question. The audio and video from each focus group were recorded and saved to a secure study database. Each focus group session was then transcribed by the principal investigator for analysis. Each group consisted of both study investigators and four students.

In addition, both the researchers kept an independent field log in which reactions, thoughts, and suggestions were recorded. These field notes were used in the data analysis.

### **Data Analysis**

A narrative thematic analysis (Riessman, 2008) approach was used during analysis, which allowed researchers to identify and then categorize “themes reflected in participants’ experiences, while simultaneously working to keep participants’ stories intact” (Edwards, 2015, p.269). The analysis of data began with an initial reading of the journal entries and the focus group transcripts (Stake, 2006). Then, both researchers independently coded the data using a content analysis approach to identify themes from the data relating to study research questions. Qualitative content analysis is defined as method for “the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns” (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1278). Journal entries and interview transcripts were analyzed using line-by-line analysis, allowing for categories, subcategories, and themes to emerge. A color-coding process was used to recognize patterns within each journal entry and interview (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Preliminary categories were defined in correlation with the interview questions and were then organized and labeled together until immersion of that topic was achieved. Both researchers met weekly to discuss themes that emerged from their independent efforts and until they came to full agreement about themes (or participant quotes) that highlight the essence of the participants’ story over time. The researchers determined to use the participant’s words to identify the themes in order to capture the rich, thick meaning of their words. The analysis process was iterative and continued until no new information emerged from the data.

### **Trustworthiness of the Study**

Every consideration was made by the researcher to represent the participant’s meanings and perspectives. Triangulation techniques (Cre-

swell, 1998, Stake, 2005), such as member checking, peer debriefing, and document analysis were utilized to assure rigor in this study.

## **Results**

Analysis of both daily internship experience journals and focus group interviews yielded three overarching themes, described using participant quotes, which provides a framework for narrating the collective experience of these teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic. These themes include: 1) “A Time of Such Confusion”, 2) “Building the Plane While Trying to Fly”, and 3) “I might have cried some actual tears.... And then I ate chocolate”.

### **“A time of such confusion”**

The statement, “*A time of such confusion,*” expressed by one participant, captures the essence of these teachers experiences just after hearing the news that schools would be closing for in-person instruction for the rest of the 2019-2020 school year. This news came abruptly and with little warning. In fact, teachers first heard the news on social media or from friends or family members, rather than directly from their school district. The in-person instruction that teachers were trained to deliver had ended, and they were expected to engage their students in “continuous learning opportunities” (Kansas State Department of Education, 2020), which was something they had never been asked to do before. Therefore, although school buildings were closed, school was still in session. Many were confused as to what this meant. Teachers were told to stay at home. As such, during the first few weeks, teachers initially shared feelings of confusion, uncertainty, and lack of control, which caused them to experience anxiety and frustration.

What an unbelievable time to be a teacher! The day we found out the schools were closing for the rest of the year; my family and I had taken a REALLY long walk...to [a local book store] to get a copy of *Alice in Wonderland* and *Moby Dick*. It seemed the perfect activity for the dreary day and for a time of such confusion. While I was in the basement of [the local book store] where the children’s books are, my girls ran down to tell me the news that was circulating. Shock. Absolute shock. I tried to hold it together in front of my kids, who were, of course, initially excited, about not having to actually attend school daily. But my students, my kids, my “other kids” all started to fly through my mind. What did I last say to them? Did I hug them before they left the day before Spring Break? What projects were left to complete? Will some of my kids, who confide in me daily, be okay? What is my job now? HOW CAN I REACH MY BABIES??

Many of the participants expressed similar shock and confusion, coupled with their fear of the uncertainty of the pandemic. Teachers were confused as to what they were to do. They shared feelings of being overwhelmed in not knowing what their day was going to look like or what was expected of them, as they were getting unclear, sometimes conflicting, messages from school and district-level administration. The lack of control they had during this time appeared to contribute to an unsettling feeling of discomfort.

Many teachers were clearly grieving, as they shared stories of confusion, anxiety, and frustration, which led to feelings of loss. They felt a sense of loss of the traditional school year, their students, and a beginning loss of their sense of identity related to being teachers. One participant expressed this clearly,

Even now... two weeks later, I feel my heartbeat faster and the tears sting my eyes as I think about the absolute pain I felt that day. We walked the mile and a half back home, and I crumbled into my bed to cry on my own until I couldn't anymore. This job is so much more than a paycheck. It's a way of life. I would probably have better blood pressure and less stress if I did something else, but I would be void of so much that way. I don't teach students. I teach humans. Humans with souls and feelings and so much good to share. I will never take that connection for granted again.

A sense of loss was also clearly articulated by one teacher who confessed,

Another day has come and gone, and I feel my life is just flashing by day by day, and I am losing my grip on everything that matters and quickly my life is losing meaning. Today, I worried about everything, and I was angry because I miss my "kids"—my students were taken away from me. I did have therapy and that helped relieve some of my stress and anxiety. Still my life is in limbo and is quickly being turned upside down.

### **“Building the plane while trying to fly”**

After the initial confusion and loss felt by these teachers, they shared experiences related to navigating new work-related expectations that were sometimes challenging. One teacher captured the essence of these teachers' experiences during this time by stating, “I keep hearing, ‘we are building the plane while trying to fly it,’ and I just think we can do better than that...” Collectively, these teachers expressed feelings of being worn down, overwhelmed, and at times frustrated with new expectations while also trying to endure the fear and uncertainty that was generally associated with COVID-19 pandemic.

Teachers were immediately exposed to a variety of trainings, mostly technology-related, and were told that they were expected to “just focus on connecting” with students and families weekly. In fact, teachers shared that district-level administrators explicitly told them that “while we want learning to take place throughout all of this, academic are [sic] certainly not the most important thing.” Teachers shared that making connections was often difficult and for a variety of reasons, such as families not having internet, parents who were working, and general parent priorities being more focused on meeting basic needs than helping children complete continuous learning activities. Some teachers shared feeling bad putting more pressure on families who were already stressed and struggling.

Most teachers felt overwhelmed, mostly with the additional paperwork required, such as having to create Individualized Continuous Learning Plans (ICLP) for each student on their caseload. In addition, they were overwhelmed with having to learn ways to draft IEPs, share confidential documents, collect signatures, and schedule virtual IEP meetings, all from home. Issues and frustrations with technology were a common theme among the participants. Some of the school districts utilized Zoom for a cloud-based platform, but quickly changed as strangers began hacking into or “Zoom bombing” sessions with derogatory photos and statements. The largest school district in the state transitioned away from Zoom and provided training on Microsoft Teams.

We have been blocked from using Zoom for school, but I guess using Zoom will give me another option for a different group to use if something like this happens again. The learning curve is big, because I have to learn and practice and teach myself how to use Zoom to do a virtual lesson because I don't know anything about it.

Another participant expressed her frustration at the school district for lapses in communication related to the technology,

We have so many educated people in this district and SO many who are hired specifically for technology that we should be doing better when asking schools and teachers to use technology. Teachers aren't at the “table” for these meetings, and we aren't ever consulted in these matters so for me it's really frustrating just to get told what to do but not how to do it.

These sentiments were echoed by another participant:

This was definitely the hardest day of teaching so far. I'm so over looking at my computer already. I feel like everything I'm doing relates just directly to logistics and technology and making sure we know how to use everything. I really want to use my creative skills to develop some cool things for my gifted kids that are beneficial to them. All I can figure out is how to get everyone on Zoom and MAYBE figure out IEP paperwork.



Overnight, they were pressed to learn how to teach online, how to support parents, how to modify courses for those homes without internet access, along with mountains of new paperwork. One participant wrote, “a lot of special education teachers are complaining about the sheer amount of work they have to do,” after the state required special educators to develop Individualized Continuous Learning Plan (ICLP) for each student on their caseload. This participant elaborated,

Essentially this includes the student’s description of disability, IEP goals, accommodations, and ways of meeting all of the students’ needs through the continuous learning. The part that took the most time was going back through the individual’s IEP to find all of this information and make sure it is up to date and in line with the continuous learning methods.

In addition to all the new responsibilities, participants realized that they needed to help their peers (other school professionals) and parents with technology glitches. “I knew that my fellow teacher struggles with technology, so I set up a google document and shared it with her so that we could work on filling out the class lists for next year.” Evident among the frustration was a rising spirit of creativity. One participant stated, “I haven’t decided if I like texting or email better. I think I will probably stick with texting my parents because I generally get better responses from them.” Another participant learned how to interact through a virtual cloud-based meeting,

I set up a Zoom meeting for next Tuesday and gave them homework to make a sea animal craft. I have been enjoying the Zoom meetings with the kids, and I look forward to seeing the crafts they make this week. I think I am going to look at printing a letter to mail to the kids and parents the week of school. I miss not being able to do the end of the year with them and want to send them something nice to recognize them leaving Pre-K.

Teachers were also overwhelmed because of the challenges associated with having to complete new work-related responsibilities from their own homes where their own kids or other family members were also present daily. Work-life balance was a struggle for these teachers. As one teacher stated, “Home is where I do what I want to do. Home is where I can just ‘be.’ Home is where I don’t have to be ‘on.’ But this all changed a few short weeks ago.” Another participant explicitly stated that that working from home was a “new challenge” for her family and shared that her children were used to, “a mom that engages them in different activities throughout the day when we are home not to a mom that has to spend the morning making phone calls.” Some participants also described it being difficult to find a place to “set up a little office” where they could work. Challenges associated with working were causing a great deal of stress as participants were truly “building the plane while trying to fly.” The stress



associated with this is evidenced in the following participant's statement,

I had a meeting with the ESOL teachers and interrelated teachers from my building on Teams. That was a bit of a challenge because my husband was not home, and both of my teenage boys were acting up and cussing and being out of control in the background. I do not think that they understand that this is my job and what they do while I am online reflects on me. I am so counting down the weeks until summer because the stress and anxiety of things being different is a little bit too much for me.

One critical aspect of the results of the data was made clear: the participants were experiencing grief in their isolation from their students, schools, and peers (Tempski et al., 2020). Our future research will focus on this aspect of the study in further detail.

**“I Might Have cried some actual tears.... And then I ate chocolate.”**

As participants settled into their daily work, completing what was newly expected of them and navigating the associated challenges, they then began to share loss associated with coming to the realization that their role as teacher was shifting. One participant's statement shares the essence of this part of these teachers' story, as she states, “I might have cried some actual tears...And then I ate chocolate.” Participants shared ways that they came to cope with their persistent sense of loss.

Broadly, teachers primarily felt like they had lost the part of their identity associated with being a teacher. More specifically, they indicated that what they were doing was not what they thought it meant to be a teacher and not what they had gone to school to do. Participants shared losing the part of being a teacher that related to human connection and creating meaningful relationships which they described as being a foundational part of teaching and the teaching-learning process. Associated with this loss, they described feeling frustrated with the teaching profession as well as feeling angry because what they were experiencing was not what they had learned in college. They were losing part of their old role and realizing that their role was shifting. In fact, one teacher explicitly stated, “I haven't done any teaching since March 12th....” Although school districts scrambled and cobbled together a quick plan for the remainder of the school year suddenly teaching wasn't what they were doing.

These teachers were tired of looking at computer screens and being on the phone and felt that everything they were doing related to “logistics and technology.” They missed being able to use their creative skills to develop learning activities that would contribute to student learning such that some teachers described feeling a sense of guilt. Teachers coped by finally going beyond what was expected to be able to use their creativity. For example, one teacher stated,

I've really been missing the teaching and creative aspects of my job. I want to be able to create really cool things for my kids who just have completely boring packets of worksheets to complete from the district right now. There has been a huge amount of guilt over all of this, but I knew I had a lot of other things to get settled first before I could get to that. On Monday and Tuesday I sent out my first sets of CHOICE BOARDS that I created for each of my students with an IEP and to students who I've been seeing for enrichment.

In addition to coping by going above and beyond to find ways to use their creative skills, participants also appeared to cope by focusing on positive aspects of their shifting role such as having more time for self-care and some of the freedom associated with working from home. For example, one participant stated,

Taking the walk from my bedroom to my 'kitchen office,' wearing sweatpants, and a black t-shirt, getting ready to attend a 'staff meeting,' felt amazing. Finally, joggers were acceptable work attire, and my commute to work was literally a distance of fifty feet. A smile crept across my jaws as I logged on, checked my nostrils for any bats in the cave, and swiftly greeted my co-workers with the push of a button.

So as much participant reaction was comprised of confusion and loss, teachers coped in ways that contributed to them finding the positive aspects in what they were experiencing.

## **Discussion and Conclusions**

The collective narrative gathered from these teachers' stories during the COVID-19 pandemic yielded important lessons that both teacher educators and school administrators should consider to understand the potential changes and planning that may be necessary as a result of the impact that the pandemic has had on the field of education. More specifically, the lessons learned can assist teacher educators and school administrators in understanding practical considerations to inform preparation of special education teachers for future pandemics, similar crisis events, and/or for teaching special education from a distance (virtually).

One of the key findings from this study is that these teachers experienced a tremendous sense of loss. In the beginning, the loss they felt was related to the confusion associated with schools abruptly closing and not being able to see their students. However, their feelings of loss persisted, and later were more closely related to work-related frustrations and their realization of their shifting role. What they thought it meant to be a teacher was rapidly changing; they were losing part of their teacher identity, the part that demanded meaningful human connections and student relation-

ships, as well as being able to see the impact of their work, i.e. student learning. An important lesson that can be learned from this is that positive student-teacher relationships are indeed a foundational part of the teaching-learning process that are reciprocally impactful for both students and teachers. The impact of positive student-teacher relationships on student learning is well-documented (e.g., Hughes, 2011; Pasta et al., 2013; Prino et al., 2016). However, less is known about the impact that student-teacher relationships have on teachers and the important work that teachers do.

More specifically, teachers were grieving. Grief, is well known to be the emotional distress that follows loss (Howarth, 2011). Grief and the grief cycle (Kubler-Ross, 1969) have been most often associated with the death of a loved one. The five stages of the Kubler-Ross (1969) grief cycle model include:

- 1) denial (avoidance, confusion, shock, fear),
- 2) anger (frustration, irritation, anxiety),
- 3) depression (overwhelmed, helplessness, hostility, flight),
- 4) bargaining (struggling to find meaning, reaching out to others, telling one's story), and
- 5) acceptance (exploring options, new plan in place, moving on).

There does appear to be some parallel between the grief cycle and what teachers in this study were feeling. For example, teachers first experienced confusion and shock. Then, they were frustrated, overwhelmed, and were working to move on with a new plan. The non-death loss experienced by the teachers in this study is only beginning to be understood (Gitterman & Knight, 2018). Future studies should consider exploring the experiences of teachers during the pandemic using the grief cycle as a framework for analysis.

Almost 20 years ago, Gardner (2000) stated, “with the possible exception of the church, few institutions have changed as little in fundamental ways as those charged with the formal education of the next generation” (p. 30). Another important finding from this study was that the current crisis clearly demonstrated that educators and the K-12 school system were not prepared for the logistical and technological challenges of the pandemic. Newton (2020) affirmed this in a recent survey of teachers where over 80% said they were not prepared for online instruction. Our university, along with many others, have developed online learning or hybrid (part online, part in person) courses for many years. However, teacher preparation programs may need to consider enhancing their programs to better prepare teachers on how to use various learning management platforms, as well as specific instructional methods and strategies that can be used to teach special education online.

Moreover, although students today are more technologically advanced than any other generation, they are often not prepared for full-

time online learning. As Korkmaz & Toraman (2020) discovered there is a unique change in educational philosophy connected with online instruction that has been neglected in teacher preparation. This needs to be incorporated into the curriculum for teacher education so they understand the unique aspects of online instruction that requires additional collaboration, community, student-centered needs, and connectivity. The lesson learned is that all school professionals need to be prepared to navigate instructional technology, as well as ways to seamlessly pivot to distance learning (online), when needed. In fact, we may find that the impact of the pandemic will be that more school districts may decide to allow families to make choices more often about which learning format (i.e., on site/in person, virtual learning synchronous/asynchronous) works best for students. As such, prioritizing technology use and teaching strategies for virtual learning is more critical now than ever before.

Lastly, this study further confirmed the importance of considering the implications of teacher working conditions on work performance (or their ability to teach). For example, recent research has documented that teacher working conditions mediate teacher attrition (Geiger & Pivovarov, 2016). During the pandemic, teachers were forced to work from home, and it came with many challenges. School administrators may want to explore giving teachers other options for places to work to help balance home and work life, such as working from their classrooms even though students are at home. This may also contribute to decreased feelings of stress and improving the overall well-being of teachers, especially during times of crisis.

### **Recommendations for Teacher Educators and/or School Administrators**

Our discussion of the key findings from this study yielded several recommendations that both teacher educators and/or school administrators may want to consider when making changes and planning to prepare teachers for future pandemics and/or crisis events.

- Be proactive and prepare teachers for the loss they might feel in the event that schools abruptly close. Provide teachers with coping strategies they might use to manage their feelings of loss.
- Consider ways to support teachers and other school professionals that are consistent with the grief cycle (i.e., information and communication (stages 1 & 2), emotional support (stage 3), and guidance and direction (stages 4 & 5).
- Position teachers “at the table” for decision-making around policies and practices that related to their working conditions as well as the kids and families they serve.
- Advocate for the use of distance learning (virtual) instructional practices that facilitate the development and/or maintenance of

positive student-teacher relationships (e.g., synchronous meetings, daily check-ins, mentoring sessions).

- Assure there are laptop computers and portable WiFi hotspots available for families who do not have access to these at home.
- Specific to special education, it may be necessary for students in special education to come to the campus for their learning and support services. The school needs to have the equipment and procedures in place for this eventuality. For example, ways to safely have the students in the same room with dividers, clear plastic masks so faces are not covered, staggered release times from classroom, or eating in classrooms to avoid crowded common areas. In addition, assure that there are adequate supplies of cleaning/disinfecting materials and good ventilation.
- Enhance teacher preparation curriculum as well as professional development trainings to better prepare teachers to use a variety of instructional technology as well as research-based strategies for teaching online.
- Create a space for teachers to work when teaching online and give teachers choices on where to work during a pandemic.

## **Conclusion**

A great deal can and will be learned from the COVID-19 pandemic. This study contributes some lessons learned from one sample of teachers. Teachers are resilient and experts at problem solving. However, we can't expect teachers to always weather the storm that they are thrown into. These findings can be used when weighing the potential impact that future pivots to distances learning might have on teachers. Future research is needed to explore how the experiences of special education teachers were different from other school professionals. Teacher educators and school administrators must take the time now to draw upon lessons learned from this study, as well as others, to proactively prepare plans to guide teachers and give them the tools to navigate future pandemics or similar crisis situations.

## **References**

- Carter, K. (1993). The place of story in the study of teaching and teacher education. *Educational Researcher*, 22(1), 5-18.
- Cipriano, C., & Rappolt-Schlichtmann, G. (2020). *Supporting school community Wellness with Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) during and after a pandemic*. Retrieved from: <https://www.prevention.psu.edu/uploads/files/PSU-SEL-Crisis-Brief.pdf>

- Clandinin, D. J., Steeves, P., & Caine, V. (Eds.). (2013). *Composing lives in transition: A narrative inquiry into the experiences of early school leavers*. Emerald Group Publishing.
- Connelly, F. & Clandinin, D. (1990, June/July). Stories of experience and narrative inquiry. *Educational Researcher*, 19(5), 2-14
- Cochran-Smith, M., & Lytle, S. L. (1990). Research on teaching and teacher research: The issues that divide. *Educational Researcher*, 19(2), 2-11.
- Creswell, J. (2006). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions*. (2nd ed). Sage Publishing.
- Dwyer, C. (18, March 2020). Kansas becomes the first state to end in-person classes for the year. Retrieved from: <https://www.npr.org/sections/Coronavirus%20Live%20Updates/2020/03/18/817886198/kansas-becomes-the-first-state-to-end-its-school-year>
- Edwards, K. T. (2015). Perceptions of power and faith among Black women faculty: Re-thinking institutional diversity. *Innovative Higher Education*, 40(3), 263-278.
- Emerson, R. M., Fretz, R.I., & Shaw, L.L. (2011). *Writing ethnographic field notes*. (2nd ed.). University of Chicago Press.
- Gardner, H. (2000). Technology remakes the schools. *The Futurist*, 34(2), 30-33.
- Geiger, T., & Pivovarov, M. (2018). The effects of working conditions on teacher retention. *Teachers and Teaching*, 24(6), 604-625.
- Gitterman, A., & Knight, C. (2019). Non-death loss: Grieving for the loss of familiar place and for precious time and associated opportunities. *Clinical Social Work Journal*, 47(2), 147-155.
- Howard, P., & Howard, J. (2012). Pandemic and pedagogy: Elementary school teachers' experience of H1N1 Influenza in the classroom. *Phenomenology & Practice*, 6(1).
- Howarth, R. (2011). Concepts and controversies in grief and loss. *Journal of mental health counseling*, 33(1), 4-10.
- Hsieh, H. F., & Shannon, S. E. (2005). Three approaches to qualitative content analysis. *Qualitative Health Research*, 15(9), 1277-1288.
- Hughes, J. N. (2011). Longitudinal effects of teacher and student perceptions of teacher-student relationship qualities on academic adjustment. *Elementary School Journal* 112, 38-60. doi: 10.1086/660686
- Klaiman, T., Kraemer, J. D., & Stoto, M. A. (2011). Variability in school closure decisions in response to 2009 H1N1: A qualitative systems improvement analysis. *BMC Public Health*, 11(1), 73.
- Korkmaz, G., & Toraman, Ç. (2020). Are we ready for the post-COVID-19 educational practice? An investigation into what educators think as to online learning. *International Journal of Technology in Education and Science (IJTES)*, 4(4), 293-309.
- Kübler-Ross, E. (1969). *On death and dying: What the dying have to teach doctors, nurses, clergy and their own families*. (1st ed). Scribner.



- Newton, D. (2020, March 26). *Most teachers say they are 'Not prepared' to teach online*. Retrieved from: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/dereknewton/2020/03/26/most-teachers-say-they-are-not-prepared-to-teach-online/#26350947f2cf>
- Pasta, T., Mendola, M., Longobardi, C., Prino, L. E., & Gastaldi, F. G. M. (2013). Attribution style of children with and without specific learning disability. *Electronic Journal of Research in Education Psychology*, 11, 649–664. doi: 10.14204/ejrep.31.13064
- Patton, M. Q. (2015). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods* (4th ed). Sage.
- Prino, L. E., Pasta, T., Gastaldi F. G. M., & Longobardi, C. (2016). The effect of autism spectrum disorders, Down Syndrome, specific learning disorders and hyperactivity and attention deficits on the student-teacher relationship. *Electronic Journal of Research in Education Psychology*, 89–106. doi: 10.14204/ejrep.38.15043
- Riessman, C. (2008). *Narrative methods for the human sciences*. Sage.
- Robinson, E. (2020, March 16). Life in the time of Covid-19 is totally unprecedented. *Washington Post*. Retrieved from: [https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/life-in-the-time-of-covid-19-is-totally-unprecedented/2020/03/16/6addf8de-67be-11ea-b313df458622c2cc\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/life-in-the-time-of-covid-19-is-totally-unprecedented/2020/03/16/6addf8de-67be-11ea-b313df458622c2cc_story.html)
- Rubin, H.J., & Rubin, I.S. (2012). *Qualitative interviewing: The art of hearing data*. (3rd ed). Sage.
- Stake, R. (2005). Qualitative case studies. In N.K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed.). (pp. 443-466). Sage.
- Tempski, P., Danila, A. H., Arantes-Costa, F. M., Siqueira, M. A., Torsani, M. B., & Martins, M. A. (2020). The COVID-19 pandemic: Time for medical teachers and students to overcome grief. *Clinics*, 75.
- Korkmaz, G., & Toraman, Ç. (2020). Are we ready for the post-COVID-19 educational practice? An investigation into what educators think as to online learning. *International Journal of Technology in Education and Science (IJTES)*, 4(4), 293-309.
- World Health Organization. (2020). Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19): *Situation Report*, 72. Retrieved from: [https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/situationreports/20200401-sitrep-72-covid-19.pdf?sfvrsn=3dd8971b\\_2](https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/situationreports/20200401-sitrep-72-covid-19.pdf?sfvrsn=3dd8971b_2)
- Yoder-Wise, P. S., & Kowalski, K. (2003). *The power of storytelling*. *Nursing Outlook*, 51(1), 37-42.

**Donna Sayman is an associate professor at Wichita State University.**

**Heidi Cornell is an assistant professor at Wichita State University.**





## FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS' EXPERIENCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN CHILE IN TIMES OF COVID-19

*As the pandemic turned instruction entirely remote in several countries, students are presented with the issues of having to re(construct) what these different institutions (university, family) look like, their boundaries, and physical spaces. The transformation to remote education poses extra challenges not only to instructors, but also to students, especially those who are newcomers and have not been exposed to university experiences before. Therefore, in order to better understand first-year university students' experiences during the pandemic and provide the necessary aid and support for them to succeed in their academic programs, we used school-wide survey data to analyze the experiences of 240 first-year students in one public university in Chile. Using a thematic analysis, we found that these students were mostly concerned about issues derived from remote emergency modality, workload, assessment, empathy, flexibility, and community. This study has important implications not only to inform online instruction during times of restricted (or no) access to in-person classes but also to inform policy concerning university-wide and nation-wide conditions that need to be met to serve all students.*

*Keywords: online emergency education, experiences, college, first-year students*

### Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic brought many changes to our lifestyles which range from social distancing, employment insecurity/loss, fear of contracting virus, among other threats to our regular way of conducting our lives (Caballero-Domínguez & Campo-Arias, 2020; Javed, Sarwer, Soto, & Mashwani, 2020; Sheraton et al., 2020). In the context of Higher Education (HE), the institutions had to adapt in order to keep their students, faculty, and staff safe. The change in the mode of instruction was one of the most important changes. Before the pandemic, Chile had a very low rate of students who attended full online programs (Cea et al., 2020), and therefore, the novelty of this new method of teaching presented several challenges that are interesting to study.

In addition to the changes and challenges that came about with the pandemic, since October 2019, Chile has been experiencing a social awakening that took the shape of massive demonstrations that were brutally re-

pressed by armed police and the military forces. These demonstrations began on October 18th with a group of high-school students who refused to pay the subway fare to protest against the last increase. But this was just the tip of the iceberg: the underlying reason was the deep social inequality that has been dividing the country propelled by the neoliberal model that the Pinochet dictatorship imposed and that has been prevalent even after returning to democracy. Protests lasted for months and interfered with the regular lives of everybody in the country (Gaete et al., 2020). Hundreds were wounded and mutilated and thousands were sent to jail, many of whom were university students (Gaete et al., 2020; Garcés Durán, 2020). Thus, the pandemic worsened the lives of the Chilean population already caught up in a state of social unrest, economic instability, and uncertainty.

In this paper, we aim to better understand some of the issues that first-year university students in one public university in Chile are facing during the pandemic, and the instructional challenges that come with it.

By doing so, we hope to add to the literature on important issues that should be considered when emergency shifts in instruction are implemented, and thus, promote informed changes which hopefully will allow us to better serve our students.

### **Literature Review**

It is a fact that around the world online education has increased in the past decades, mostly due to communication technology advances and economic incentives, especially for universities, to offer online programs (Palvia et al., 2018). When compared to other regions, Latin America, in general, is positioned only before Africa when considering the region's digital ecosystem (Cáceres-Muñoz, Jiménez Hernández, & Martín-Sánchez, 2020). More specifically, in Chile, online education has increased only marginally in the past 5 years: While countries like the U.S. and Brazil have between 15% and 20% of their total enrollment covered by online programs, Chile only has about 3% of its programs offered online (Martínez, 2019). Another important aspect in terms of online education is accreditation. In Chile, 91.4% of universities are accredited, and while about 65% of the total national number of regular programs have received accreditation, only 16% of the online programs have this status (Martínez, 2019).

Concerning access to basic technology in Chile, a nationwide survey showed that half of the students surveyed have only occasional or no access to a computer, and only 23% had access to a tablet or personal digital assistant (PDA) (Educación 2020, 2020). Furthermore, 80% of the students reported not having access to an environment appropriate for concentrating.

## **Online Emergency Education in Chile**

As will be later explained, this study focuses on emergency remote teaching, which differs greatly from programs such as the aforementioned, which were planned and organized from their conception to be delivered online. In this short literature review, we will address some of the recent studies that have analyzed how this emergency remote teaching prompted by the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted education in Chile.

Cáceres-Muñoz et al. (2020) carried out an international study (sampling 23 countries from three continents, including Chile) that analyzed the socio-educational consequences of school closings. The authors analyzed informant perceptions using the following seven categories:

- a) execution timings;
- b) democratic aspects of the educational measures adopted;
- c) curricular, didactic, and methodological adaption;
- d) infrastructure and resources adequate for distance learning;
- e) perceptions about faculty;
- f) perceptions about families; and
- g) alternative proposals.

In their study, the authors stress that the consequences of COVID-19 directly affect the right to education; they explain that having a right to education, includes not only access to education, which now is mostly online, but also a right to quality education (Cáceres-Muñoz et al., 2020).

Given that online instruction was implemented as an emergency measure due to the pandemic, there was little to no preparation in most educational establishments to tackle it. This was the case for other countries as well (Díez Gutiérrez & Gajardo Espinoza, 2020; Rupnow, Ladue, James, & Bergan-Roller, 2020). This lack of preparation provoked that already existing inequities in Chile, such as the already existing educational access gap and the quality gap, became wider and more noticeable. Arriagada (2020) explains that in order to be better prepared to transition to emergency online modes of education, there need to be strong educational policies implemented at the short, medium, and long term. Among these necessary policies, the author posits that curricula for teacher education needs to be revisited, stressing the need to develop techno-pedagogical knowledge that allows for more flexible curricular processes.

In a similar vein, Murillo & Duk (2020) also discuss how the pandemic has helped widen educational gaps already existing in the country, in particular in relation to inclusion of students with special needs. The authors explain that these students have seen themselves confined at home and without the palliative measures that education officials have implemented to adjust to the pandemic. Further, and aligned to Arriagada

(2020), the authors caution about the lack of teacher preparation concerning virtual environments. They posit that only a minority of professors in Chile, and in general in the Latin American region, know how to design and implement curricula for a virtual environment.

Given this lack of preparation for situations like the COVID-19 pandemic currently affecting the country, Muñoz & Cartes (2020) propose the implementation of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) (Díez Villoria & Sánchez Fuentes, 2015) that would promote a more flexible and equitable teaching-learning process. Basically, the UDL would provide the tools to address diversity in the classroom, support adaptation to different learning styles and rhythms, and increase the types of educational materials provided to students. The authors posit that UDL is a real methodological alternative for teachers, suitable to the requirements the pandemic has imposed in the educational arena.

Finally, Cea et al. (2020) focused on understanding the challenges brought by the pandemic from the instructors' perspective. Preliminary results from a large-scale study carried out with 785 instructors in a Chilean university by Cea et al. (2020) show that one major issue reported by instructors has been that students turn off their cameras and microphones when attending online classes. Though they explain this could be partly due to connectivity issues, they state that students also find these rarely interactive lectures to be a waste of time, especially when the material can be available in other formats. Instructors usually just replicate what they did during their face-to-face instruction, which adds to the fact that they are unfamiliar with the technology they need to use, and thus, unprepared to tackle technology issues as they arise (Cea et al., 2020; Muñoz Vidal & Cartes Arévalo, 2020). The authors also mentioned that this sudden shift to online instruction has evidenced the need to move from teacher-centered to student-centered instruction. Even though this change has been implemented in certain institutions, the challenges brought by the pandemic have made this issue even more salient. Another factor that has proven problematic, particularly for first-year college students, has been that students have not had the chance to get to know their classmates more than by name. Lessons were cancelled before students had any face-to-face lessons which are essential to establish their social network. Finally, Cea et al. (2020) draw attention to how the socio-economic impact that the pandemic has had on students and their families (e.g., loss of employment, debt increase) can further complicate students' access to technology and overall wellbeing. In turn, the latter will further compromise underserved students' educational development.

## **Recent U.S. and International Studies**

Before the pandemic, a survey from the World Health Organization with data from 21 countries showed that one out of five college stu-

dents surveyed had reported experiencing at least one mental health disorder. Thus, it is not surprising that in recent studies that have looked at university students' experience during COVID-19, one of the most reported issues that higher education students have mentioned relates to mental health. Studies have shown that students report feeling anxious (Islam, Barna, Raihan, Khan, & Hossain, 2020; Peloso et al., 2020; Zhai & Du, 2020), stressed, angry (Shanahan et al., 2020), less efficient in overcoming problems (Marelli et al., 2020), and depressed (Islam et al., 2020; Zhai & Du, 2020) during the pandemic.

Among the stressors mentioned were fear that their family members and themselves would contract the disease (Peloso et al., 2020; Zhai & Du, 2020), and lifestyle and economic disruptions (Blankstein, Frederick, & Wolff-Eisenberg, 2020; Shanahan et al., 2020). Among academic concerns, studies showed low enjoyment and difficulty coping with the distance learning modality (Blankstein et al., 2020; Peloso et al., 2020). Further, students who were enrolled in programs that included clinical material and professional training reported feeling concerned that their learning in these aspects would be impaired (Peloso et al., 2020).

## **Theoretical Framework**

### **University Experiences**

We conceptualize university experience from a sociocultural perspective (Vygotsky, 1978), expanding from (Abarca Millán, 2020). We believe personal characteristics (the intellectual and affective processes) and situational characteristics are indivisible (van Compernelle, 2019; Zinchenko, 2009). Thus, we conceptualize students' experiences as "a unified phenomenon with a host of factors, including human relations of different kinds (i.e., academic, social, familial)" (Abarca Millán, 2020, p. 30) that can take place not only inside but also outside the institution (eg., the family, the university).

### **Emergency Remote Teaching**

It is important to distinguish the specific characteristics of online instruction that are the result of a health emergency contrasted to a well-planned and carefully prepared online course delivery. Thus, we use the term emergency remote teaching (ERT) drawing from Hodges et al. (2020), and we define it as "a temporary shift of instructional delivery to an alternate delivery mode due to crisis circumstances" (Hodges, Moore, Lockee, Trust, & Bond, 2020). Further, based on this conceptualization, ERT involves certain pedagogical solutions that might be used for face-to-face, blended or hybrid courses, given that it is expected to return to that

format when the emergency period has finished. Therefore, in this mode of instruction, the intent is to create a temporary access to instruction and instructional support that is easily implemented and available during crisis.

## **Methodology**

### **Research Questions**

It seemed relevant to identify what topics were the most prevalent in the online experience of the freshmen students who answered the survey. These topics would shed light on what they were thinking and feeling regarding this new classroom environment which, evidently, added a new area of difficulty to their lives during the pandemic. In this way, this study was guided by the following research questions:

- a) What are the most salient themes students discussed when asked to provide their professors with advice or suggestions for the rest of the academic year?
- b) What are the main challenges and positive aspects of the experiences that they report?

### **Participants and Context**

This study was carried out with data from a public traditional university in Chile which enrolls more than 40,000 students per year. This university is among the most prestigious in the country and has been ranked among the top ten universities in Latin America (Times Higher Education, 2020).

We focused on the experiences of first-year students as this would be these students' first encounter with the university. Their way to become part of this new academic community of practice lacked the possibility to interact in person with peers, professors, and staff. Therefore, most doubts had to be solved remotely because academic communication was done either in class or via e-mail. The same happened with working or studying in groups. These are situations which add to what is already known about students' high levels of stress and anxiety during their first year of university (García-Ros, Pérez-González, Pérez-Blasco, & Natividad, 2012)

These circumstances added more tension to an already stressed group of students who had to finish their senior year of high school after the social awakening that Chile experienced on October 18, 2019 (Gaete et al., 2020; Garcés Durán, 2020). Demonstrations lasted for months and caused the country's university entrance test date to be postponed twice. On March 3rd, Chile had its first reported COVID-19 case. From then on, there was a series of measures adopted to prevent the spread of the virus. One of those was the interruption of all face-to-face contact in schools and

universities. This university, as most HE institutions, chose to postpone the beginning of their academic activities in order to reorganize, learn, and adapt to this new teaching and learning situation; They decided to hold all academic activities using emergency remote teaching via Zoom. Additionally, there were different initiatives led by the Undergraduate Studies Provost to help the whole academic community adapt to this situation. Different websites and help desks were created to aid both professors and students. Social media were used to communicate with students, and a class that was intended to help freshmen understand and thrive in their first year at the university was transformed into an online course that was available until May. Professors were encouraged to take workshops and to schedule one-on-one meetings to learn about the teaching platform and to make a more thorough use of the educational platforms that help with the administration of each class. At the same time, there was a series of documents produced by the Academic Provost office team intended to provide administrative and academic guidelines to ease the transition into online lessons. The first week of online classes was only devoted to getting in touch with students in each class and asking if they had connectivity issues. Academically speaking, university authorities suggested focusing only on teaching core content and to make adjustments reducing course objectives and course load.

Additionally, the university created a program to provide tablets and free internet connection to students who required it. Considering that about 50% of the students in the researched school come from low income families (equivalent to 177 dollars per person per month) (Díaz-Romero, 2019) -15% more than in the rest of the university- several of them requested this help. In spite of this, there was a strike led by students requesting more technological help and a decrease in academic workload, study weeks without lessons, and fewer class modules per week. The strike lasted, depending on the program, from a few days to five weeks.

In this preliminary analysis, we focused on one of the 19 schools within the university. From this smaller sample, we decided to focus on all first-year students who attended the six undergraduate programs offered by the School of Philosophies and Humanities. As shown in Table 1, the majority of these students are female, that is, about 68 percent identify as female.



**Table 1***Number of Students who Completed the Survey Per Program and Gender*

<b>Programs</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Total</b>
International studies	18	1	19
Philosophy	14	24	38
History	22	19	41
Linguistics and Literature	36	7	43
English linguistics and literature	21	10	31
Education	23	3	26
Total (%)	134 (67.7%)	64 (32.3%)	198 (100%)

This trend is true for most of the programs within the school, with the exception of philosophy, where there are more males than females, and in history, where there is a more equal distribution in terms of gender. Table 2 below shows the number of students enrolled in each of the programs who answered the survey in terms of the establishment they graduated from before entering university.

**Table 2***Number of Students who Completed the Survey Per Graduation Establishment and Program*

<b>Type of Establishment</b>	<b>Int'l studies</b>	<b>Phil.</b>	<b>History</b>	<b>Ling. &amp; Lit.</b>	<b>Eng Ling &amp; Lit</b>	<b>Edu- cation (K-8)</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>% of grand total</b>
Municipal	1	1	7	7	4	5	25	12.63%
Municipal emblematic	0	3	5	1	3	2	14	7.07%
Private	3	10	4	6	2	1	26	13.13%
Private subsidi- zed	8	13	12	15	11	10	69	34.85%
No info.	7	11	13	14	11	8	64	32.32%
Total	19	38	41	43	31	26	198	100%

Following Table 2, most students came from private state-subsidized high schools, and only about 20 percent of the students came from municipal or municipal emblematic establishments. This distinction is relevant given the great educational inequality that exists in Chile, depending on the type of establishment students attend. Several studies have shown

that private establishments consistently achieve better academic results than municipal ones (Bravo, Contreras, & Sanhueza, 1999; Mizala & Romaguera, 1998, 2002) -with the exception of municipal emblematic high schools, which are known for their academic rigor and high educational achievement (Centro de Estudios Mineduc, 2020).

## **Data**

For this study, we used school-wide survey data that was collected during the 5th and the 22nd of June 2020. From these surveys, which were distributed online, we used demographic information and responses to one of three open-ended questions answered by first-year undergraduate students who were attending one school in this university. The one open-ended question, included in our analysis, asked students to provide advice to their instructors on what to improve during this emergency remote teaching period. We chose this question because we felt the data would allow us to see the main patterns in terms of issues that needed to be quickly dealt with in order to improve students' experience in this out-of-the-ordinary academic environment. Table 3 below shows the percentage of students who answered the survey and the question we analyzed based on the total number of enrolled students.

**Table 3**

*Percentage of Students in the Sample Based on Total Number of Enrolled Students.*

<b>n enrolled</b>	<b>n survey completed</b>	<b>% of total n enrolled</b>	<b>n of Q1 answered</b>	<b>% of total n enrolled</b>
426	298	69.95	136	31.92

As shown in Table 3, from a total of 426 enrolled first-year students in six different programs in the Humanities School at this university, 198 students completed the survey (answered all required questions), and 136 answered question one (that was optional).

**Table 4***Number of Students in the Sample by Program and Survey Completion*

Program	Survey completed			Q1 answered		
	n of enrolled	n	% of total enrolled	n	% of total enrolled	% of total survey completed
Philosophy	63	38	52.4	33	52.4	86.8
English Ling. & Lit.	78	31	24.4	19	24.4	61.3
Ling. & Lit.	101	43	23.8	24	23.8	55.8
History	92	41	30.4	28	30.4	68.3
Pedagogy (k-8)	44	26	54.5	24	54.5	92.3
Int'l studies	48	19	16.7	8	16.7	42.1
Average	71.0	33	33.7	22.7	33.7	67.8
Total	426	198	46	136	31.9	68.7

Following Table 4, most programs have a somewhat similar survey return rate (about 30 students per program) based on total number of enrolled students, with an average rate of survey completion in all programs of about 34% percent. Further, from all students who took the survey, about 68 percent answered the question we analyzed in depth for this study.

### Analysis

We analyzed the data from the open-ended question systematically using a thematic analysis (Guest, MacQueen, & Namey, 2014), which helped us identify and describe the implicit and explicit ideas that were present in the data. To this end, we started with an open coding that revealed the main categories in relation to the different aspects that students referred to in their comments. Then, an axial coding revealed the connections between categories. These connections allowed us to create three overarching categories that applied to all students' comments; thus, students included advice in relation to (a) academic aspects; (b) social aspects, and (c) a third category that encompassed all comments that could not be categorized as advice to instructors to improve their teaching.

Based on the above, we defined academic aspects as issues that directly related to students' academic program, its curriculum and implementation. In this category we included issues raised by students that related to methodology, class continuity, evaluations and assignments, classroom culture, time management, and academic support. In relation to the social/personal aspects of the instructors in relation to their students, we defined these as issues in relation to instructors socio-emotional skills and

the way these affected or influenced student-teacher relationships. In this second category, we included issues that related to the creation and maintenance of an academic, democratic community that talked about signs of empathy displayed by instructors, motivation to teach, patience, honesty, and need for psychological help for professors and students. Finally, the last category we created included statements that instead of providing advice, expressed appreciation, provided motivational words, or expressed sympathy for the work the instructors were doing. (For more details on coding and coding categories, please refer to the Appendix). It is important to mention that we coded students' comments with multiple codes depending on the issues referenced and, when students were emphatic and repeated certain issues in their comments, we duplicated codes, thus, accounting for students emphasizing specific aspects in a way that could later be translated in the frequency for that code.

Once we had agreed on the main codes and their definitions, we each coded a section of data independently to check for inter-rater reliability, reaching 88 percent agreement. We then discussed our differences, refined the codes, and reached 100 percent agreement. After we finished coding, we created frequency tables for the most important codes in each major category. We then compared and contrasted data within and across programs.

## Findings

Based on our analysis of the data described and following tables 5, 6, and 7 below, preliminary findings suggest that students are mostly concerned with academic aspects, which constituted almost 60 percent of the total of 293 coded instances.

**Table 5**

*Number of Coded Instances of Advice by Type and Program*

Program	Total n	Academic		Social/personal		No-advice	
		n	%	n	%	n	%
Philosophy	69	37	53.6	20	29.0	12	17.4
English Ling. & Lit.	40	24	60.0	12	30.0	4	10.0
Ling. & Lit.	63	41	65.1	20	31.7	2	3.2
History	57	32	56.1	19	33.3	6	10.5
Education (K-8)	50	28	56.0	20	40.0	2	4.0
Int'l studies	14	7	50.0	6	42.9	1	7.1
Average	48.8	28.2	56.8	16.2	34.5	4.5	8.7
Total	293	169		97		27	

**Table 6***Number of Students Based on Main Types of Coded Answers.*

Program	Total n of students	Academic		Social/personal		No-advice	
		n	%	n	%	n	%
Philosophy	38	22	57.9	15	39.5	7	18.4
English linguistics	31	16	51.6	10	32.3	4	12.9
Hispanic linguistics	43	18	41.9	13	30.2	1	2.3
History	41	22	53.7	16	39.0	5	12.2
Pedagogy (K-8)	26	18	69.2	14	53.8	2	7.7
Int'l studies	19	6	31.6	5	26.3	1	5.3
Total	198	102	51.5	73	36.9	20	10.1

“Total n of students” is based on the total number who answered the survey.

**Table 7***Number of Academic Coded Instances by Sub-Code and Program*

	Int'l studies	Philosophy	History	Ling. & Lit.	English Ling. & Lit	Education (K-8)	Total
Academic support	0	5	1	1	4	0	11
Class continuity	0	2	0	3	1	0	6
Evaluation & assign.	3	10	16	10	12	11	62
Methodology	4	18	13	21	7	14	77
Classroom culture	0	2	0	0	0	0	2
Time management	0	0	2	6	0	3	11
Total	7	37	32	41	24	28	169

These findings came as no surprise to us. However, given the detail of coding we used for this analysis, we were able to have a much better idea of the specific academic aspects that needed to be addressed. The second most important aspect was the social/personal (34%), with almost

a third of the total number of coded instances. Finally, instances coded as no-advice constituted almost 9% of the total.

Upon further analysis, we found that most of the suggestions made by students focused on either the way in which classes were taught and on the amount of content and type of evaluations.

### **Social/Personal Issues**

Table 8 below shows that in the suggestions related to social or personal issues, the most common concept is empathy.

**Table 8**

*Number of Social/Personal Coded Instances by Sub-Code and Program*

<b>Sub-codes</b>	<b>Int'l studies</b>	<b>Philosophy</b>	<b>History</b>	<b>Ling. &amp; Lit.</b>	<b>English Ling. &amp; Lit</b>	<b>Education (K-8)</b>	<b>Total</b>
Community	3	3	5	4	4	3	22
Empathy	3	12	12	11	6	14	58
Honesty	0	1	0	0	0	1	2
Motivation	0	0	1	2	0	0	3
Patience	0	2	0	1	0	2	5
Mental health (st)	0	1	1	2	1	0	5
Mental health (instruct)	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>96</b>

Empathy was conceived as issues raised by students that related to the instructors' ability to acknowledge and empathize with students' current conditions that had impacted their homes and wellbeing, and as a result, students' ability to tackle academic requirements. A total of 56 students included comments that aligned with this category.

### **No-Advice**

Table 9 on page 222 shows the number of instances coded as no-advice.

**Table 9***Number of No-Advice Coded Instances by Sub-Code and Program*

Sub-codes	Int'l studies	Philosophy	History	Ling. & Lit.	English Ling. & Lit.	Education (K-8)	Total
Appreciation	1	5	3	1	0	2	12
Empathy	0	2	2	0	1	0	5
Encouragement	0	5	1	1	3	0	10
Total	1	12	6	2	4	2	27

Table 9 shows that most of these statements focused on expressing students' appreciation for the work and attitude their professors had expressed, and "appreciation" is the most frequent one (12 out of 27 instances). Appreciation was conceived as statements made by students that expressed gratitude to their instructors' performance in class, and a total of 15 students spread across programs included comments that aligned with this category.

## Discussion

Our first research question intended to identify the most salient themes students discussed when asked to provide their professors with advice or suggestions for the rest of the academic year. As mentioned, three main themes were identified as the ones that concerned students the most: methodology, evaluation, and empathy.

Academically, the students' focus is on the way classes are carried out by their instructors. Several of them asked instructors to adapt their lessons considering both the online aspect and the way they presented content. That entailed more student participation and less teacher-centered lessons in the virtual classroom. In the excerpt below,<sup>1</sup> the student was asking for different methodologies and ways to learn the content of the class. This suggestion included the need to interact with other classmates to learn, but also to get to know each other from a social point of view.

Yo creo que mi consejo es que diversifiquen la forma de entregar contenido para que sea más dinámico, se den más instancias de participación y de conocernos con actividades en grupo, en que tengamos que interactuar. No solo quedarse en el ppt o en el texto, sino lograr otro tipo de cosas para que la interacción sea mayor.



[I think that my advice is to diversify the way they teach content so that it is more dynamic, it provides more opportunities for participation and getting to know each other through group activities where we have to interact. Do not just resort to a PowerPoint presentation or the reading materials, but use other types of things so that interaction increases.]

Other students suggested that instructors add other resources to teach beyond the lecture type. For example, one student mentioned: “La utilización de mayor material al momento de la clase como uso de algún tipo de pizarra virtual o video, esto es debido a que hay clases en las que solo se habla y responde preguntas.” [The use of more tools during class time, such as the use of some kind of virtual board or a video, this (request) is due to the fact that there are lessons in which people talk and answer questions]. From this, we could deduce that the request also points to a change in roles in the classroom where students can participate more actively.

These suggestions related to interaction in the classroom and instances to become acquainted with each other appear to be a suggestion to create a community that could go beyond the boundaries of the classroom. The spaces where socialization usually are found outside the classroom, but in this case, this is not possible, so, class time is seen as a resource to get to know their classmates. Moreover, this university experience with only the academic aspect is only a fragment of the usual university experience of a first-year student (Author, 2020; van Compernelle, 2019; Zinchenko, 2009).

Conversely, there was no mention of classroom culture across disciplines. This could be due to the nature of the participants who, because of their socio-economic origin, are first-generation university students and are not acquainted with the university culture at all (Flanagan Borquez, 2017). So, they can only ask for what was part of their previous school experience in these circumstances.

Moreover, students also asked instructors to make sure that they were learning by including formative evaluations and providing a space in their lessons to talk to the students about their own progress. For example, one student expressed:

“Que hagan un seguimiento general de cómo van los contenidos y si estos están siendo aprendidos o no.”

[Do a general follow up to assess if the content is actually learned by the students or not].

In terms of evaluation, students asked for a decrease in workload reflected in fewer readings to complete and a request to employ alternative ways to evaluate their knowledge. On this, for instance, one student requested:

“Reducir la carga académica. Dejar el material que ocupan disponible luego del horario de clase. Dentro de lo posible ocupar pruebas de diagnóstico en vez de exámenes con nota.”

[Reduce the academic workload. Leave the materials that they (professors) use available after class. Where possible, use diagnostic tests instead of graded exams.]

While another student stated:

Más trabajos con retroalimentación o actividades cortas para hacer en el momento y aplicar lo aprendido.

[More written assignments with instructors’ feedback or short activities to do in class to apply what has been learned.]

Thus, in these excerpts we see the importance of modifying and diversifying assessments and ensuring availability of resources.

Formative evaluations allow students to have unbiased information about of their academic progress. This information can help them direct their study and could influence their final performance (Boud, 2017). These freshmen students come from a very different educational reality and do not know how they are going to be evaluated or are concerned about their performance in this new environment (Flanagan Borquez, 2017). A formative type of evaluation would allow them to know more about what is required in their classes and it would provide a concrete way to dissipate the stress about what they have to do to pass the class.

The third salient theme was empathy, included in the Social/Personal overarching theme. Students asked instructors to consider the pandemic and all its consequences when planning, teaching, and evaluating their progress. While it is expected to experience more stress as a first-year student at university (García-Ros et al., 2012), there is more tension in these students due to the pandemic in the same way as it has been reported in other countries (Islam et al., 2020; Javed et al., 2020; Marelli et al., 2020). Students are presenting their academic reality as something that is influenced by their general vulnerability and the specific situation they are experiencing at the moment (Abarca Millán, 2020). Some examples of this type of advice are presented below:

Les diría que fueran más empáticos, ya que muchos de nosotros no podemos acceder a clases a veces, o tenemos problemas en nuestras casas, etc.

[I would tell them to be more empathetic, since many of us cannot have access to their lessons sometimes, or have problems at home, etc.]

Que se tenga en cuenta que las condiciones y el ambiente son complejos en esta pandemia. Por lo que si se quiere tener un buen aprendizaje tengan más empatía. No todos tenemos el privilegio

de cumplir con toda la carga académica en tiempos de pandemia.

[The complex general conditions and the environment should be taken into account. Therefore, if what is intended is proper learning, have more empathy. Not all of us have the privilege to complete our academic workload during the times of the pandemic.]

This general request represents a deeper concern related to the probability of failing their classes. This is the first time these students are facing the requirements of HE, and they bring their family situations, their economic status, and their mental health to the discussion as a supporting argument for suggesting the reduction of academic workload and more flexibility during these times. These aspects are in line with the concepts presented by several authors that describe the university experience as challenging, but also that includes the students' entire context, not only the academic one (Author, 2020; Javed et al., 2020; van Compernelle, 2019; Zinchenko, 2009). It is also important to mention that empathy was the most common word encountered in students' responses university wide. This suggests that it was in everyone's mind to ask their professor to consider the general and specific contexts they were experiencing when making academic choices. This is in line with what other authors have mentioned in terms of mental health issues that students are facing (Marelli et al., 2020) as well as the plea for compassion from their professors (Gelles, Lord, Hoople, Chen, & Mejia, 2020).

Additionally, even though they were less frequent, it seemed relevant to present some of the answers that were not suggestions, but mostly words of encouragement and appreciation to the work that their professors had done. For example, one student said:

La verdad es que no se puede decir mucho más que sigan como lo están haciendo, ya que estos tiempos han sido muy complicados como para exigir demasiado.

[The truth is that not much can be asked for. Just keep on doing things as they are, as these times have been complicated enough to demand more.]

Another student stated:

Podría decir que ojalá mantengan esa disposición y empatía que tienen con nosotrxs, porque realmente ese tipo de apoyo es sumamente importante, además de ser necesario para podernos sentir resguardados académicamente.

[I could say that I hope they keep the disposition and empathy they have with us, because that type of support is really important, besides it is necessary for us to feel academically sheltered.]

These statements seem to reflect that students are showing their empathy towards their teachers by recognizing their positive attitude and

the effort made in each class. This is also seen in other studies that highlight compassion from teachers as a form of encouragement for students (Gelles et al., 2020). Thus, it seems logical that these students ask for the same type of treatment. This also presents an understanding of the possible realities that their professors are experiencing that might influence their own performance in class such as mental health issues just as other studies have mentioned (e.g., Marelli et al., 2020). The words of encouragement appeal to a future where all academic activities will be taken up as they were planned, and everybody will be able to continue with the curriculum as planned.

The second research question focused on the main challenges and positive aspects of the experiences that these students reported. First of all, emergency remote teaching in the context of the pandemic modified the entire experience for every student. The change included the impossibility to have access to learning spaces such as classrooms, libraries, computer labs, or internet connection on campus. The lack of access to these resources, in light of the socio-economic composition of the student body must be an added burden to keep up with their schoolwork (Flanagan Borquez, 2017). As face-to-face contact with peers and instructors was impossible, the idea of being part of a community and learn about its cultural practices was challenged. This lack of community ties made the entire experience a solitary one for these first-year students who ask for participation in the classroom and to use the online time with their professors not only to cover content, but also to get to know each other. As an example, one student stated:

Que se den clases para hablar con nosotres, hacer comunidad y dialogar en conjunto las metodologías. Además de que se dé el trabajo de hacer evaluaciones formativas

[Use some lessons to talk with us, create community and talk as a group about methodologies. Besides, make the effort to create formative evaluations.]

The other challenges are the teaching and evaluation methodologies that, according to what students suggest, seem to be mostly teacher-centered and less focused on the learning process and more on the product. As mentioned previously, there is a difference between online teaching and emergency remote instruction. The intent of the latter is only to provide access to instruction and instructional support to students while there is confinement due to the effects of the pandemic. In spite of all the efforts made by the university to train professors how to use these platforms, due to the emergency and the fact that many were less acquainted with technology, many instructors resorted to the same methodology they use in face-to-face classes: lectures with Q&A. These practices restrict participation and make students feel less in control of their own learning, and the pandemic has revealed an issue that goes beyond the limits of the pandem-

ic and emergency remote instruction.

The same concern applies to the request for transparency in their evaluations. Several students asked to know what would be evaluated. They also wanted to know about their progress through formative evaluations or short evaluations where they would get feedback from their professors. For example, one student mentioned: “Poder realizar más actividades formativas para saber si estamos entendiendo correctamente o destinar una clase para repasar, antes de trabajos o evaluaciones.” [Be able to have more formative activities to know if we understand correctly and have a class to review (the material) before assignments or evaluations.]

This context is stressful for everyone, so even though many instructors may be willing to think about their practices, it is a challenge to ask them to modify methodologies they consider efficient and have been using for years. Training to use new platforms requires more than just a few weeks and professors are suffering from the stress of the pandemic, too. The survey also showed a more positive aspect that included students' gratitude and encouragement towards their professors. Students' statements in that respect presented an experience where students felt understood and not alone.

One theme that appeared in relation to the social and personal challenging aspects was mental health. According to a Chilean journal edited by the Association of Physicians, one in five people in Chile has suffered from one psychiatric illness during the last year (Cofré, 2019). Moreover, this constitutes the second cause of death in young people in the country.

To the social and health situation already mentioned, the new academic environment and the inability to deal with their academic workload and the types and nature of their evaluations added another layer to these students' mental health issues. When the concept is mentioned, there is a suggestion to consider it as a factor in order to make academic choices. For instance, one student stated:

Intentar clases más dinámicas y más evaluaciones sin nota pero con retroalimentación, asegurarse de que estamos aprendiendo y cuidando de esa forma nuestra salud mental.

[Try to teach more dynamically and (administer) more evaluations without a grade, but with feedback, make sure we are learning and, in that way, taking care of our mental health.]

In sum, students' main concerns are derived from the remote emergency modality in relation to academic workload, assessment, flexibility, mental health issues, and empathy from their professors. These topics require going beyond the information in the surveys, creating other opportunities to discuss the concerns of both students and professors about adaptation to the new situation, and acknowledging the changing needs expressed by these students in their first year of university studies.

## **Implications**

This study has important implications not only to inform online instruction during times of restricted (or no) access to in-person classes but also to inform policy concerning university-wide and nation-wide conditions that need to be met to serve all students. In other words, if this type of online teaching continues, considering what the students reported, their mental health and access to internet should be considered when implementing new aid measures. Additionally, it would be necessary to adapt course content, teaching methodologies, and assessment and evaluation strategies in order to formally acknowledge challenges in this form of interaction. These actions would prevent the increase in the educational gap reported by Murillo & Duk (2020) and would provide proper training to instructors who are not properly acquainted with virtual environments Arriagada (2020).

## **Limitations and Further Research**

One of the limitations we identify in this exploratory stage of our research project is that we only focused on first-year students. As this was an exploratory analysis, we decided to only focus on first-year students' responses to a single open-ended question, but future research should look into the experiences of students from different cohorts within the same programs in order to better understand the needs of students at different stages of their university journeys.

Additionally, it would be relevant to look into other aspects of the data, such as the relationship between some socio-economic factors and their university experience. If correlations between these factors were found, it would allow for a more targeted and student-specific approach to address the challenges that students would likely face in these situations. We also believe it would be important to compare and contrast this demographic information to data recently gathered after new teacher training was provided and modifications were made to teaching platforms at the university in order to assess the effectiveness of the measures taken so far, and to assess whether certain issues persist and/or have increased or decreased in relevance based on student reporting.

Further, our research only used data from a school-wide survey, and even though it allowed for participants to answer open-ended questions which provided very important data, more detailed qualitative data was not collected. We believe future research should also aim at collecting more detailed information from participants through interviews or focus groups.

Finally, we believe it would be very interesting to also include information about the experiences of instructors to have a more holistic understanding of the main issues. For example, it would be pertinent to

identify the strategies that professors employed to deal with the situation at hand and also how, from their perspectives, this affected their plans and class objectives.

### Endnote

- 1 All excerpts were transcribed and translated by the authors (both of which hold degrees in English Linguistics and are native Spanish speakers).

### Appendix

Code	Description
<b>Academic aspects</b>	Issues that directly relate to students' academic program, its curriculum and implementation
<i>Methodology</i>	Issues related to the set of overarching principles that structure and guide instructors' classes
1. Class format	Issues related to the way the class is structured, how content will be delivered, activities included, etc.
2. Class preparation	Issues related to how well-prepared the instructor is to deliver the class
3. Self-evaluation	Issues related to instructor's self-assessment based on class overall development
4. Clarity and consciousness	Issues related to how clear and concise course contents are being presented by the instructor
5. Feedback and rapport	Issues related to instructor's ability to create rapport with students and take into consideration feedback from students in relation to the course
6. Interaction	Issues related to student-teacher interaction online, on and off class time
7. Flexibility	Issues related to the degree in which instructors are able to adapt their teaching methodology considering students' special circumstances
8. Planning	Issues related to instructors' preparedness to teach course content, including organization of course content and time allotment for course activities
9. Engagement	Issues related to instructors' ability to encourage student participation and engagement in class activities
10. Individual/group activities	Issues concerning the inclusion of class activities that are individual and in groups.
11. Online-class teacher training	Issues concerning the instructors' preparedness to teach in an online context



<i>Class continuity</i>	Issues pertaining to the lack or existence of interruptions in the regular flow of academic activities in the semester, including the frequency and continuity of sessions.
<i>Evaluations and assignment</i>	Issues concerning the timing, content, periodicity, and number of evaluations and assignments included in the course
1. Workload	Issues related to amount of work that students are required to tackle towards completion of the course, including number and difficulty of readings, assignments, and evaluations.
2. Deadlines	Issues concerning the amount of time instructors give students to complete and/or prepare for evaluations and assignments
3. Transparency	Issues relating to the transparency of expectations and evaluation criteria of evaluations and assignments
4. Flexibility	Issues relating to the type of evaluations, their length, and deadlines considered for the course
5. Formative/summative	Issues pertaining to the different types of evaluations proposed for a class and their importance and impact in the learning process
<i>Classroom culture</i>	Issues related to the way teachers and students are expected to behave/participate in the university culture
<i>Time management</i>	Issues related to the way time is used in class in terms of class frequency, punctuality, time to rest during classes, and their duration.
1. Frequency	Issues related to the number of sessions a class meets during the week
2. Punctuality	Issues related to the adherence of times to begin and end classes
3. Breaks	Issues related to the presence or absence of breaks during class time
4. Length of classes	Issues related to the duration of classes
<i>Academic support</i>	Issues concerning the way instructors make themselves available to students to provide academic support as well as the timeliness of this availability
1. Office hours	Issues pertaining to instructors' availability to meet with students outside of the class period
2. Academic resources	Issues related to availability of tools to aid students in their academic process as well as the possibility to have access to them promptly

a. Availability	Issues related to the possibility to have access to different academic resources that can help students in their learning process
b. Promptness	Issues concerning the access to academic resources in a timely manner
<b>Social/personal aspects</b>	Issues concerning instructors' socio-emotional skills and the way these affect/influence student-teacher relationship
<i>Community</i>	Issues concerning the creation and sustaining of a healthy and democratic academic community in the course
1. Dialogue	Issues concerning the instructors' ability to initiate, maintain, and encourage student-instructor dialogues that allow the discussion of students' concerns to be heard and duly considered
2. Agreement	Issues relating to the instructors' ability and willingness to reach agreements with the students based on their expressed needs and concerns in course-related aspects
3. Safe spaces	Issues concerning the instructors' ability to create, maintain, and foster safe spaces in the virtual classroom and platforms where students can express their needs and concerns
<i>Empathy</i>	Issues related to the instructors' ability to acknowledge and empathize with students' current conditions that have impacted their homes and wellbeing and, as a result, students' ability to tackle academic requirements
<i>Motivation</i>	Issues relating to the instructors' motivation to teach and persevere despite pandemic-related challenges that might have affected the courses they teach
<i>Patience</i>	Issues relating to the instructors' ability to show and remain calm and composed despite pandemic-related challenges that might have affected the courses they teach
<i>Honesty</i>	Issues related to the instructors' ability to create a class environment where both students and instructors would feel comfortable sharing pandemic-related concerns that could affect their academic performance
<i>Psychological help for professors</i>	Issues related to the instructors' need for professional help due to the pandemic to support their mental well-being

<i>Student mental health</i>	Issues related to the students' need for professional help to the pandemic to support their mental well-being
<b>No-advice</b>	Statements, that instead of providing advice, express appreciation, provide motivating words, or express sympathy for the work done
<i>Appreciation</i>	Statements that express gratitude to their instructors (for the work carried out by their instructors)
<i>Encouragement</i>	Statements that provide motivating words to instructors to continue with the work that has been done
<i>Empathy</i>	Statement that show compassion for the situation that the instructors are going through

## References

- Abarca Millán, E. (2020). *Equitable access to higher education in Chile: An analysis of special-access students' reported experiences at university* (University of Pittsburgh). Retrieved from <http://d-scholarship.pitt.edu/38706/>
- Arriagada, P. (2020). Pandemia COVID-19 : educación a distancia. O las distancias en la educación [COVID-19 Pandemic: distance education. Or the distances in education]. *Revista Internacional de Educación Para La Justicia Social*, 9(3).
- Blankstein, M., Frederick, J. K., & Wolff-Eisenberg, C. (2020). *Student Experiences During the Pandemic Pivot*. In Ithaka S&R. Retrieved from <https://www.luminafoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/sr-report-student-experiences-during-the-pandemic-pivot.pdf>
- Boud, D. (2017). Standards-based assessment for an era of increasing Transparency. In D. Carless, S. M. Bridges, C. Ka Yuk Chan, & R. Glofcheski (Eds.), *Scaling up Assessment for Learning in Higher Education* (pp. 19–32). Springer.
- Bravo, D., Contreras, D., & Sanhueza, C. (1999). *Rendimiento educacional, Desigualdad, y Brecha de desempeño Privado/Público: Chile 1982-1997 [Educational performance, inequality, and private/public achievement gap: Chile 1982-1997]*. Santiago, Chile.
- Caballero-Domínguez, C. C., & Campo-Arias, A. (2020). Problemas de salud mental en la sociedad: un acercamiento desde el impacto del COVID 19 y de la cuarentena. *Duazary*, 17(3), 1–3. <https://doi.org/10.21676/2389783x.3467>
- Cáceres-Muñoz, J., Jiménez Hernández, A. S., & Martín-Sánchez, M. (2020). School closings and socio-educational inequality in times of COVID-19. An exploratory research in an international key. *Revista Internacional de Educación Para La Justicia Social*, 9(3), 199–221. <https://doi.org/10.15366/RIEJS2020.9.3.011>

- Cea, F., García Hormazabal, R., Turra Chico, H., Moya Figueroa, B., Sanhueza Jara, S., Moya Sobarzo, R., & Vidal Hernández, W. (2020). Educación online de emergencia: Hablando a pantallas en negro (Online emergency education: Talking to black screens). Retrieved October 3, 2020, from Ciper académico website: <https://www.ciperchile.cl/2020/06/08/educacion-online-de-emergencia-hablando-a-pantallas-en-negro/>
- Centro de Estudios Mineduc. (2020). *Liceos Emblemáticos y Bicentenario*. Retrieved from [https://centroestudios.mineduc.cl/wp-content/uploads/sites/100/2020/02/APUNTES-1\\_2020\\_f01.pdf](https://centroestudios.mineduc.cl/wp-content/uploads/sites/100/2020/02/APUNTES-1_2020_f01.pdf)
- Cofré, P. (2019). Deudas, desafíos y medidas: Radiografía a la salud mental en Chile (Debts, challenges and measures: X-ray of mental health in Chile). Retrieved October 4, 2020, from Vida Médica, Colegio Médico de Chile website: <http://revista.colegiomedico.cl/deudas-desafios-y-medidas-radiografia-a-la-salud-mental-en-chile/>
- Díaz-Romero, P. (2019). *Reporte gratuidad y beneficios*. Retrieved from [http://gestiondb.e.uchile.cl/menus/docs/2019\\_reporte\\_gratuidad\\_beneficios.docx.pdf](http://gestiondb.e.uchile.cl/menus/docs/2019_reporte_gratuidad_beneficios.docx.pdf)
- Díez Gutiérrez, E. J., & Gajardo Espinoza, K. (2020). Educar y evaluar en tiempos de Coronavirus: la situación en España. *Multidisciplinary Journal of Educational Research*, 10(2), 102–134. <https://doi.org/10.17583/remie.2020.5604>
- Díez Villoria, E., & Sánchez Fuentes, S. (2015). Universal design for learning as a teaching method in order to meet the need for diversity in universities. *Aula Abierta*, 43(2), 87–93. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.aula.2014.12.002>
- Educación 2020. (2020). *Recomendaciones para la política pública y gestión escolar sobre los resultados de la encuesta #EstamosConectados*. [Recommendations for public policy and school management based on results from survey#connected]. Retrieved from <http://educacion2020.cl/documentos/policy-brief-estamosconectados/>
- Flanagan Borquez, A. (2017). Experiences of first-generation students in Chilean universities: Realities and challenges. *Revista de La Educación Superior*, 46(183), 87–104. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.resu.2017.06.003>
- Gaete, A., Iturrieta, P., Peña, C., Soto, H., Valenzuela, C., Veliz, V., & Vera, F. (2020). *The 2019 Social Outbreak: Evidence of Delusional Oasis*. In *CIPER Chile*. Retrieved from <https://ciperchile.cl/wp-content/uploads/en-ingles.pdf>
- Garcés Durán, M. F. (2020). *Estallido social y una nueva constitución para Chile* [Social outbreak and a new constitution for Chile] (1st ed.). Retrieved from [https://books.google.cl/books?hl=es&lr=&id=QwXcDwAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PT3&dq=estallido+social+chile&ots=1tQHTinfiq&sig=w1ek4pFjqhAnsm-IPL5C8qBajj4&redir\\_esc=y#v=onepage&q=estallido social chile&f=false](https://books.google.cl/books?hl=es&lr=&id=QwXcDwAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PT3&dq=estallido+social+chile&ots=1tQHTinfiq&sig=w1ek4pFjqhAnsm-IPL5C8qBajj4&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=estallido social chile&f=false)
- García-Ros, R., Pérez-González, F., Pérez-Blasco, J., & Natividad, L.

- (2012). Academic stress in first-year college students. *Revista Latinoamericana de Psicología*, 44(2), 143–154.
- Gelles, L. A., Lord, S. M., Hoople, G. D., Chen, D. A., & Mejia, J. A. (2020). Compassionate flexibility and self-discipline: Student adaptation to emergency remote teaching in an integrated engineering course during COVID-19. *Education Sciences*, 10(11), 1–23. <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci10110304>
- Guest, G., MacQueen, K., & Namey, E. (2014). Introduction to applied thematic analysis. In *Applied Thematic Analysis* (pp. 3–20). <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781483384436.n1>
- Hodges, C., Moore, S., Lockee, B., Trust, T., & Bond, A. (2020). *The difference between emergency remote teaching and online learning*. Retrieved October 3, 2020, from Educause Review website: <https://er.educause.edu/articles/2020/3/the-difference-between-emergency-remote-teaching-and->
- Islam, A., Barna, S. D., Raihan, H., Khan, N. A., & Hossain, T. (2020). Depression and anxiety among university students during the COVID-19 pandemic in Bangladesh: A web-based cross-sectional survey. *PLoS ONE*, 15(8), 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0238162>
- Javed, B., Sarwer, A., Soto, E. B., & Mashwani, Z. R. (2020). The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic's impact on mental health. *International Journal of Health Planning and Management*, 35, 993–996.
- Marelli, S., Castelnuovo, A., Somma, A., Castronovo, V., Mombelli, S., Bottoni, D., ... Ferini-Strambi, L. (2020). Impact of COVID-19 lockdown on sleep quality in university students and administration staff. *Journal of Neurology*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00415-020-10056-6>
- Martínez, J. (2019). Educación superior en línea: ¿qué tan atrasado está Chile? *América Economía*. Retrieved from <https://mba.americaeconomia.com/articulos/reportajes/educacion-superior-en-linea-que-tan-atrasado-esta-chile>
- Mizala, A., & Romaguera, P. (1998). Desempeño Escolar y Elección de Colegios: La Experiencia Chilena [School performance and School selection: Chilean experience]. In *Serie Economía*, 36, Santiago.
- Mizala, A., & Romaguera, P. (2002). Equity and educational performance. In *Serie Economía*, 136, Santiago, Chile.
- Muñoz Vidal, F., & Cartes Arévalo, J. (2020). Diseño Universal del Aprendizaje, una estrategia de enseñanza pertinente en tiempos de COVID-19 [Universal Design of Learning, a pertinent teaching strategy in times of COVID-19]. In N. Araneda Garcés & J. Parra Díaz (Eds.), *Educación e Inclusión en pandemia: Repensando la educación en medio de la crisis* (1st ed., pp. 164–177). Nueva Mirada Ediciones.
- Murillo, F. J., & Duk, C. (2020). El COVID-19 y las Brechas Educativas. *Revista Latinoamericana de Educación Inclusiva*, 14(1), 11–13. <https://doi.org/10.4067/s0718-73782020000100011>
- Palvia, S., Aeron, P., Gupta, P., Mahapatra, D., Parida, R., Rosner, R., &

- Sindhi, S. (2018). Online education: Worldwide status, challenges, trends, and implications. *Journal of Global Information Technology Management*, 21(4), 233–241. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1097198X.2018.1542262>
- Peloso, R. M., Ferruzzi, F., Mori, A. A., Camacho, D. P., Franzin, L. C. da S., Margioto Teston, A. P., & Freitas, K. M. S. (2020). Notes from the Field: Concerns of Health-Related Higher Education Students in Brazil Pertaining to Distance Learning During the Coronavirus Pandemic. *Evaluation and the Health Professions*, 43(3), 201–203. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0163278720939302>
- Rupnow, R. L., Ladue, N. D., James, N. M., & Bergan-Roller, H. E. (2020). A Perturbed system: How tenured faculty responded to the COVID-19 shift to remote instruction. *Journal of Chemical Education*, 97(9), 2397–2407. <https://doi.org/10.1021/acs.jchemed.0c00802>
- Shanahan, L., Steinhoff, A., Bechtiger, L., Murray, A. L., Nivette, A., Hepp, U., ... Eisner, M. (2020). Emotional distress in young adults during the COVID-19 pandemic: Evidence of risk and resilience from a longitudinal cohort study. *Psychological Medicine*, 1(10). <https://doi.org/10.1017/S003329172000241X>
- Sheraton, M., Deo, N., Dutt, T., Surani, S., Hall-Flavin, D., & Kashyap, R. (2020). Psychological effects of the COVID 19 pandemic on health-care workers globally: A systematic review. *Psychiatry Research*, 292(July). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychres.2020.113360>
- Times Higher Education. (2020). University of Chile. Retrieved November 25, 2018, from World University Rankings website: <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/world-university-rankings/university-chile>
- van Compernelle, R. A. (2019). The qualitative science of Vygotskian sociocultural psychology and L2 development. In J. W. Schwieter & A. Benati (Eds.), *The Cambridge Handbook of language learning* (pp. 62–83). Cambridge University Press.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes* (M. Cole, V. John-Steiner, S. Scribner, & E. Souberman, Eds.). Harvard University Press.
- Zhai, Y., & Du, X. (2020). Addressing collegiate mental health amid COVID-19 pandemic. *Psychiatry Research*, 288, 1–2.
- Zinchenko, V. P. (2009). Consciousness as the Subject matter and task of psychology. *Journal of Russian & East European Psychology*, 47(5), 44–75. <https://doi.org/10.2753/rpo1061-0405470503>

**Rosa Bahamondes Rivera is an assistant professor at the University of Chile in Santiago, Chile.**

**Erika Abarca Millán is a faculty member at Point Park University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.**





## FOUND IN OZ, THE RUBY SLIPPERS TO EMBRACING DIGITAL CLASSROOMS THROUGH APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY

*Within the context of a global pandemic and challenges of adapting pedagogical practice to virtual instruction, four higher education professors came together to share observations and review student feedback regarding their online learning experiences. Using an Appreciative Inquiry (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987) theoretical framework, researchers mapped the journey of transforming their instruction and delivery by collectively re-envisioning the upcoming semester's online teaching approach. This paper documents outcomes of the study offering the reader a framework to harness professional capital, as well as replicable online instructional strategies, with implications related to the course, student, and instructor.*

### Context and Dorothy as Metaphor

During the first full week of March 2020, four teacher preparation faculty from a publicly funded four-year institution of higher education in New England left their classrooms to enjoy a respite during the college's spring break. As in previous semesters, lecture and practicum courses in special education, elementary, and early childhood education were scheduled to be delivered via a face-to-face format. Though the instructors' courses aligned to a research-supported quality assurance framework for online course delivery (Quality Matters Higher Education Rubric, 2013), and course materials supported preservice teachers' fluency in classroom technology based on ISTE standards (Crompton, 2017), online course instruction was considered supplemental and not the primary delivery model scheduled for the Spring 2020 semester.

Instead of returning to classrooms after the break, the instructors along with thousands of colleagues in schools across the country were asked to pivot to online teaching, as work and learning environments were effectively closed due to the global impact of the COVID-19 virus. Regardless of the assigned grade level, educators from early childhood education through higher education met the formidable challenge of adapting their pedagogical practice to virtual instruction seemingly overnight. In addition to providing students with engaging and rigorous online learning experiences, educators also provided social-emotional support to alleviate anxiety by instilling a sense of normalcy through virtual classroom practices as they completed the academic year (Fox, Bryant, Lin, Srinivasan,

2020; Rhode Island College, 2020).

The global pandemic drew attention to the inequities in education that negatively influence student academic outcomes. One such injustice was the lack of access to technology such as a home computer or viable internet availability, known concerns prior to the pandemic, but now critical course tools required to successfully complete assignments and maintain engagement in online learning. To bridge these gaps, some states created innovative partnerships to ensure all K-12 students had access to computers and internet capability at home (RIOI, 2020), thereby reducing some of the more glaring barriers to learning. However, many comprehensive supports provided by public schools (social-emotional initiatives, breakfast and lunch to offset food scarcity, and services for individuals with special needs) were far more difficult to address during extended periods of school shut-downs and statewide quarantines (Stein & Strauss, 2020; U.S. Department of Agriculture, 2020).

It is within this context four higher education instructors came together at the conclusion of the Spring 2020 semester to share observations and review student feedback regarding their online learning experiences. Though the instructors were seasoned and knowledgeable of their respective content, virtual learning environments, applications, technology, and novel approaches to online teaching and learning were not the familiar education landscape. Without their physical classrooms situated within brick-and-mortar schools the researchers kept returning to the metaphor of Dorothy in the Wizard of Oz, realizing they were no longer in Kansas.

This paper highlights the faculty collaboration (Hargreaves & O'Connor, 2018) anchoring the action research conducted during an unprecedented time in education. Using an Appreciative Inquiry (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987) theoretical framework, the researchers mapped the journey of transforming their instruction and delivery by collectively re-envisioning the upcoming semester's online teaching approach. This paper documents outcomes of the study offering the reader a framework to harness professional capital, as well as replicable online instructional strategies, with implications related to the course, student, and instructor.

## Research Questions

Two overarching research questions guided this study:

- 1) In what ways did an Appreciative Inquiry framework inform a collaboration among teacher preparation faculty to transform online teaching practices?
- 2) What changes were made to online course delivery based on results of the Appreciative Inquiry methodology?

The next sections provide an overview of the theoretical framework of the study, followed by a review of the literature specific to collabora-

oration and professional capital.

## **Appreciative Inquiry and the 5-D Cycle**

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) was developed as part of David Cooperrider's PhD dissertation and expanded in collaboration with his mentor, Suresh Srivastva from Case Western Reserve University (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987; Grieten et al., 2018). Together they developed a collaborative inquiry model that appreciated the best of what an organization offered (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987). The original study examined a new collaboration instituted at the Cleveland Clinic when its physicians demanded greater involvement in all aspects of managing the organization, moving beyond surgery and medical care, to also include administrative responsibilities. As part of the evaluation study of the shared management model, Cooperrider was charged with identifying gaps and deficits to be further addressed by hospital administration. Interestingly, it was only once Cooperrider reviewed stories he had curated in an interview database that he was led to

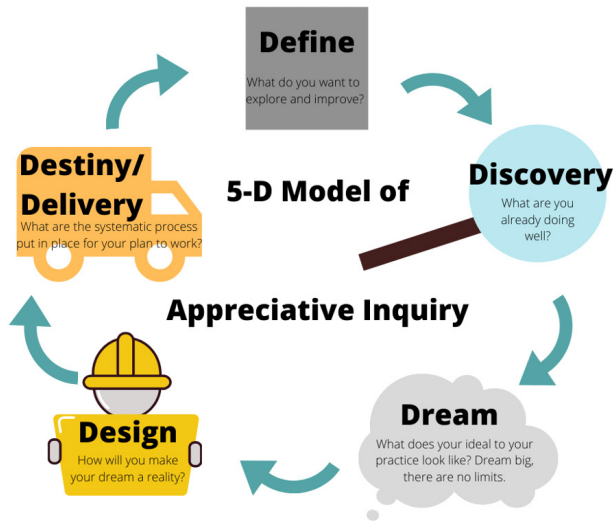
...literally set aside all the deficiencies and looked only at the things that were giving life to the system when it was most alive. Then I took the best of the best to then speculate and leap to ideal-type possibilities for the future—to build a theory of possibility: not a theory of yesterday's world but of tomorrow's possibilities (Greiten et al., 2018, p. 103).

The inquiry-based protocols of the AI model grounded his study in appreciation of what was already happening and served as the intervention. In the same interview conducted by Greiten et al. (2018), Cooperrider pointed out, "our questions are fateful: once posed, questions do their work; they cannot be stopped. We become what we inquire into. When people co-inquire into the life-giving, the good and the possible, they simultaneously change their system in that direction" (p. 104).

AI literature highlights its foundation in social constructivism, as Bloom (2013) and her colleagues noted there are deep roots with Dewey's philosophy that "education is not an affair of 'telling'...but an active and constructive process" (Dewey, 1916, p. 46). Though much of the literature in Appreciative Inquiry resides in organizational development research, there are also applications to higher education where AI is applied to evaluate organizational planning and assessment within student affairs (Fifolt & Lander, 2013), it is also used to understand the influence of teaching practices on student well-being (Lane et al., 2018), as well as to evaluate educational leadership and management education (Lambrechts et al., 2011).

**Figure 1**

*The 5-D cycle of Appreciative Inquiry*



The 5-D cycle of appreciative inquiry (AI) includes define, discover, dream, design, and destiny/delivery. Individuals utilizing AI carefully go through each step to successfully implement the model. Adapted from Buchanan (2014); cooperrider & Whitney (2006); Cooperrider Center for Appreciative Inquiry at Champlain College (2020).

The literature points to five phases of the Appreciative Inquiry cycle, also referred to as the 5-D cycle (Figure 1.), each with its own purpose and guiding questions: Define, Discovery, Dream, Design, and Destiny/Delivery (Smith, 2006). At the start of the project, stakeholders must first Define the objectives of their inquiry, establishing the scope and focus of what they want to learn. Then the process moves to the Discovery and Dream cycles inviting participants to reflect and share success stories to then re-envision these appreciated practices into what could be within the organization. The innovative approaches are then mapped to turn the dream into reality in the Design phase, identifying structures needed to ensure what should be in the organization. The Destiny/Delivery phase is the final portion of the iterative cycle and represents what will be by placing systemic structures in place to ensure sustainability and continued growth and development of the organization (Clarke & Thornton, 2014; Fifolt & Lander, 2013; Smith, 2006; Acosta & Douthwaite, 2005).

The faculty intentionally selected the Appreciative Inquiry model to avoid deficit-based thinking and to guide rich discussions as a strategy to first recognize and then build on effective teaching practices already in place. The dialogue served as a positive space to create a shared vision for professional online learning and helped to alleviate feelings of isolation

from colleagues and students (Giles & Kung, 2010) experienced by many during the Covid-19 pandemic (Fox et al., 2020).

### **Collaboration and Professional Capital to Address Covid-Related Shifts in Education**

In March 2020, radical changes were made in the delivery of education, as teachers and students retreated to home settings to complete the academic year online. Teachers across the education continuum worked tirelessly to teach the required content, while simultaneously investigating and implementing recent technology to deliver curriculum. Results from a national survey designed to evaluate the experience of pivoting from face-to-face to online teaching documented the experience of 4,000 faculty employed in higher education. An overwhelming 91% of the instructors moved their courses online (Fox et al., 2020) and noted “keeping students engaged and motivated to learn in a remote environment” was their greatest challenge (Fox et al., 2020, p. 7).

In a similar survey conducted of 1,008 undergraduate students during this same time, students confirmed their struggle to stay motivated and “missed receiving feedback from instructors and collaborating with fellow students” (Means & Neisler, 2020, p. 3). In addition to issues related to connection and motivation, faculty also noted concerns with equity and access to reliable technology as students reported using mobile phones to complete assignments because they lacked a home computer or adequate internet capacity. “These access issues, in addition to challenges with family and work responsibilities and financial and health concerns brought on by the pandemic, compromised student learning” (Fox et al., 2020, p.9).

Findings from these national survey results mirrored the experiences of the researchers of this study. As their courses shifted from in-person to online delivery, they found engaging with students in this new format challenging, especially as they simultaneously learned new features of applications and technology that had not yet been mastered. They were also aware from student feedback that issues related to lack of equitable access to course materials needed to be addressed. With these concerns in mind, the instructors gathered at the conclusion of the semester to share student feedback with the intent of using this informal data to make significant changes to their upcoming fall courses which would also be delivered online.

Research points to the effectiveness of school improvement efforts that are holistic and engage teachers through their relationships with one another as an effective strategy to influence change (Gulosino, Jones, & Franceschini, 2016). According to Hargreaves and O’Connor (2018), collaborative professionalism encourages “enhanced motivation, commitment to change...and tenacity in the face of obstacles” (p. 12), necessary

supports when addressing issues of student engagement, motivation, and the design of online instructional practices to minimize inequities in learning. Collaborations are a powerful strategy to create effective organizational change while increasing teacher retention in the field (Hargreaves & O'Connor, 2018). In response to significant changes in their teaching, the researchers designed a community of inquiry, committed to a shared vision through reflective dialogue about teaching and learning (Wenger, McDermott, Snyder, 2002) and focused on “professional capital” (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012) that assumed “good teaching is technically sophisticated and difficult ... [and is] perfected through continuous improvement” (p. 14).

The study adhered to Appreciative Inquiry protocols that provided the framework for weekly discussions to evaluate and modify teaching approaches in a fully virtual environment. The next section guides the reader through the AI Define, Discovery, and Dream cycles, serving as data collection for the study and includes agenda topics, guiding questions, highlights of meeting minutes, and decisions from the participating researchers. Results of the study are provided in the Design and Delivery cycles, detailing responsive pedagogical changes made to courses across their respective teacher preparation programs scheduled the following semester.

## **Methodology - Define, Discovery, and Dream...Steps Along the Yellow Brick Road**

### ***Define***

Over a 15-week period between May and August 2020, the researchers met weekly cataloging responses to agenda topics and guiding questions that aligned to the 5-D cycle from the Appreciative Inquiry framework (see Appendix A: Appreciative Inquiry 5-D Guiding Questions in Education). The first cycle of the AI 5-D model is to define one’s focus and objectives for the change process. The researchers were invigorated by the challenge of moving to full-time virtual learning and passionate about the success of their students. Using informal reflections and feedback from the researchers and their students regarding aspects of instruction that had positive impacts on students during face-to-face settings, the authors identified and defined four categories for their study: an expressed need for community, transparent course organization, equitable access, and meeting diverse learner needs.

For the purpose of this paper, community is defined as the relationship built and maintained between the student and her teacher, her fellow students, and the course itself. Research supports the importance of building positive relationships in educational settings, as they empower individuals, provide a sense of responsibility to the classroom environment, as well as contribute to a sense of safety within it (Muñoz & Dos-

sett, 2016). Research examining the most effective components of Danielson's Framework for Teaching (2015) shows that "support, discipline, and trust were significantly correlated with student achievement in a positive way" (Muñoz & Dossett, 2016, p.14). Building on this objective, the researchers identified ways to build community within a virtual environment so students would feel confident, safe, and able to participate in a predictable virtual classroom that facilitated their ability to take control of their learning.

Transparent course organization was specifically identified as a strategy to present how course materials were made visible and accessible to students. The online course instructor holds many roles including that of course facilitator and manager (Martin, et al., 2019) responsible for the "nuts and bolts" of the course in a transparent manner. For students this translates into their course materials being well-organized, the delivered content is accessible, assignments are collected and graded, and that attendance and participation are noted within the learning management system.

Access and equity addressed how students were able to engage with the online platform. For instance, do all students have a stable internet connection? Are there interventions that allow all students to have equitable opportunity and access to materials or lectures (i.e., can a deaf student access the content and instruction equally to his peers?). Do students have access to the necessary practicum experiences? Equitable access ensures "all materials and tools are accessible in multiple formats" (Darby & Lang, 2019, p.68) so that learning is made easier using various technologies, not more difficult.

Throughout the remaining cycles of the AI model these four categories: an expressed need for community, transparent course organization, equitable access, and meeting diverse learner needs served as the framework for the changes to course design and delivery developed through this study.

### ***Discovery***

Discovery, the second cycle of the AI 5-D model, asks individuals to identify through stories what they already do well. The Discovery stage allowed for engagement through storytelling and analysis of each of the researchers' most positive moments in their teaching history. The personal stories celebrated the expertise of the instructors and allowed them to learn from and about each other. Reminiscing about these shining moments as educators, common threads emerged from the narratives. In all examples, students were engaged and invested in their learning and the instructor provided learning opportunities that were tailored to specific learner needs. This portion of the AI framework facilitated two key elements of their work. First, it informed the researchers' future course revi-



sions. It also facilitated a sense of community between the instructors as they more fully appreciated the skills and professionalism each brought to their work in teacher preparation.

### ***Dream***

The third cycle of the AI 5-D model is Dream, during which individuals were challenged to take their identified past achievements and dream them forward. Guiding questions included imagining what the new learning environment might include and a description of the roles individuals would have within this space. In this re-envisioned educational landscape, they also asked what collaboration would look like between faculty.

Amabile and Kramer (2011) discussed how one uses small wins to ignite joy, engagement, and creativity in the classroom. With this in mind, each researcher envisioned her dream using her strengths to positively transform each of the identified components of virtual instruction. At the conclusion of the Dream cycle of the 5-D model, statements were written in the present as if having already achieved the vision for their work. For example, one researcher wrote

I am able to provide each student with a feeling of safety that encourages them to take risks in and out of the virtual classroom to enrich their understanding of course topics. Students begin to make connections between what we do in our class and transform knowledge into practice when working in supervised practicum in classroom environments.

The collaborative discussion that emerged from the Dream cycle resulted in a greater degree of mutual support and encouragement between members of the team. The iterative frame-work of reflecting and sharing professional experiences that were known and had proven to work well, served as steps along the proverbial yellow brick road, moving them closer to a re-envisioned teaching and learning environment. Several creative ideas surrounding the instructor, student, and course related to building community, transparent course organization, equitable access, and meeting diverse learner needs were further developed and are discussed in the next section focusing on the design and destiny cycle of the AI model.

### **Findings - Design and Destiny**

The final sections of the AI 5-D model, Design and Destiny, outline results of the researchers' work that translated into shared beliefs and teaching practices of the instructors, a shift in roles that included greater student accountability, as well as co-constructed revisions implemented in their respective courses as a result of the iterative Appreciative Inquiry model.

After recording and analyzing discussions related to their work

as faculty in higher education, several themes emerged within two broader categories: (1) the role of the instructor and (2) the collaboration established through the self-selected inquiry group. Across all themes that emerged, relationships stood as foundational to the work, including the notable professional capital gained through weekly virtual gatherings to discuss results of each AI phase. The process served as the intervention supporting the researchers through the rapid transition to online teaching precipitated by COVID-19. The design phase of AI moved shared recollections of effective teaching practices to co-constructed and re-imagined learning spaces that continued to hold students central to curriculum design and delivery.

The conversations culminated in actionable course revisions detailed in the Design and Destiny cycle. In the Design Cycle of AI, the researchers pooled together their dreams as they focused on central relationships: those between the teacher and student, between student and student, and also the students' connection to the course to implement a handful of significant adjustments to their classes.

## ***Design***

**Student to Teacher.** The instructors asked themselves, “How could their dreams be realized?” and “What tangible steps could be taken to better their classes?” “Almost all great breakthroughs come from focusing, working on a small number of ambitious goals, and creating something different and elegant in simplicity” (Fullan, 2012, p.17). In the Design Cycle, this “change knowledge” put forth by Fullan was implemented by the researchers as an iterative process to determine action steps for selected goals.

The researchers decided to shift some of their synchronous class time to address community building and to provide additional opportunities for connecting with students. One strategy provided a space for the instructor to have a “check-in” time with the students through community building activities, such as using apps such as Flipgrid, Voicethread, and Screencastify to respond to questions virtually, sharing their reactions to course content that provided the instructors with informal assessment data and snapshots of student satisfaction.

Clear expectations were always required in course design, but without regular “face-to-face” contact, what students could anticipate through virtual connections needed to be explicitly stated. For example, defining expectations surrounding turnaround time for emails, student questions, and grades were established. The instructors wanted to ensure students received consistent and timely responses to their questions. while also maintaining professional boundaries and expectations related to student emails. For example, one researcher prescribed the following: (1) instructors would respond to emails within a given time period. (2) Students

would identify who they were, the nature of the email, and list the course they were enrolled in, thereby saving the instructor's time, and provided additional context to accurately respond to student questions. (3) Students were explicitly told that grades would not be discussed via email, but if there was a question surrounding a posted grade the student should schedule a meeting with the professor to discuss at that time.

The instructors also chose to implement weekly online "coffee hours." At designated times, students could virtually drop in to chat with one another and their professors. Pedagogical research supports these "small investments in targeted relationships with students pay off with high-yield motivational and achievement results" (Fullan, 2012, pps. 3-4). These student-to-teacher investments served as preventative measures that demonstrated students' questions and concerns matter and needed to be addressed. Moreover, the policies set a precedent for the instructors ensuring consistency in responding to students across departments within the school of education.

**Student-to-Student.** The researchers desired to see students actively engaged or what Nipper (1989) identified as "noisy" within their online learning environments. One instructor introduced a strategy to encourage active engagement between students. To encourage characteristics of successful online learners, students identified as willing to speak up and seek assistance, the instructor shared a protocol for students to follow when they had questions about the course. Students were encouraged to first check with a 'study buddy' and check the course Q&A Discussion Forum on Blackboard for answers to their questions or to post a question. Students could then reach out to the instructor, if needed, but the strategy's purpose was to promote student development of their "noisy" selves by becoming more autonomous and actively engaged in their learning.

In their discussions the researchers often returned to the interpersonal relationships that allowed for a cycle of modeling, practice, and implementation. In order to see students engaged in meaningful learning in the online context, the researchers envisioned a community of learners with deep connections and trust that would allow for members of the class to put themselves on the line by teaching in front of each other, providing constructive peer review and feedback that would influence their development as teacher candidates. This was actualized through small group activities and assignments promoting collaboration during synchronous sections using breakout rooms via Zoom or Blackboard Collaborate (Markowitz, 2005).

The researchers envisioned their students engaged in an inquiry-based online class willing to be active and creative in the learning process, trying out teaching methods and critically reflecting on those experiences. By prioritizing the teacher-to-student and student-to-student relationships in these activities, the objective was to enhance students' focus and attention to the online classroom.

**Student-to-Course.** The researchers also prioritized the student to course relationship in the online classroom by ensuring, (1) the course content and materials were transparent and organized; (2) each student had access to the course materials and practicum experiences; and (3) the course materials met the diverse learner needs to ensure equity for each student in the course. The following information highlights ways in which the researchers addressed these three topics.

To support students' success in the course, it was imperative they were able to easily locate and navigate within the learning management platform. One tool the researchers developed was a standardized Blackboard template outlining course content, materials, assignments that were easily identifiable and consistent throughout the course design.

Access and equity were addressed in the varying modalities the researchers provided students for engaging with the content and practicum experiences in each course. One example was through the use of video modeling and video analysis to ensure all students had the opportunity to observe model teaching practices and young children in real-life educational settings - of particular importance as classroom-based practicum experiences were now not available in K-12 public school settings. Video modeling provided opportunities for the instructors to demonstrate instructional strategies to their students through self-produced videos shared via YouTube or Padlet, while video analysis (Baecher, 2020) used curated videos that served as exemplars for students to critically observe and relate to course content.

In order to achieve equity within the course it was necessary to provide a variety of teaching modalities, such as synchronous and asynchronous instruction, voiceovers, powerpoints, video lectures, modules, small and large group instruction and learning opportunities, as well as offering choice in how students demonstrated learning. As an example, students were provided choice through the use of a "playlist" of course assignments. When using a playlist students were provided a choice in how to demonstrate their understanding (Education Elements, 2020). This strategy differentiates instruction to meet individual academic and social-emotional needs by providing students with agency to demonstrate their learning along a developmental progression throughout the course.

Another strategy to enhance equitable student success within the virtual classroom was through the use of a goals contract. Because students need to be self-directed to experience success in a virtual course, the goals contract outlined expectations for students in the course coupled with an opportunity for students to design their own personal learning goals. The use of a goals contract shifts ownership of learning from the instructor to the student (Darby & Lang, 2019).

It should be noted, collectively over 100 hours of professional development were completed by the instructors during Summer 2020, covering topics aimed to improve knowledge and skills in online course de-

livery. Heinrich (2020) and her colleagues note the most effective way to successfully increase integration of technology in schools is by providing “intensive professional development that boosts teacher technology knowledge and experience at the start of the digital learning initiative” (p. 109). Two of the team members moved from knowledge building to implementation by creating an online tutoring initiative to expand their working knowledge of online instruction. Outcomes of this work informed methods courses, preparing teacher candidates for a new educational landscape of online teaching and learning.

### ***Destiny/Delivery***

The Destiny/Delivery cycle brings the work of Discovery, Dream and Design to a logical conclusion. It also forms the beginning of an appreciative learning culture. A major outcome of the Destiny/Delivery phase is the development of programmatic structures that will sustain the ideas and plans previously developed. To ensure students’ success in distance learning and, prior to engaging with the course content, students participated in various online modules and read articles pertaining to what it meant to be a successful learner in a virtual environment in addition to encouraging healthy self-care. Researchers empowered students to take control of their personal learning by exploring the dichotomy of receiving and accepting information because it came from someone of authority or becoming critical interrogators of “truth” by questioning information presented to them that does not align with their own experiences or research. They were encouraged to seek “truth” through questioning and exploring additional sources outside of what was provided to them within the context of the course (Markowitz, 2005). During this exploration students read an article and worked in small groups to reflect and dissect the information. Finally, students came together collectively and shared their thoughts through a facilitated discussion. Students determined that effective learners (1) understand their own biases, (2) investigate the “truth” of information disseminated to them, and (3) understand there can be multiple truths based on the social context, one’s own experience, and the perspective of the individual delivering the information.

When taught face-to-face, the delivery of lessons within the researchers’ practicum classes afforded pre-service teachers the opportunity to experience the elementary classroom through observations of skilled teachers and through teaching small groups of children themselves. According to Trilling and Fadel (2009), “online education may provide a less authentic context for many learners...Instructors of online classes must seek to make the learning experience authentic in this new context” (p. 34). When instruction moved online, one of the researchers addressed concerns with experiential learning when the course could no longer meet in the elementary school context. How could they deliver instruction in

an authentic manner?

The researchers chose to incorporate video analysis (Baecher, 2020) into the structure of their online classes using specific observation/analysis guidelines. One researcher incorporated videos of herself teaching elementary students. The pre-service teachers were able to see how the content they were learning would look in a real situation. The video analysis component allowed the instructor and students to pause the lesson for discussion or to replay key sections. Video analysis templates found in Baecher's (2020) book, *Video in Teacher Learning*, were selected depending on the focus of the lesson.

A final structure of the study included systems to sustain the critical reflective dialogue the researchers engaged in for this project, informed by the Appreciative Inquiry framework. One such system included continued inquiry of the instructors' online teaching, regularly scheduled meetings to examine outcomes of the implemented strategies detailed in this paper, and professional development to improve instruction and ensure student achievement.

The Dream/Delivery phase focused on continuous learning, adjustments, and collaboration. It helped build momentum and a shared positive image of the future allowing the researchers to continuously reflect on which practices were and were not effective in the virtual learning environment.

## **Recommendations**

Upon the completion of their work, the researchers of this study developed several recommendations for educators wishing to implement the AI model into their program development or redesign. Three primary recommendations should be considered by those wishing to implement the process in their work. These include: dedicated time to the process, teamwork, and use of the iterative 5-D cycle for continued course improvement.

First, it is essential to make time to invest in this inquiry process. The AI model was an effective tool, but it required commitment and time to navigate the 5-D cycle to yield results. For this project, weekly one-to-two-hour sessions were scheduled to devote ample time to the process. Each cycle necessitated exploration of the Guiding Questions (Appendix A) to identify, respond, listen, and re-envision the focus of the identified inquiry.

Second, working within a team to incorporate the AI model was effective as the researchers had the opportunity to share ideas and receive feedback; it also demonstrated shared professional values among colleagues seeking to improve instructional practices. Teachers and faculty members interested in implementing this framework into their own work in the classroom could utilize the model to not only improve their on-line



teaching practice, but any other facet of their work as educators. Clearly defining the change or area to be developed provides a strong foundation for the work and will make a significant impact on the overall process. Ultimately, the selected questions and area of inquiry to focus on will drive the transformation.

Third, in the implementation process of the AI 5-D cycle, one must be prepared to be vulnerable. As practices are analyzed, it is necessary to understand the importance of the strengths-based approach required in this methodology. Share stories of successful professional practice. Embrace possibility and lead with what one does well or what works in your organization and from there breathe life into new programmatic structures.

### **Conclusions: Embracing our Ruby Slippers... We Had What We Needed All Along**

Prior to the Design cycle of Appreciative Inquiry, the participants identified key instructional strategies that in brick-and-mortar classrooms had proven to be effective teaching practices. At this stage in the AI process, “participants identify the high-leverage changes in the organization’s systems, processes, roles, measures, and structures necessary for achieving the dream” (Mohr, 2001, p. 4). But, the Design phase was more than parsing out action steps; it was also “...about ‘translating’ the dream into the ‘language’ of the organization’s social architecture” (Mohr, 2001, p. 4). This phase required the researchers to radically shift the delivery model of their teaching while retaining the quality and content of their courses.

As in the Discovery and Dreaming cycles, the faculty focused on “what could be” in their virtual instructional practices so as to breathe life through architectural alterations required of the course, the instructor, and students to ensure their success. For example, to build community in on-line courses, the instructors focused on making personal connections during the initial sessions to develop a sense of community. Cyber-cafes were embedded in the course schedules as an informal support that established relationships among the members of the course. Student contracts focused on learning goals and were designed to ensure students developed agency, an important component of online learning.

To facilitate student development and empowerment in a virtual environment, faculty spent a significant amount of time considering the purpose of all course elements. For example, a plan for instructional delivery blending synchronous and asynchronous sessions was developed. A template for each type of session, along with a variety of formative assessments, provided feedback to students on their learning. Time was spent discussing what it meant to be an online learner and how to be successful. Taking this further, a faculty member challenged students to be critical consumers of information (Markowitz, 2005).

The researchers agreed to continue their work with the AI itera-



tive process, including a new research project and plan to continue revisions to their courses. The AI cycle aided in determining what was truly at the heart of the researcher's instruction and how this pedagogy would be translated to the virtual classroom. Ultimately, effective pedagogy was recognized as the instructors' metaphorical ruby slippers - educators already have the means to be successful in this new educational landscape. Apply an Appreciative Inquiry lens as you reflect, focus on what works in your teaching, collaborate with peers, and establish new instructional strategies that meet the needs of your students. Good teaching practices remain at the core of effective instruction, and technology and virtual learning environments are vehicles to achieve student success.

## Appendix A: Appreciative Inquiry 5-D Guiding Questions in Education

<b>DEFINE</b>	
<b>Questions</b>	<b>Responses</b>
<p>What do you wish to explore/change/innovate?</p> <p>What terms do you need a common understanding/definition of to aid in communication between each other?</p>	
<b>DISCOVER</b>	
<b>Questions</b>	<b>Responses</b>
<p>What is the best lesson you have ever taught?</p> <p>How did this lesson have an impact on your students?</p> <p>How would you describe the dynamics between you and your students?</p> <p>How would you describe the group energy?</p> <p>How was this experience the same and different from other teaching experiences you've had?</p> <p>What is the most important learning to take forward from this experience?</p>	
<b>DREAM</b>	
<b>Questions</b>	<b>Responses</b>
<p>What does your ideal look like?</p> <p>If you had no constraints, what would you do?</p> <p>Daydream forward to picture the ideal future for your online classes... What is so wonderful about this instruction?</p> <p>Imagine your online instruction in three years time. What are the three biggest things you've accomplished between now and then?</p>	

<b>DESIGN</b>	
<b>Questions</b>	<b>Responses</b>
What do you need to make your dream a reality?	
Who do you need to include in this plan?	
What logistical steps need to be put in place for your dream to be realized?	
What steps can you take to move you closer to your dream?	
<b>DESTINY/DELIVERY</b>	
<b>Questions</b>	<b>Responses</b>
What process(es) will you put in place?	
What changes will happen in your class?	
How will these process(es) be communicated?	
How will you know if you are effective?	
What are the next steps you will take?	

## References

- Acosta, A. & Douthwaite, B. (2005). *Appreciative inquiry: An approach for learning and change based on our own best practices*. ILAC Brief 6, Institutional Learning and Change (ILAC) Initiative. Downloaded from Better Evaluation [https://www.betterevaluation.org/sites/default/files/ILAC\\_Brief06\\_inquiry.pdf](https://www.betterevaluation.org/sites/default/files/ILAC_Brief06_inquiry.pdf)
- Amabile, T., and Kramer, S. (2011). *The progress principle: Using small wins to ignite joy, engagement, and creativity at work*. Boston: Harvard Business Review Press.
- Baecher, L. H. (2020). Video in teacher learning: *Through their own eyes*. Corwin.
- Bloom, J.L., Hutson, B.L., He, Y., & Konkle, E. (2013). *Appreciative education. New directions for student services*, 142, pp. 5-18. Wiley.
- Clarke, M. & Thornton, J. (2014). Using appreciative inquiry to explore the potential of enhanced practice education opportunities. *British Journal of Occupational Therapy*. 77(9), 475-478.
- Cooperrider, D.L. & Srivastva, S. (1987). Appreciative inquiry in organizational life. In Woodman, R.W. & Pasmore, W.A. (Eds.) *Research in organizational change and development*. (p. 129-170). JAI Press.
- Crompton, H. (2017). *ISTE standards for educators: A guide for teachers and other professionals*. International Society for Technology in Education.
- Danielson, C. (2015). *The framework for teaching: Evaluation instrument*. Hawker Brownlow Education.
- Darby, F., & Lang, J. M. (2019). *Small teaching online: Applying learning science in online classes*. Jossey-Bass.
- Dewey, J. (1916). *Democracy in education: An introduction to the philosophy of education*. Free Press.
- Education Elements (2020). Playlist building 101. Retrieved from [https://www.edelements.com/hubfs/Blog\\_Files/How%20to%20Pick%20the%20Right%20Instructional%20Model%20for%20Your%20Classroom/Playlist%20Building%20101%20Guide.pdf](https://www.edelements.com/hubfs/Blog_Files/How%20to%20Pick%20the%20Right%20Instructional%20Model%20for%20Your%20Classroom/Playlist%20Building%20101%20Guide.pdf) on 9.21.2020
- Fifolt, M. & Lander, L. (2013). Cultivating change using Appreciative Inquiry. *New Directions for Student Services*, n143. Wiley.
- Fox, K., Bryant, G., Lin, N., Srinivasan, N. (2020, July 8). *Time for Class – COVID-19 Edition Part I: A National Survey of Faculty during COVID-19*. Tyton Partners and Every Learner Everywhere. [www.everylearnereverywhere.org/resources](http://www.everylearnereverywhere.org/resources)
- Fullan, M. (2012). *Stratosphere: Integrating technology, pedagogy, and change knowledge*. Pearson Canada Inc.
- Giles, D. & Kung, S. (2010). Using Appreciative Inquiry to explore the professional practice of a lecturer in higher education: Moving towards life-centric practice. *Australian Journal of Adult Learning*, 50(2), 308-322.

- Greiten, S., Lambrechts, F., Bouwen, R., Huybrechts, J., Frys, R., & Cooperrider, D. (2018). Inquiring into Appreciative Inquiry: A conversation with David Cooperrider and Ronald Fry. *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 27(1), 101-114.
- Gulosino, C. A., Jones, L., & Franceschini, L. (2016). Using the competing values framework (CVF) to examine teacher satisfaction in Tennessee schools. *Planning and Changing*, 47(3/4), 141-168.
- Hargreaves, A. & Fullan, M. (2012). *Professional capital: Transforming teaching in every school*. Teachers College Press.
- Hargreaves, A. & O'Connor, M.T. (2018). *Collaborative professionalism: When teaching together means learning for all*. Corwin.
- Heinrich, C.J., Darling-Aduana, J., & Good, A.G. (2020). *Equity and quality in digital learning: Realizing the promise in K-12 education*. Harvard University Press.
- Lambrechts, F., Bouwen, R., Grieten, S., Huybrechts, J., & Schein, E.H. (2011). Learning to help through humble inquiry and implications for management research, practice, and education: An interview with Edgar H. Schein. *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, 10, 131-147.
- Lane, K., Teng, M. Y., Barnes, S. J., Moore, K., Smith, K., & Lee, M. (2018). Using appreciative inquiry to understand the role of teaching practices in student well-being at a research-intensive university. *The Canadian Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*, 9(2). Retrieved from [https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/cjsotl\\_rcacea/vol9/iss2/10](https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/cjsotl_rcacea/vol9/iss2/10)
- Markowitz, L. (2005). Unmasking moral dichotomies: Can feminist pedagogy overcome student resistance? *Gender and Education*. 17(1), 39-55.
- Martin, F., Budhrani, K., Kumar, S., & Ritzhaupt, A. (2019). Award-winning faculty online teaching practices: Roles and competencies. *Online Learning*, 23(1). doi:10.24059/olj.v23i1.1329
- Means, B., and Neisler, J., with Langer Research Associates. (2020). *Suddenly online: A national survey of undergraduates during the COVID-19 pandemic*. Digital Promise. Downloaded from [https://digitalpromise.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/ELE\\_CoBrand\\_DP\\_FINAL\\_3.pdf](https://digitalpromise.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/ELE_CoBrand_DP_FINAL_3.pdf)
- Mohr, B. (2001 ). *Appreciative Inquiry: Igniting transformative action. The systems thinker*. Pegasus Communications. Downloaded from [https://www.academia.edu/3369208/Appreciative\\_inquiry\\_Igniting\\_transformative\\_action](https://www.academia.edu/3369208/Appreciative_inquiry_Igniting_transformative_action)
- Muñoz, M. & Dossett, D. (2016). Multiple measures of teaching effectiveness: Classroom observation and student surveys as predictors of student learning. *Planning and Changing*, 47(3/4), pp. 123-140.
- Muñoz, M.A. (2016). Building research-practice-partnerships as a district-led initiative: A high-leverage strategy for system improvement. *Planning and Changing*. 47(3/4). pp. 182-190.

- Nipper, S. (1989). Third generation distance learning and computer conferencing. In R. Mason and A. Kaye (Eds.), (pp. 63-73). *Mindweave: Communication, computers and distance education*, Permagon
- Palloff, R. and Pratt, K. (2007). *Building online learning communities: Effective strategies for the virtual classroom*. Jossey-Bass.
- Quality Matters. (2013). *QM higher ed program rubric*. Retrieved from <https://www.qualitymatters.org/rubric>.
- Rhode Island College (2020). Summary of Results of the Student Survey of Online Learning, Spring 2020. Email communication.
- RIOI (2020). Rhode Island Office of Innovation. *Accessing the Internet in-home during COVID-19*. Downloaded from <https://www.innovate.ri.gov/covidwifi>
- Smith, A. (2006). What is Appreciative Inquiry? A coaching leaders brief. *The Appreciative Inquiry Commons*. Champlain University. Downloaded from <https://appreciativeinquiry.champlain.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/whatisappreciativeinquiry.pdf>
- Trilling, B., & Fadel, C. (2009). *21st century skills: Learning for life in our times*. Jossey-Bass.
- Stein & Strauss (2020, August 5). Special education students are not just falling behind in the pandemic — they're losing key skills, parents say. *Washington Post*. [https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/education/special-education-students-are-not-just-falling-behind--they-re-losing-key-skills-parents-say/2020/08/05/ec1b91ca-cffd-11ea-9038-af089b63ac21\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/education/special-education-students-are-not-just-falling-behind--they-re-losing-key-skills-parents-say/2020/08/05/ec1b91ca-cffd-11ea-9038-af089b63ac21_story.html)
- Wenger, E., McDermott, R., & Snyder, W.M. (2002). *Cultivating communities of practice: A guide to managing knowledge*. Harvard Business School Press.

**Natasha Feinberg is an assistant professor at Rhode Island College in Providence.**

**Beth Pinheiro is an assistant professor at Rhode Island College in Providence.**

**Leslie Sevey is an associate professor at Rhode Island College in Providence.**

**Susan Zoll is an associate professor at Rhode Island College in Providence.**

## Conclusion to the Special Issue

### *Taking a Pause to Consider a Radical New: Or All (Re)envisioning is Science-Fiction Work*

by S. Gavin Weiser

The last several months have seen monumental changes in the landscape of not only education, but the world broadly conceived. Due to the on-going COVID-19 pandemic, many people have used this time to reconceptualize what could be across a variety of fields, from health-care to Big Tech. This special issue of *Planning & Changing* includes the voices of 16 scholars based out of the U.S. and abroad who shared their reactions and research in connection to this pandemic. While there are ongoing clinical trials, and at least two (with an anticipated third) vaccines approved within the U.S., this raises perhaps just as many questions as it potentially answers. First, will the vaccine be the magic bullet to allow us to enter back into classrooms with less worry? Will we still need masks? If so, for how long? Further, many nations across the globe have yet to have access to these vaccines due to wealthy nations hoarding these life-saving vaccines, which some say opens us up to a new surge with a new variant in the future. While the scholars who have written within these pages are not epidemiologists, we are all scholars who are considering the impact the pandemic has had on education. As of yet, we have only inklings of ideas of what impact the pandemic will have on education in 2021 and beyond.

As a fan of speculative fiction, growing up, and even as recently as 2019, the idea of a pandemic evoked images borrowed from popular media. Images from such texts as Butler's *Clay's Ark*, Brooks's *World War Z*, Crichton's *The Andromeda Strain*, Scalzi's *Lockdown*, Cronin's *The Passage*, or the one that haunted my childhood in particular, King's *The Stand*. All of these texts tell of a virus that forever alters the history of humankind on one way or another. Other texts have taken on plagues throughout history either in fictional manners (such as García Márquez's *Love in the Time of Cholera*) or in non-fictional manners (I'm thinking here of Caldwell's *The American Plague* and Kelly's *The Great Mortality*, but also France's *How to Survive a Plague*). And all of these texts have both given me night sweats and hope over the past year. In the end, we as a species are given remarkable insights into our own adaptability. All of these texts also help us to understand that we are still here, even after facing a world-changing pandemic.

Additionally, the articles contained within this issue have given me hope for the future of educational research both during and after this cataclysmic event. The pieces within this special issue took care to understand the issues within educational administration during the global pan-



dem, in the United States and internationally. Lisa Crosslin and Lucy E. Bailey explored the blurred lines that occur for home and work for mother school leaders, incisively using visual research methods to help us all better understand the overlapping responsibilities of mother/leaders (Grzelakowski, 2005). Jennifer Antoni explored conceptually how the viral pandemic may exacerbate student drop-out or push-out within U.S. high schools. Susan Zoll, Natasha Feinberg, Beth Pinheiro, and Leslie Sevey used the framework of Appreciative Inquiry alongside feminist theory (with a good measure of magic ruby slippers) to explore the ways to create a better digital classroom experience, something many of us are still struggling with.

Moving beyond the borders of the United States, Rosa Bahamondes Rivera and Erika Abarca Millán explored how first-year university students adapted to moving last minute to remote instruction on a moment's notice with an eye to how institutions can better support first-year students during the pandemic and beyond. Jenna Cushing-Leubner attempts to better understand how English language learners (ELLs) adapted to the sudden shift to online learning. While many of us were required to make this adjustment, the authors examined the impact of the barrier for ELLs in light of the affective nature inherent in language acquisition. The title of Donna Sayman and Heidi Cornell's piece said what we all have been feeling that we are trying to build the plane while trying to fly during the pandemic. They attempt to illuminate special education teachers' experiences to formulate lessons for the future. This eye toward the future runs as a throughline for all of these pieces—a radical imagination of what could be. Science fiction is ultimately about hope, a hope that a new world will be waiting on the other side of struggle. That world may not be a wonderful world (here I think of the film, *Bladerunner*) but a world, nonetheless.

Pandemics are certainly not the only devastating occurrences that impact humankind. Some of these events are maybe only cataclysmic on a local scale. I, for one, lived through a hundred-year flood in Columbia, South Carolina only a few years ago. This localized disaster changed my own conceptualization of many things related to not only disaster preparation, how I consider water, but also education, for at the time I was working as a university administrator. What then might a reflection on these items during and in the aftermath<sup>1</sup> of disaster look like for the COVID-19 pandemic, one that is both local and global at the same time?

I for one believe that this pandemic has given us a pause to (re) consider a radical new vision for education. While the pandemic has gripped the world, it would be disingenuous to allow for us to contend that this pandemic has had equitable impacts on all populations. This pandemic, like others before it, and likely the next, has had greater impacts on communities including Black, Indigenous, and Persons of Color (BIPOC). Moreover, in the U.S. we were reminded of the ongoing violence against

BIPOC communities at the hands of the state in the form of not only the aid delivered to help alleviate the stress caused by this pandemic, but also the physical violence enacted in the name of law & order. Like many summers before this, the late spring and summer brought to the fore the ongoing pandemic of white supremacy enacted by police violence causing the U.S. to (re)encounter and consider two on-going pandemics.

This pandemic will not be the last crisis that neither we as educators, nor we as humans, will face. My scholarship with co-editor, Dr. Lindsay DeMartino, focused on the pandemic and the challenges it has brought to educational leaders (DeMartino & Weiser, in press b, in press a) and was in part inspired by another moment of crisis in education. In 1999, Texas A&M had their annual bonfire collapse and kill 12 students and injure many others. While this crisis is by no means on the magnitude of the pandemics referenced here, it provided me a space to understand and conceptualize educational response to crisis (Treadwell, 2017; Treadwell et al., 2020). How might educational leaders respond to an ongoing crisis? Through our research, the research contained within this issue, and beyond, I am heartened to see the ongoing response, and the documentation and archiving that is occurring. These acts of organizing, activism, mutual aid, and planning give me hope that incremental progress is occurring to create the change that our world needs.

While a vaccine may bring us comfort that the COVID-19 pandemic may be nearing its twilight, we mustn't let the end of one pandemic, which has had disproportionate impacts on BIPOC communities, allow us to be lulled back into complacency. The scholars within this issue have spoken to how education has responded to one pandemic. My aim is that through learning from these scholars and their scholarship, as well as our own research and experiences living through this time, will help us all (re)imagine a radical new future. Using speculative science-fiction as a creative endeavor to help us sharpen and hone our imaginations allows us as scholars to think of what could be. It is, admittedly, difficult to envision something that one has never seen, and one person alone cannot (and really should not) reconceptualize a more just and hopeful future. While we may not yet know what that future looks like, I have critical hope that the time scholars, activists, and organizers have spent "dreaming new worlds every time [they/we] think about the changes we want to make in the world" (Imarisha & brown, 2015, p. 3) will not be in vain. Recognizing that in some way, all "organizing is science fiction" (Imarisha & brown, 2015, p. 3), the engagement in revisioning what can take place, what needs to take place, can take its lead from the creative scholars who aim to imagine what could be during this interlude. While our work is ongoing and will likely never end, this violent and deadly interlude will hopefully have awoken a critical mass in order to take on the challenges to create a more just world, not only in education, but in the worlds contained within and beyond.

## Endnote

- 1 If we are ever to get to an after – presupposing that after should and hopefully looks vastly different than before – which is in fact the purpose of this brief essay.

## References

- DeMartino, L., & Weiser, S. G. (in press a). Striving for equity in pandemic times: The administrator's role in the shift to online education in K-12 and higher education spaces. In *Revealing Inequities in Online Education During Global Crises*. IGI Global.
- DeMartino, L., & Weiser, S. G. (in press b). The administrative response to the COVID crisis: Voices from the field. *Frontiers in Education*.
- Grzelakowski, M. (2005). *Mother leads best: 50 women who are changing the way organizations define leadership* (illustrated edition). Kaplan Business.
- Imarisha, W., & brown, a. m. (Eds.). (2015). *Octavia's brood: Science fictions: Stories from social justice movements* (1st ed). AK Press.
- Treadwell, K. L. (2017). Learning from tragedy: Student affairs leadership following college campus disasters. *Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice*, 54(1), 42–54. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19496591.2016.1206019>
- Treadwell, K. L., Lane, F. C., & Paterson, B. G. (2020). Reflections from crisis: A phenomenological study of the Texas A&M bonfire collapse. *Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice*, 57(2), 119–131. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19496591.2019.1614939>

# *Planning and Changing*

## An Educational Leadership and Policy Journal

Volume Index: Volume 50, 2021

No. 1/2 pp. 3–110

No. 3/4 pp. 111–262

### **TITLE INDEX**

High School Administrators Second Order Change, pp. 3–19.

A Cost-Benefit Analysis of a Teen Pregnancy Program Employed as a High School Dropout Intervention, pp. 20–36.

Improving Math and Science Instructional Quality: Evidence from a Rural Consortium-Based Reform Initiative, pp. 37–57.

Principal Practices that Build and Sustain Trust: Recommendations from Teachers in a High-Trust School, pp. 58–74.

Roll Call in Data Team Meetings: Are Principals Present?, pp. 75–93.

The Principal and the School Nurse: Conditions and Conceptual Model for Building a Successful and Vital Professional Relationship, pp. 95–110.

The Challenges of the COVID-19 Crisis on Education, pp. 113–116.

Disengaged and Nearing Departure: Students at Risk for Dropping Out in the Age of COVID-19, pp. 117–137.

The (Im)possibilities of Equitable Education of Multilingual English Learners in Remote Teaching: An EL Teacher Survey of the Great Lakes Region, pp. 139–164.

Mother School Leaders Negotiate ‘Blurred Lines’ Between Work and Home During COVID-19, pp. 165–189.

“Building the Plane While Trying to Fly”: Exploring Special Education Teacher Narratives During the COVID-19 Pandemic, pp. 191–207.

First-Year Students’ Experience in Higher Education in Chile in Times of COVID-19, pp. 209–235.

Found in Oz, the Ruby Slippers to Embracing Digital Classrooms through Appreciative Inquiry, pp. 237–256.

Taking a Pause to Consider a Radical New: Or All (Re)envisioning is  
Science-Fiction Work, pp. 257-260.

***Author Index***

*Abarca Millán, p. 209*  
*Antoni, p. 117*  
*Bahamondes Rivera, p. 209*  
*Bailey, p. 165*  
*Benegas, p. 139*  
*Bukko, p. 58*  
*Cornell, p. 62*  
*Crosslin, p. 165*  
*Cushing-Leubner p. 139*  
*C. Davis, p. 95*  
*DeMartino, p. 113*  
*P. Davis, p. 95*  
*Feinberg, p. 237*  
*Garry, p. 75*  
*Geraghty, p. 37*  
*Greene, p. 139*  
*Johnson, p. 58*  
*Liu, p. 58*  
*Lynch, p. 95*  
*Macchia, p. 20*  
*Mokher, p. 37*  
*Morita-Mullaney, p. 139*  
*Pearson, p. 20*  
*Pinheiro, p. 237*  
*Pringle, p. 3*  
*Sayman, p. 191*  
*Sevey, p. 237*  
*Stolpestad, p. 139*  
*Therriault, p. 20*  
*Weiser, p. 257*  
*Wood, p. 20*  
*Zoll, p. 237*

# *Planning and Changing*

An Educational Leadership and Policy Journal

---

## **Mission Statement**

*Planning and Changing* provides a forum for the presentation of issues and studies that inform current educational policy and practice. As such, the journal serves as a critical intellectual resource for educational leaders, practitioners, and policymakers. Peer-reviewed articles include formal research studies using quantitative and/or qualitative methodologies, as well as reflective, theoretical pieces focused on significant aspects of education and schooling relevant to the administrator, community, or the larger public good.

# *Planning and Changing*

An Educational Leadership and Policy Journal

---

## **Subscription Form**

Type of Subscription:     New                       Renewal

The journal is published in semi-annual double issues with shipping dates in January and July.

Subscription Rates:     \$18.00 Domestic  
                                   \$24.00 International  
                                   \$15.00 Individual Student

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to *Planning and Changing*.

Return to: Managing Editor  
*Planning and Changing*  
Dept. of Educational Administration and Foundations  
Illinois State University  
Campus Box 5900  
Normal, IL 61790-5900



# *Planning and Changing*

## **An Educational Leadership and Policy Journal**

### *Manuscript Submission Guidelines*

1. Manuscripts are evaluated by their contribution to the understanding of educational leadership and policy issues.
2. Manuscripts must be previously unpublished, not under consideration elsewhere, and prepared according to the style recommendations in the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, 7th ed. (2019).
3. Manuscripts should be approximately 3000-6000 words (plus abstract). Submit your manuscript to [Education.IllinoisState.edu/PlanningChanging](http://Education.IllinoisState.edu/PlanningChanging). All other correspondence should be sent to Thomas Navickas at [tjnavic@IllinoisState.edu](mailto:tjnavic@IllinoisState.edu) or (309) 438-5422.
4. No copy of the manuscript should list the author's (s') name(s) in the title, header, and/or footer. Do not substitute the word author for the author's (s') name(s) in the manuscript text, citations, and/or references.
5. Manuscripts should be accompanied by one cover sheet with each author's current title, position, institutional affiliation, and complete mailing address, phone, fax, and email address.
6. Upon receipt of the manuscript, the contact author will receive notification. Each acceptable manuscript will ordinarily be reviewed by three independent reviewers. The blind review process normally takes ten to twelve weeks (excluding summer).
7. Authors may be requested to make revisions prior to final acceptance. Authors will receive a copy to proof and approve. The editor reserves the right to make final and necessary editorial changes that do not materially affect the meaning of the text.

*Planning and Changing* is now an open source journal! View it online at [Education.IllinoisState.edu/Planning](http://Education.IllinoisState.edu/Planning)

Illinois State University  
***Planning and Changing***  
Department of Educational Administration and Foundations  
Campus Box 5900  
Normal, IL 61790-5900

**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**



**ILLINOIS STATE  
UNIVERSITY**  
*Illinois' first public university.*

NON-PROFIT ORG  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
**ILLINOIS STATE  
UNIVERSITY**