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## Have You Read Yet? Improving Literacy while Learning from Home

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**Have You Read Yet? Improving Literacy while Learning from Home**

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LS 400: Senior Capstone

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### **Abstract**

The focus of this Capstone Project is on building literacy development during distance learning. This is an important issue for some students and their families because learning from home has been challenging. For some families, there is a language barrier that makes it difficult to support their student's learning. An argument is made that students who are English Language Learners are not engaging in sufficient practice of literacy skills during these tough times. Considerations of the issue should include the perspectives of elementary school educators and parents whose children attend a school in a low socioeconomic status community. Three action options emerged from an analysis of the data and were explored as ways to address the issue presented. Participating in support training for parents, as well as utilizing the technology and resources available, is argued to be the most effective way to achieve the goal of continuing to support student's literacy development during distance learning.

### **Have You Read Yet? Improving Literacy while Learning from Home**

For all of my K-6 education, I attended the same elementary school, located in a low socioeconomic status community. Since I grew up in a low SES community, I was required to attend a school in that area. Almost all of the students that attended that school came from the same cultural background. Just like myself, many of my classmates were Mexican or Mexican American, or came from countries from Central America. I grew up learning Spanish as my first language, therefore I learned English as a second language. This was the same for most of the students in that elementary school since most of the school's student population were English language learners. The issue that my capstone project focuses on is relevant to my life in that although I did not attend my elementary school years remotely, I understand the struggles and challenges that many students, including English learners, might be facing.

Growing up, attending an elementary school in a low socioeconomic status community seemed normal to me. However, as I have grown up, I have become more aware of the opportunities and resources that are available for students who attend schools of higher SES communities. Although I attended a school where the majority of the students were English language learners, we were not allowed to speak any Spanish while at school. When assigned homework, instructions for homework stopped being translated from English to Spanish after kindergarten. When I reached first grade, my parents were unable to help me complete my homework because they spoke zero English and directions were not provided in Spanish. My parents had to guess the directions for homework assignments based on pictures, shapes, or numbers on the worksheets. They were mostly only successful when it came to Mathematics. On the other hand, when it came to English Language Arts, also known as ELA, they were unsuccessful. There was no way that my Spanish speaking parents would be able to help me

spell words or read a book in a language that was completely different from theirs. I never got to experience my parents reading a bedtime story to me for that reason. When my parents received English letters in the mail, I was required to translate them for them. However, how could I tell my parents that my English was not at the level that the letters were written in since I was hardly practicing my literacy skills at home? The only way that I was able to develop my reading, writing, and speaking skills, was at school.

As future educators, it is important to take into consideration the challenges and circumstances that students and their families face. Understanding the community where the school is located is another important component to understand students' possible challenges. Despite the fact that my parents were hardly able to help me develop strong literacy skills at home, I always made sure to use the resources provided by my school. I would constantly check out books from my school's library to practice my reading. All I knew was that I wanted to succeed with my education and obtain a career where I would be able to support others who are facing the challenges that I faced when I was in elementary school. With the help of my elementary teachers, I was able to develop literacy skills that allowed me to become proficient in not only Spanish, but English as well. Now that students are going to school virtually, many parents and families are not as prepared to support their students, therefore they can fall behind academically, but it is up to teachers to fill these gaps.

### **Literature Synthesis & Integration: Developing Students' Literacy Skills**

The COVID-19 pandemic required teachers to transition from in-person instruction to teaching remotely. This transition has not only affected teachers, but also students and their families. More specifically, students from low socioeconomic status communities have been greatly impacted by distance learning. English-language learners are facing the challenge of

developing strong literacy skills while learning from home. Therefore, it is important to consider how students can practice and improve their literacy skills during distance learning.

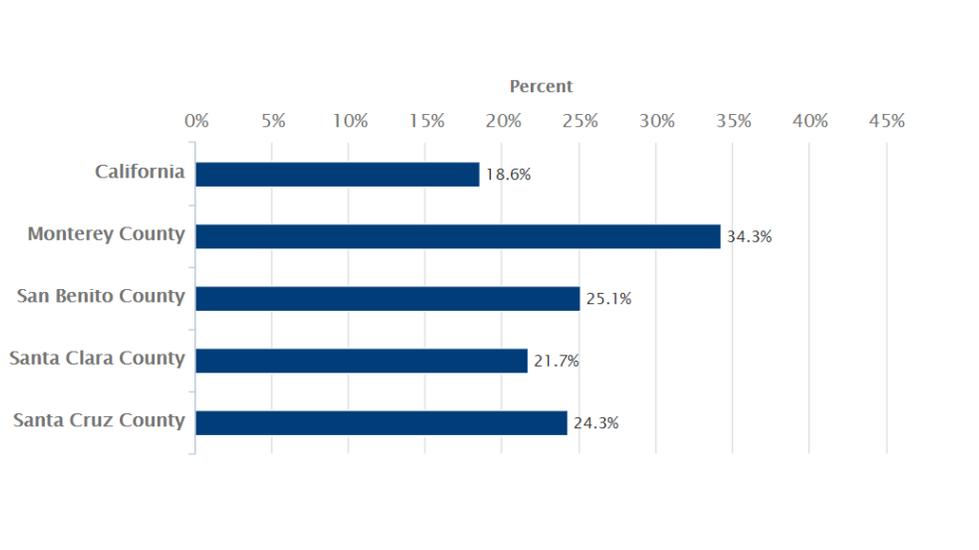
### **What is the Problem?**

As students and teachers transitioned to distance learning, practicing literacy development has been more challenging for some students. While the COVID-19 pandemic poses a threat to everyone, students of low-income communities and culturally and linguistically diverse communities have been the most greatly affected (Education Trust-West & California Association for Bilingual Education, 2020). These students experienced a lack of digital resources like internet and device accessibility, limited live teacher contact, and lack of parent involvement in learning (Gao, Lafortune, & Hill, 2020). Socioeconomic status, also known as SES, is used to refer to the social, economic, and work status of individuals (Morgan, Farkas, Hillemeier, & Maczuga, 2009). SES does not just encompass income, it also deals with educational attainment. Since distance learning has started, students in low SES communities have struggled to further develop their literacy skills while learning from home. Many of these students are English-language learners (ELLs). The Glossary of Education Reform (2013) defines English-language learners as students whose first language is often not English, who are unable to communicate fluently in English, and who typically require specialized modified instruction in both the English language and in their academic courses.

Below, Figure 1 demonstrates the percentage of public school students who, on census day in the 2020 school year, speak a language other than English at home and lack English language speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills necessary to succeed in regular instructional programs. The chart details Monterey County which is where the research will be

conducted for this issue. As it is seen, 34.3% of public school students in Monterey County are English-learners.

**Figure 1.** Percentage of public school students who are English learners by county



*Note. Source: California Department of Education (2020).*

**Why is it an Issue?**

Having strong literacy skills is an important aspect of overall learning, and distance learning has made it difficult for some students to practice such skills due to the lack of learning in person. This is an issue that should be addressed since it is crucial for all students, regardless of their socioeconomic status, to obtain literacy skills that will allow them to engage in advanced reading, writing, listening, and speaking. In particular, research indicates that children from low SES communities develop academic skills slower than children from higher SES groups (Morgan et al., 2009). Many studies have also shown that reading books to children and reading together from an early age have positive effects on children's language and developing literacy skills (Kamisli, 2020).

Furthermore, the amount of time students are interacting with their peers and teachers during the pandemic, is not enough time for them to practice their English. Cardoza (2021) who is a kindergarten teacher, mentions that since distance learning has started, she gets a maximum of thirty minutes of interaction with her students. If teachers are not receiving sufficient time with their students during distance learning, then it is more likely that many students are not practicing their literacy skills. Given what we know about learning loss during the traditional summer months, it is critical to support families and teachers (Babinski & Addendum, 2020). Now more than ever, education has been adapted and the responsibility of families for the education of their children has increased (Kamisli, 2020). Having attended an elementary school in a low SES community, and being an English-language learner, I understand the challenges that students and parents go through when practicing literacy skills at home. In many cases, parents might speak little to no English, therefore making it more difficult for them to be able to assist their children with their learning.

Teachers are also interested in this issue since they are stakeholders who are experiencing an extraordinary instructional challenge since providing instruction from a distance has not been easy for them. Therefore, not only has it been hard for the students, but for teachers as well to adequately contribute to developing strong literacy skills through remote learning. A teacher recalls how overwhelmed she was with the challenge of making reading work when students were not in a physical classroom (Krulder, 2020). Although students are learning remotely, the Biden administration confirmed that states in the U.S. must resume their annual standardized testing (Johnson, 2021). The U.S. Department of Education waived federal testing requirements after schools closed for in-person instruction in March 2020 due to the pandemic. Under the federal Every Student Succeeds Act, states are required to administer annual tests in reading and

Mathematics for students in grades 3-8 and once in high school (U.S. Department of Education, 2021). How a student performs in these tests, reflects their level of knowledge. However, this is an issue since students have not been able to fully practice and develop strong literacy skills since distance learning started. All students, regardless of their socioeconomic status, are being affected academically by receiving insufficient literacy development during distance learning.

### **What Should be Done?**

If distance learning will be continuing for the following school year, then there is a call to action for teachers, school administrators, and parents to pursue an effective way to improve and have students practice their literacy skills while learning from home. To achieve this goal, one must identify the challenges that students and their families face. Schools must develop a comprehensive approach to family engagement and build parent leadership (Education Trust-West & CABE, 2020). During distance learning, family members are uniquely important to students' wellbeing and development since they are able to work with students in person. A first step for effectively engaging all students, including English-learners, during distance learning is ensuring that they have the required information and communication technology, along with high-speed internet, and any support they might need for using the technology effectively (Billings, Lagunoff, & WestEd, 2020).

Moreover, as teachers design lessons and activities to serve their students through distance learning, they should consider the specific social-emotional, language, and academic needs of their English-learners, to avoid deepening education inequities and gaps in learning that already exist for this student population (Billings et al., 2020). This is extremely important to do since many students have parents who do not speak English and are unable to support their children with school work or homework.

Not only is it important to consider the language that students speak at home, but also the amount of resources that they have available. Now more than ever, getting books into students' hands is essential during distance learning. This means working with a variety of people, like utilizing school libraries, community libraries, or online resources where students can reserve and practice their literacy skills (Krulder, 2020). Krulder (2020) who has been a teacher for twenty years, made sure her students took a survey that she created that would help her understand her students' book availability. Some school libraries offer curbside library book checkouts, which take place a few days a week with limited hours (Trujillo, 2020). This is a great opportunity for students to choose books that are the appropriate reading level for them. Devoting synchronous class time to reading and conversations about reading is another way that teachers can support students' literacy development (Cardoza, 2021). This could be really helpful for a child who might not have the same support at home compared to their peers. Students from low socioeconomic communities could greatly benefit from this since they will be able to practice and ask questions which will allow them to strengthen their literacy skills during distance learning.

### **Conclusion**

Overall, there are several changes that schools need to make to address the issue of developing effective literacy skills during distance learning. California schools cannot succeed with hybrid learning unless they take substantive action to address students from low socioeconomic status communities and English-language learners (Education Trust-West & CAFE, 2020). These students make up a large portion of California's public schools. Additionally, it is important for students to obtain the education they deserve and not allow any

student to fall behind their peers. Teachers, students, and families need appropriate information and resources to educate their children while learning from a distance.

### **Method**

Having strong literacy skills is an important aspect of overall learning, and distance learning has made it difficult for some students to practice such skills. For this Capstone Project, I investigated how teachers and parents view the effect that distance learning has on students' literacy skills and what they believe could be done to improve it. Based on an analysis of the data and the relevant research literature, I used what I learned to formulate an action that responded to the focus issue in a way that inspired, informed, or involved a particular audience.

### **Context**

This research took place at Shore Elementary School<sup>1</sup>, located in the East side of Salad, California. Agriculture is the foundation for the city's local economy. The city has an estimated population of around 155,000 inhabitants, making it the most populous city in the county (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019). Shore Elementary School is a K-6 grade school that is part of one of the largest elementary school districts in the city. Currently, Shore Elementary has been participating in distance learning for a year now, where students participate in synchronous and asynchronous lessons. The school is looking to transition into a hybrid method where half of the students attend school in person, on certain days and times, while the other half attend school at a distinct time from the first group. Of course, it is the parent's decision to choose whether they would like their student to participate in in-person instruction, or to remain distance learning. For the 2019-2020 school year, there were 937 enrolled students at Shore Elementary (Ed-Data, 2020). According to the school's SARC report (2020), around 98% of the students are Hispanic or Latino, 96% are socioeconomically disadvantaged, and 74% of students are English learners. Most of the parents

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<sup>1</sup> Pseudonyms have been used for the names of people, places, and organizations.

of children who attend this school only speak Spanish, therefore, students learn English as a second language.

### **Participants and Participant Selection**

I invited three elementary school teachers and one parent to participate in this study. These participants were invited to participate because of their relevant membership and experience as teachers in a low socioeconomic status community. Each teacher who participated, taught a different grade level, they include: kindergarten, second grade, and sixth grade. A parent was invited to participate because they have one or more children who attend the elementary school where the research was conducted.

**Kim Martin.** A female, kindergarten teacher. Kim has been teaching at Shore Elementary for two years. Her average class size is 20.

**Osmara Ram.** A female, Mexican American third grade teacher. Ms. Ram has been teaching for around 12 years, in different grade levels at Shore Elementary. Her average class size is 25.

**Norma Lauren.** A female, Mexican American sixth grade teacher. Ms. Lauren has been teaching at Shore Elementary for around 15 years, and has mostly stuck to teaching 6th grade. Her average class size is 23.

**Leila Hernandez.** A parent of a third-grade student and sixth grade student who attend Shore Elementary. All of Mrs. Hernandez's children have attended Shore Elementary for their whole elementary school years.

**Researcher.** This topic is personally meaningful to me because I attended an elementary school in a low socioeconomic community, and I also have younger siblings whose literacy skills have been affected during distance learning. I am aware of the importance of developing literacy

skills and I also understand that parents may struggle to support their child's literacy when their first language is not English. I am similar to my participants in that my parents' first language is also Spanish, and how reading was not something that was prioritized at home. As I moved forward with this project, I needed to be mindful about teachers' suggestions on how they believe the issue can be improved and also about the way that parents felt about distance learning.

### **Semi-Structured Interview and Survey Questions**

#### **Teachers.**

1. How are your students being academically affected during distance learning? What do you see as the challenges with practicing literacy skills at home; or What are you most concerned about when it comes to your students' literacy development during distance learning?
2. What is currently being done to strengthen students' literacy skills during distance learning - by whom - and what are the strengths and weaknesses of these efforts?
3. What do you think should be done to develop literacy skills while learning from home?
4. What do you think are the challenges to doing something like practicing literacy skills during distance learning? What about when some parents speak little to no English?
5. Is there anything else that you would like to say about the way distance learning has affected your students' development of literacy skills or how it could be improved?

#### **A parent of children who attends a low SES school.**

1. How is distance learning affecting your students' literacy skills? What do you see as the challenges with practicing literacy skills with your child at home; or What are you most concerned about when it comes to your child's literacy skills?

2. What is currently being done to practice literacy skills at home- by whom - and what are the strengths and weaknesses of these efforts?
3. What do you think should be done to allow your child to develop literacy skills while learning from home?
4. What do you think are the challenges to helping a child build strong literacy skills when a parent speaks little to no English? What could be done about these challenges?
5. Is there anything else that you would like to say about the way distance learning has affected your students' literacy skills or how it could be improved?

### **Procedure**

Participants were interviewed. All interviews were done individually. When it was not possible to interview participants in person, they were invited to complete a phone interview or a Google form which included all of the same questions. Face-to-Face interviews took less than one hour, were audio-recorded (with participant consent), or took place via Zoom or Google Meet in a quiet area and were audio-recorded (with participant consent). A semi-structured interview format was used for face-to-face interviews and remote interviews, to allow for follow-up questions to unclear, interesting or unexpected responses. All interviews/surveys were scheduled at the convenience of the interviewee and took approximately 25 minutes to complete.

### **Data Analysis**

Transcribed interviews were coded and analyzed for emergent themes.

### **Results**

For this Capstone Project, three elementary school teachers who teach in a low SES community and one parent were interviewed to see what they think could be done to improve students' literacy skills during distance learning. This is important because teachers and students

transitioned to remote learning unexpectedly without having the knowledge and experience to teach and learn using a computer. For some students and families, it has been a challenge to learn from home when there is a language barrier. Many families continue to not have the resources to effectively support their children with their learning. This is causing some students to fall behind with their education and not develop both critical thinking and basic skills since instructional time is limited. Based on an analysis of the data and the relevant research literature three themes emerged (see Table 1). Evidence-based decision making required evaluating each potential Action Option by the following criteria: time; access; and effectiveness. Time is a criteria that should be taken into consideration to evaluate whether an action option is realistic since students are currently participating in distance learning. Access is a criterion that considers the possibility of students, teachers, or families obtaining the option. Lastly, effectiveness measures the extent of success of the option when determining a new method to support students’ literacy skills during distance learning. Based on the evaluation of each Action Option an action will be recommended and justified.

Table 1

*Evaluation of Action Options*

	Time	Access	Effectiveness
Support training for parents/family	Medium	High	High
Utilizing technology and resources	Low	High	High
Increasing synchronous sessions: time spent with teacher	High	Medium	Medium

### **Support Training for Parents/Family**

Support training for parents, or other family members, can be an option to improve students' literacy skills while learning from home. Many parents, especially those who might struggle to navigate the technology, or who speak a different language that is not English, can continue to support their child's learning. As one teacher explained, "there is always something that a parent can do to help support their students at home, it doesn't require them to speak the same language, but it does require the parent to be knowledgeable of how they can help" (N. Lauren, personal communication, March 2021). In order to educate a child, it takes the child, the teacher, the school, and the family at home. For this reason, the literature reveals that schools can develop a comprehensive approach to family engagement and build parent leadership (Education Trust-West & CABE, 2020). Furthermore, another teacher gave input that parents should be taught procedures of what it looks like when a child is learning or how to strengthen their learning (O. Ram, personal communication, April 2021). Thus, teaching parents techniques can have students practice their speaking, reading, and writing more at home.

Examining the interview data and the literature research, one can evaluate the option based on the criteria. In regards to time, implementing this option will require some time for teachers to be able to meet one-on-one, or in small groups with parents. However, since distance learning is currently taking place, the training for parents would have to take place as soon as possible in order to better assist children as they continue with remote learning. The training will be centered around procedures and techniques that parents can implement with their child to contribute to practicing literacy skills at home. Schools and teachers have access and form of communication with who the student spends most of their time with at home. When looking at the option's effectiveness, the training can be a great help for parents who are worried about their

child's performance, lacking technology knowledge, or want to know how to foster learning at home. This option can also be effective even if distance learning does not continue in the future.

### **Utilizing Technology and Resources**

Through these times, technology has played a huge role in education. Utilizing the technology effectively, is an opportunity that teachers, students, and families can use to practice the learning process. In correlation to this theme, a teacher brought up that their school has online adaptive programs for students to use, however some students only complete the programs to get them done, without any positive intent (N. Lauren, personal communication, 2021). Moreover, a parent expressed that teachers can have students watch a video of their teacher read a book to them or have students record themselves reading a book, which can help teachers understand where students' reading level is and where they might be struggling (L. Hernandez, personal communication, March 2021). This relates to the literature that states that studies have shown that reading books to children has a positive effect on their language and literacy skills development (Kamisli, 2020). As libraries have begun to reopen, that is another opportunity for families to take advantage of. A teacher mentioned that the school's library is open on certain days of the week for each grade level and students are encouraged to go check out books (K. Martin, personal communication, March 2021). The research literature indicates that getting books into students' hands is essential during distance learning, such as utilizing school libraries, community libraries, and online resources where students can reserve and practice their literacy skills (Krulder, 2020).

The amount of time required to implement this option is low. Since students have been participating in distance learning for a year now, they should have enough knowledge to be able to navigate themselves through the online adaptive programs. Schools should have also

informed the students and their families the days and times that the school's library is open. For this option, time is mostly greater for the teachers if they plan on making activities for the students using video. Students already have access to a school computer, and hopefully, reliable internet connection. Also, school libraries and public libraries have begun to reopen, therefore they have high access to those resources. This option can be effective, if and only if, students and their families make an effort to utilize the resources that are available.

### **Increasing Synchronous Sessions**

The amount of time that teachers spend with students has been significantly reduced since distance learning started. During this limited time, teachers are expected to teach the majority of literacy skills to students at a faster pace, than they would if they were in-person. For this reason, increasing synchronous live sessions between students and teachers is an option that can help students strengthen their literacy skills. A teacher interviewee discussed that she only spends two hours a day in a live session with her students (O. Ram, personal communication, April 2021). Another teacher at that same school voiced that the time spent together as a class is a strength, but it is also a weakness because there is not enough time together to work on developing strong literacy skills (K. Martin, personal communication, March 2021). According to the literature research, devoting synchronous class time to reading and conversation about reading is a way that teachers can support students' literacy development (Cardoza, 2021). However, this has been hard to do because there are other subjects that students are required to learn, but there is not enough time.

Evaluating this option based on the criteria of time and access is crucial. It can take a while to implement this option of increasing synchronous live sessions since it is a plan that the whole school should follow. It is not an action that one or a few teachers can implement. It is

important to note that some schools have begun to reopen using a hybrid method, with only some families participating, while others making the decision to remain distance learning only.

Therefore, it can be hard to extend the hours that a teacher spends with students remotely. This connects to the amount of access that students have with their teacher as schools have begun making changes to their instructional plans and methods of reopening. In terms of effectiveness, this option can be effective, depending on how students are handling distance learning. There are some students who have not been affected and have excelled with remote instruction. There are others who are advocating that students are spending too much on a screen.

### **Conclusion**

After analyzing the three potential options to implement as the most effective way to support and develop students' literacy skills during distance learning, it is recommended that both support training for parents, and utilizing technology and resources be practiced. Based on the literature and data collected through the interview process, I am confident that these two options are the best options to better assist children with their learning through these unforeseen times. This section will discuss the concessions, limitations, and possible negative outcomes that this action option may entail.

**Concessions.** While I chose support training for parents and families, as well as utilizing technology and resources as the best option moving forward, the third option has considerable strengths as well. Some important concessions that need to be addressed in favor of increasing synchronous live sessions would be that students would be receiving the opportunity and time to ask questions if they are having trouble understanding the material. This is because teachers would have more time to go back and take their time explaining a concept or problem to a student without keeping an eye on time. This option would greatly benefit English learners or

students who might be a little behind their peers because they will be receiving extra time to practice academic English with an expert. Allowing teachers to spend more time with their students can also build stronger relationships. It is important to form a strong relationship with each student to bring a positive academic and social development.

**Limitations.** While choosing support training for parents and utilizing technology and resources as the recommended action option, there are still limitations to recognize as well. For instance, for the parent support training, when a teacher does not speak a language that a student's parent speaks, there will need to be a backup plan for those parents to receive the training in their native language. When it comes to utilizing technology, some parents may not be okay with their student recording themselves reading a book for personal reasons. Also, schools' library hours are limited to being open mostly during school hours. Therefore, parents who work might not be able to take their child during the available times.

**Potential negative outcomes.** There are some possible negative outcomes that could come from these options. For example, if support training is given, there might be some parents who might not attend the training. For the second option of utilizing the technology, students will be spending more time looking at a screen, which can cause underlying health issues especially at such a young age. We must also consider that if students will be using technology resources, there is the possibility of some students not using the technology appropriately. There are many websites on the internet that are not school appropriate.

**Conclusion.** Despite the concessions, limitations, and possible negative outcomes that were identified, I still recommend implementing a support training program for parents, and having teachers and families utilize the technology and resources that are available. Given that schools have shifted to the digital realm, these actions appear to be the most effective. Every

student has been given an electronic device to complete their studies which they can continue to use wisely during distance learning, hybrid learning, and even when they return to in-person instruction. Considering the literature review and the interview data collected, training parents how to support their children at home is crucial for the development of their learning.

Furthermore, technology and books have proven to be an effective tool when it comes to building literacy skills. Overall, the recommended options demonstrate that together, the school, the student, the teacher, and the parent play a role in educating the student to develop strong literacy skills.

### **Action Documentation**

Distance learning has brought unforeseen challenges for many students and educators. Developing strong literacy skills happens to be one of them. For this reason, this Capstone project focused on how students' literacy skills could be improved during distance learning. Three elementary school teachers and a parent whose students attend the same school were interviewed. It is important to note that the school is in a low socioeconomic status community. After analyzing the literature and interview data, three action options emerged. The first option was holding a training for parents and educating them on effective ways to support their children's learning. The second option dealt with learning how to utilize the technology and resources that are available. Lastly, increasing live synchronous sessions to have students spend more time with their teachers was also an option. Holding a support training and utilizing the technology and resources was the recommended course of action. The two options were the most reasonable to implement in order to make a change in a timely manner.

Moving forward with the recommendations, a letter was written to the school's principal, as well as teachers who participated and those who did not participate in the interview process.

The letter explained the analysis of the collected interview data. Additionally, the letter includes resources such as examples and websites that educators can use with their students to further develop literacy skills through the recommended action options. Each resource is followed by an active link, and a short description. I made sure that the survey example I created was in English and Spanish, since many of the parents who attend this school only speak Spanish. As of now, the teachers who participated in the interview process have responded and thanked me for the information provided.

While finding relevant information for my recommendations, I was surprised at the variety of educational apps that are available to enhance and practice literacy skills. Each and every app can be used in a creative format to make learning fun and engaging. Continuing to share the knowledge and resources found with other teachers from different schools is an important next step.

To the principal and teachers:

First and foremost, I would like to thank those of you who participated in my Capstone research. It has been a privilege to be able to conduct my research with the staff from this school. For those of you who did not participate, I hope this letter finds you well and of interest. The data focused on what could be done to improve students' literacy skills during distance learning.

From the multiple responses collected during interviews, it is clear that many of your students are English learners. Some of you also brought to my attention that it would be a great idea to train parents on ways they can continue to support their student's learning from home. For this reason, after careful examination of the literature and interview data, I would like to share some suggestions and resources that I believe are effective for teachers to implement with their students during distance learning. Some of the suggestions can even be used if distance learning does not continue for the next school year.

#### **Support Training for Parents/Family**

For this option, I created an example of a Google Form that can be sent out to students' families. This is a survey that can help teachers understand parents' availability and guidance extra to improve their students' learning from home.

Here is the link to the Google Form:

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeY00L1MR2fOH-G\\_hYyjkJE3xvsTEHQXddzaBQyVLYVO0Aw/viewform?usp=sf\\_link](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeY00L1MR2fOH-G_hYyjkJE3xvsTEHQXddzaBQyVLYVO0Aw/viewform?usp=sf_link)

#### **Utilizing Technology/Resources**

**Kidblog:** <https://kidblog.org/home/>

Use Kidblog as a platform for your students to publish their writing, audio, visual, or video projects. As a teacher, you can also create a class blog as a way to communicate with parents. Include information about daily happenings in the classroom, upcoming deadlines, and learning tips for students. Teachers could also use Kidblog as a digital portfolio, which could grow with students from year to year within the same school district.

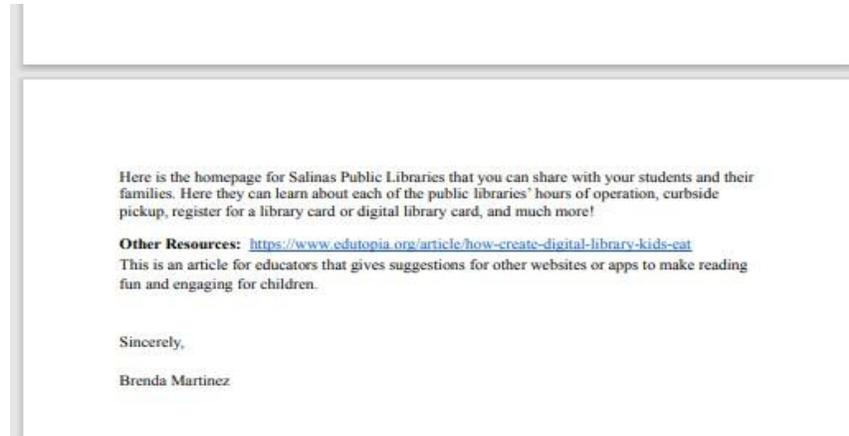
**Flipgrid:** <https://info.flipgrid.com/>

Flipgrid is a website that allows teachers to create "grids" to facilitate video discussions. Each grid is like a message board where teachers can pose questions, called "topics," and their students can post video responses that appear in a tiled grid display.

Here is an article titled "9 Ways to Use Flipgrid in the Classroom"  
<https://www.edutopia.org/article/9-new-ways-use-flipgrid-classroom>

**Salinas Public Library:**

<https://salinaspubliclibrary.org/news/salinas-public-library-responds-covid-19-coronavirus>



*Image 1.* Screenshot of the letter sent to the school's principal and teachers. The letter contains active links to each resource recommended along with a description of the website or app.

### **Critical Reflection**

Through this Capstone project, I was able to learn about myself and more about the career that I will be going into in the future. By conducting interviews, I learned about appropriate questions to ask the interviewee no matter what your stand is on the focus issue. It is important to remain neutral and be open about other's ideas, opinions, and suggestions. I also learned to get out of my comfort zone and reach out to professionals who I did not have much of a relationship with. As a future educator, I have a clear understanding that teaching and learning can be done in a variety of ways and that one should always be prepared for the unexpected. Ultimately, I learned that when you are passionate about an issue, working toward change will not only guide and give opportunities to others, but it will also influence you to want to do more and reach a bigger audience.

### **Synthesis and Integration**

The required coursework, the Liberal Studies MLOs, and this Action Research Project have positively impacted my professional development as an undergraduate student at the

University of California Monterey Bay. To begin with, MLO 1: Developing Educator, allowed me to think, write, and speak critically for the need of this Capstone project. Furthermore, MLO 3: Innovative Technology Practitioner, was a crucial component for my studies since the only way to be able to complete my studies at CSUMB was to use technology effectively for innovative teaching and learning, and effective instruction. Undoubtedly, MLO 5: Subject Matter Generalist, allowed me to complete a coherent depth of study successfully within my action research project. Although at times it was a challenge, I found myself pushing through the obstacles in order to reach my goals. I now know what I am truly passionate about and why I decided to pursue a career in education. All along, it was the teachers who influenced me to want to become a teacher myself. I want to inspire and make a difference in the lives of my future students and change the way that some of them might perceive school. However, before I can do that, I need to make sure I understand their backgrounds and the community that they are growing up in, in order to become the professional that I envision being.

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