

5-2021

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Learning from Home...less students: A Study On What We Can Do To Reach Homeless Youth  
During COVID-19

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### **Abstract**

The focus of this Capstone project is on reaching homeless youth during this time of distance learning. Student homelessness is an issue because it is harder for teachers to reach them than a student with stable living conditions. According to the scholarly literature, schools are struggling to reach homeless students during the pandemic due to their lack of an address, wifi, and/or in-person interactions with their teachers. An argument is made that if schools identify students' challenges, they can provide adequate resources. Upon interviewing the assistant principal, school counselor, who has access to students and their emotional needs, and a teacher, who has taught kindergarten and fourth grade, at an elementary school, three possible solutions emerged as ways to address the issue presented. Based on the data, an action was chosen as the most effective option for reaching homeless youth during COVID-19.

*Key words: homelessness, homeless youth, distance learning*

**Learning from Home...less students: A Study On What We Can Do To Reach Homeless Youth During COVID-19**

When I was a little girl, my mom would take my sisters and I to San Francisco often to go to the American Girl store. American Girl dolls were made of porcelain and each came with one outfit and their own background stories. My favorite doll was named Kit and she had blonde hair and the most symmetrical freckles. She wore a dark purple shirt with a matching cardigan, a skirt with an intricate flower design, and white sandals. Kit's passion was writing, as was mine, so I always dreamed of buying her a typewriter (for dolls of course). She reminded me a lot of Nancy Drew and in a way, I desired to be just like her, solving crimes and mystery; Overall, making the world a better place. There was one instance I will never forget and it is an important part of my very own American Girl story.

When we arrived, my mom could not find parking nearby so she parked in a parking lot further down from the store. She knew when we got out of the car, we would go running up the street filled with excitement that could not, and would not, wait. So, she handed us each twenty dollars and said we could buy any accessory for our doll we wanted. I had my eye on a lot of things for Kit, but as I mentioned earlier, I wanted this tiny typewriter for her to write all her news breaking stories on. My sisters bolted from the car, while I walked quickly behind them to keep them in my eyes' view as well as all of my surroundings. I turned back and saw my mom was still looking for parking so I wandered off and turned the corner at the store. I was a very curious child who couldn't help exploring and finding beautiful sights. I did find a sight, but not one that was beautiful. I saw a woman sitting on the floor outside of a building quietly asking passerbyers for spare change, but what struck a chord the most was the baby crying in her arms. I

didn't understand. Why was this happening? What could I do? Why wasn't anyone stopping? So I came up with a small solution. I walked over and handed her my twenty dollar bill. She exclaimed, "God bless you!" And I returned a big smile. The moment was quickly interrupted by my angry mother. She started yelling at me because I "gave her a heart attack" and "could've gotten lost." My little eyes rolled since I was perfectly fine. Her eyes diverted to the woman and the dollar bill in her hand. Her jaw dropped and she snatched it away and pulled me away towards the store by my wrist. She saw the sadness on my face as I was perusing the store and apologized, but that I should not "give money to people like that." People like that. People like what? The drive home was quiet. I had gotten my typewriter, but I felt an odd feeling in my stomach. I felt guilty. Now that I knew there were people who lived on the street, I did not want anything to do with materialistic things. I also could not forget what my mom had said. I would later grow up to learn that it is a common stereotype and I later understood it. In fact, I almost agreed with it. That is until the day I learned what it was like not to have a home.

It was my freshman year at community college and not a day had passed that my mother and I had not exchanged a screaming match. We had such a horrible relationship that lacked communication and understanding. We believed different things and couldn't see things from other perspectives. One night, I had gotten home late from school and my mom waited at the top of the staircase with what looked like little patience. We started arguing over who had cleaned the bathroom last and it got so intense she eventually screamed, "GET OUT!" I did just that. I roamed in a 24 hour Walgreens, couch surfed, and slept at the park for a few months. I was too stubborn to go back home and my mom was too stubborn to call. I did not have a job because I was a full time student so I knew what it was like to be truly hungry. I remember crying in the bathroom stall and not knowing what to do. One day, I told myself to "suck it up," and find out

what resources I had at my disposal. My college had a free food pantry on the third floor and offered scholarships up to \$500 to students with a 3.5 GPA and up. These scholarships are provided by Student Government and Alumni and are meant to be used at the bookstore.

However, I knew the librarian and she allowed me to borrow my class textbooks for a few hours everyday. I studied every single day until my time was up and did so well in my classes that I won a scholarship! I used the \$500 for food and necessities provided by the bookstore AND still went up to the food pantry whenever they had extra food from the lunch lines from that week.

There is an instance I remember to this day about my math professor. I would not sleep at night since I was too scared so I would wait for the library to open in the morning to sleep on their couches. When I reached my math class at 5 pm, I felt drowsy all over again and would have the bad habit of falling asleep in class. However, I still managed to ace all my math exams. So much so, my professor accused me of cheating. He said it was impossible for me to have an A in his class when I was falling asleep all the time. There is that stereotype again. Little did he know I practically lived in the library. I wasn't going to let my situation bring me or my grades down.

Today, I stand before you, an about-to-be-graduate, to let you know that I was more than the stereotype. With the support of staff, such as the librarian, and campus resources provided, I pushed toward my degree. Education is such an important aspect for me because it is the only home I have ever known. After I fought my way out of my situation, I couldn't help thinking about younger kids who face homelessness. How were they getting resources? Did they tell anyone they needed help? I predicted it was going to be a topic of discussion when I reached Capstone. What I didn't predict was the COVID-19 outbreak and its effect on schools. The biggest concern is how teachers are reaching homeless youth right now. This American girl found her news breaking story. I hope it will inspire you.

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

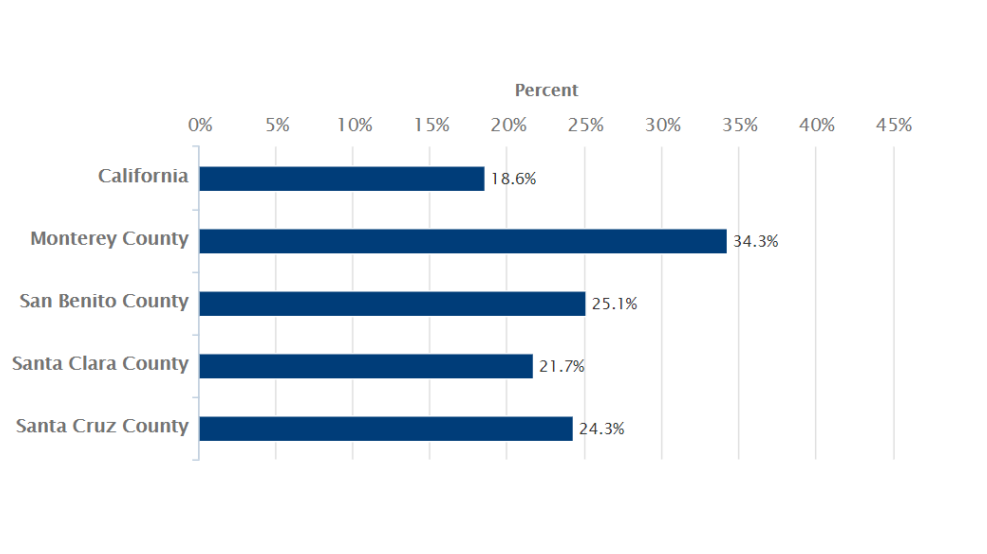
The COVID-19 pandemic required teachers to transition from in-person instruction to teaching remotely. This transition has not only affected teachers, but also students and their families. More specifically, students from low socioeconomic status communities have been greatly impacted by distance learning. 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. In order 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 & CAFE, 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, so as 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**

For this Capstone Project, the researcher investigated how teachers, as well as their schools, are reaching homeless students during the COVID-19 pandemic. Based on an analysis of the data and the relevant research literature, the researcher used what she has learned to form an action that responds to the issue in a way that informs and inspires the distinct audience.

### **Context**

This research took place at an elementary school that serves students in grades preschool through sixth grade. Cherry Blossom Elementary School is located in the central area of Hesperia and currently has 881 students enrolled. According to the school's SARC report, all students can receive a free breakfast as well as lunch everyday since 100 percent of the students qualify for free or reduced lunch. According to the California dashboard, Cherry Blossom Elementary has shown improvement in meeting and/or exceeding the state standards in both English and Math. Students have improved by 12.3 points in English Language Arts/Literacy as well as in Mathematics by 15.1. However, English language learners' performance is very low with a 27.1 percent progress towards English proficiency. About 93 percent of the students are

socioeconomically disadvantaged and less than 1 percent are foster youth (as cited in the California Dashboard, 2020). All students are also provided a chromebook and a hotspot if needed.

### **Participants and Participant Selection**

I invited the school assistant principal, school counselor, and a kindergarten teacher to participate in this study. These participants were invited to participate because of their relevant influence and interaction with students.

**Mia York.** A female kindergarten teacher who's average class size is 33 students. Mia has been teaching for 9 years at 2 different schools. She is also a member of the district technology team and leadership team.

**Valentina Galloway.** A female school counselor who has spent 7 years working with students in the education field. Valentina has been a school counselor since September 2020, however, has worked as a substitute school counselor and also completed over 700 supervised counseling hours in different school settings.

**Mary Brave.** Cherry Blossom Elementary School Assistant Principal. Mary has been in education for 15 years, serving as an assistant principal for 7 years at 2 different sites. Mary's passion lies with serving students of low socioeconomic status, trauma, and at-risk academically.

**Researcher.** This topic is personally meaningful to me because I believe that homeless students should receive a quality education with substantial resources despite their situation. I grew up in an area where I saw homeless people often as well as the people who stereotype them. Therefore, I grew up with compassion and empathy, offering whatever assistance I could. I also experienced homelessness when I was in community college and with the help of supportive staff and available resources, I was able to transfer to a 4 year university. I believe this

experience is what differentiates me from other teachers who may not prioritize reaching homeless youth and/or possess the negative stereotype. I believe that it is important to recognize people make mistakes and their children are not at fault for their actions. With the comfort and support of teachers, students will gain confidence within themselves to succeed academically. Every student deserves a fair shot and that is what drives my passion.

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

1. What do you know about student homelessness in your school? What do you see as the challenges with reaching them during this time of remote learning?
2. What do you think should be done about student homelessness by schools?
3. What is currently being done to help these students? By whom?
4. Do you think the efforts being done are good, bad or indifferent? Why?
5. Is there anything else that you want me to know about student homelessness in your school?

### **Procedure**

Participants were interviewed. All interviews were done individually and through email. This is because of my sudden move to Pennsylvania due to my parents' hasty divorce. The interviews were scheduled as Zoom meetings, but after my incident, as well as the time difference, there was no available time to meet. Emails were very formal and came attached with the interview questions. Another email followed up asking for more information on their background in education as well as a reminder to ask questions if any were unclear. All participants emailed their responses at their convenience. All responded in less than a week.

### **Data Analysis**

Transcribed interviews were coded and analyzed for emergent themes.

## Results

For this Capstone Project, the school assistant principal, counselor, and kindergarten teacher were interviewed to see what they think could be done to help homeless youth in schools. This is important because schools are struggling to reach homeless students during the pandemic due to their lack of an address, wifi, and/or in-person interactions with their teachers. Therefore, providing resources becomes an obstacle for schools due to the students' unstable living conditions. 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, reach, and effectiveness. Time is important due to teachers' busy schedules during the pandemic. Reach is an important criterion because it is already difficult for teachers to get a hold of homeless youth. Finally, effectiveness is important to ensure the best solution possible for homeless students. Based on the evaluation of each Action Option, an action will be recommended and justified.

Table 1

### *Evaluation of Action Topics*

	Time required	Reach	Effectiveness
Leading with empathy: Tackling the homeless stereotype	Low	High	Medium
Create opportunities: building infrastructure i.e schools/businesses/homes	High	High	High
Proactive partnering: Working with agencies/businesses	Medium	High	Medium

to provide more support			
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### **Leading with Empathy**

Time is an issue due to educators' busy schedules; I make this assumption due to the lateness of emails sent by the participants of this study. I also met with Valentina Galloway at the beginning of the semester on Zoom to introduce myself. I distinctly remember her ending the meeting early due to incoming phone calls. She mentioned that during this time, everyone has been extremely busy which is why emailing was a needed solution due to their convenience. When reading Mia York's responses, I noticed how much she claims her school is doing to support homeless students. This includes the school providing over 300 mobile hotspots, free food to take home, clothing resources, and chromebooks. However, she explains the two "camps" at her school. The first camp consists of the teachers who see poverty, addiction, and joblessness as situations that need unconditional support while the second camp views poverty and associates it with laziness and depravity. She also uses the term: "pull themselves up by the bootstraps" (M. York, personal communication, April 21, 2021). She then explains that with the fluctuation of new teachers, there is more compassion, but it is still an underlying issue in her school and community. The literature reveals that low income communities are the most affected (as cited in Education Trust-West, 2020). Thus, teachers need to lead with empathy.

As a result of examining both the literature research and interview data, an action option presented itself, implementing module completions at the beginning of the school year. In order to become a teacher, there are a lot of classes to complete as well as teacher training. When you are a teacher, it is important to know the learning does not stop there. The modules will contain articles on homeless youth, including the stigma around them. At the end of the module, teachers



will complete a short quiz to prove they read the information. As stated before, time is an issue and these modules would not take up too much time since they can be done at the teacher's convenience before the first day of the school year. By completing these modules before the school year, teachers will have a refreshed mindset and reach all their students while paying attention to potential signs of homelessness. This way teachers will lead with empathy and the effectiveness will be beneficial.

### **Create Opportunities**

Creating infrastructure such as new buildings, new schools, and homes may require a lot of time, but the reach would be incredibly high. Hesperia is a low income community with few jobs, few job opportunities, and general poverty. One teacher explained it is because of Hesperia's "remote location being greatly affected by methamphetamine addiction" (M. York, personal communication, April 21, 2021). As cited in the SARC, students at Lime Street are low scoring in meeting the state standards and 17.8 percent of students are english learners. This parallels with the literature when Kamisli (2020) explains that "education has been adapted and the responsibility of families for the education of their children has increased." Parents may also speak little English and struggle with this task. There is a need for opportunities for higher education.

In order to provide more job opportunities in the future, we need to do what we do best as educators: teach. An action option is revealed and it is to provide higher education by building infrastructure such as new schools and then new businesses, to stimulate more jobs. Homeless youth are homeless because of their parents' situation and although we cannot fix their problem, we can offer aid and encourage them to see their potential. Just like our students, they need unconditional support to find the means to overcome their hardships. This will be time

consuming due to the call to action to the governor as well as building these schools and finding teachers to teach there. However, both the reach and effectiveness will be high due to the increase in learning and future job opportunities.

### **Proactive Partnering**

A third theme that emerged during the research process was the idea of proactive partnering. Cherry Blossom Elementary is well aware of their homeless problem. The Assistant Principal explained that they receive numerous reports from Student Services regarding their homeless and foster youth students. She also describes who they partner with, in her own words, “Our elementary counselor and Intern Social Workers contact each homeless family to support them at least twice, once each semester. Food boxes, backpacks, and hygiene kits were offered to each student within the homeless family, even if they were at another site. School Police also worked with the sites to make the connections needed and support the food boxes, backpacks, and hygiene kits being received. Our District Social Worker also worked to provide needed resources (M. Brave, personal communication, April 27, 2021). However, according to York, she thinks the efforts at her school are good, but “will never be enough” due to the “corrosive problems” that come with the city of Hesperia (M. York, personal communication, April 21, 2021). Therefore, there will always be a need for more resources. The literature revealed that we can provide only if schools “develop a comprehensive approach to family engagement” (Education Trust-West & CAFE, 2020). This is very important because schools must establish a relationship with families in order to identify their challenges.

Making the connection between schools and parents comes about as a third action option. Schools must identify families’ needs and then proactively partner with more agencies, individuals, and businesses. For example, my mother works for Walmart as their head Assistant

General Manager. Each year, the company gives her and her colleagues \$2500 to give away. They can give it to a school in need, a charity, or a nonprofit organization. By looking for locations and presenting to people the needs of your school as well as your demographics, agencies will notice you and consider you. By offering money or resources, homeless families will receive their needs. This may require some time due to the research behind finding a partner, but the reach is high since no student goes unnoticed and therefore has a strong chance of receiving what they need. The effectiveness would also be high because one of the problems with remote learning is ensuring every student has access to the same resources.

### **Conclusion**

Of all the three action options explained above, I recommend that teachers lead with empathy to remove the stigma around homelessness. Based on the literature and data collected from the participants, I am confident this is the best solution to better reach and support homeless youth during COVID-19. Next, I will be discussing the concessions, limitations, and possible negative outcomes of my selected action.

**Concessions:** Although I chose leading with empathy as my action, the other two options have strengths as well. For example, the action discussing building infrastructure to create opportunities could ensure new homes. M. York explains that families rarely come forward with their status as “unhomed,” due to the requirement of proof of residence to enroll in school. However, their temporary situations come with complications and some families live in their cars. This option would very much cater that. It would also help in future jobs created due to the new school buildings. As for the proactive partnering option, there are also notable strengths. One being the medium time frame due to the school working with another agency. This would allow for fresh ideas as well as resources for the advanced needs of homeless students. This

action would also help with reaching out to families and building a bridge. This allows more communication between schools so they can better support homeless youth.

**Limitations:** Despite choosing to lead with empathy, there are still ways my choice is limited. Forcing teachers to complete these modules could backfire. For example, teachers could wait until the last minute to complete their modules on supporting homeless youth and ask colleagues to give them the answers. Another limitation would be teachers who are close minded and refuse to tackle the homeless stereotype. Everyone has a different perspective and set of beliefs so this option could be useless if presented to a teacher as so.

**Potential negative outcomes:** There are also possibilities of negative outcomes within this action. For example, the modules could not work. Reading and talking about homelessness is important because it is a conversation that needs to be had, but if no one talks about it or feels passionate about it, there would be no point. Another example would be no one completing it. Although you could enforce it, there's the possibility that everyone does not do it because they deem it unnecessary.

**Conclusion.** Despite all limitations and potential negative outcomes, I still recommend leading with empathy is the best action option to support homeless youth. This action has the lowest time required which is beneficial for teachers' busy schedules. The reach is also high due to forcing teachers to tackle the homeless stigma. It also ensures more knowledge on the signs of homelessness to better support all students. I believe being empathetic to these children in helpless situations is so important and effective in creating a relationship with them. When students are more comfortable, they will feel safe and happy. I remember people who were understanding and helpful when I was homeless and it reminded me that we are all human and life is already hard enough; We need to be there for one another especially during this pandemic.

I have not seen my friends in so long, but they call often and it makes me feel seen and heard. Our students should still be as connected to us despite the pandemic. By approaching them with our emotions, they will reciprocate and we will better understand them. Leading with empathy will address this systemic problem and that is important because it will ensure two “camps,” as described by M. York, become one. Approaching our students with emotional intelligence will result in them reciprocating and that is why this action rises above the others.

### **Action Documentation and Reflection**

For the past year, COVID-19 has changed the way schooling has taken place. It has required teachers to transition from in-person instruction to online instruction. This transition has affected teachers, students and their families. More specifically, students from low socioeconomic status communities have been greatly impacted by distance learning. This is not only due to lack of in person instruction, but also lack of WiFi and a home address. Reaching homeless youth has been difficult for schools and it has raised a level of concern. This is important because all students deserve a quality education with the needed resources. After analyzing the literature and conducting an interview with an assistant principal, school counselor, and kindergarten teacher, three action options emerged. The first option is to have teachers lead with empathy by completing modules that destigmatize homelessness. The second is to create opportunities such as building infrastructure that will lead to higher education and more jobs. The last option is to proactively partner with more agencies to meet the advanced needs of homeless youth and their families. I implemented the first option because it ties into removing the stereotype from staff to better support homeless students. The time is low, due to completion at the convenience of the teacher, while the reach is high, ensuring all students will be free of judgement and well supported. Due to the pandemic, I was unable to create this module of

articles to share with the teachers at the school. However, I found an alternative and that is using social media. I had created a professional Twitter account last semester in LS350 and decided to use it for my action. First, I asked all my peers who followed me on Instagram to follow me on Twitter. I then compiled a total of 8 tweets (see Appendix) where I am retweeting organizations that support homeless youth. I also tweeted about youtube accounts that give homelessness a face to help remove the stereotype. Additionally, I donated money to The Bridge, a nonprofit that provides shelter to homeless and runaway youth. In each tweet, I included hashtags for a greater reach, such as teachers, end homelessness, homeless, etc. I found it surprising how many people are tackling the same issue I am. I often feel alone in the issues I advocate and it made me happy to find a lot of resources. I found myself making a few modifications because a lot of the accounts I came in contact with were UK or Canada based and I wanted to keep my tweets catered to the United States. The response has been minimal, but so appreciated. The nonprofits I boosted have liked my tweets which means they are circulating. I wish I had known how powerful Twitter is. I have never been involved in social media, but it has a lot of benefits to it, like getting your message across! I learned that I am very strong willed and passionate. This helps me work toward change because of my determined attitude to be the change I want to see.

### **Synthesis and Integration**

I was absolutely terrified when I first entered my LS400: Senior Capstone class because I had heard of an extremely long paper, an action, a big presentation at a festival, and sweat running down your back the entire time because this class signified if you had what it takes to be an educator. After this class, I know a few things are true. One is that the paper was not that bad because it is divided into sections. The second is that I love presenting and can't wait to do so at the festival, and finally, I have never been more sure about being a teacher. I read an inspiration

quote about teachers once: “Teachers plant seeds that bloom and last forever.” I look back on my academic career and can tell you the name of every teacher I have ever had and something monumental they taught me. Teachers inspire and create change. They are the people who push you to believe in yourself. I am ready to be that person. My time at CSU Monterey Bay has been extremely rewarding. I have made friends I will never forget, papers that were longer than my fingernails, riveting class discussions, all nighters, and more. I wouldn’t change a thing. The Liberal Studies MLO’s, the required coursework, and this Action research project has equipped me in my professional development. MLO 2: Diversity and Multicultural Scholar led me to value diversity and the means to create a multicultural classroom where students embrace their cultural identity. MLO 4: Social Justice Collaborator reaffirmed my teaching philosophy: I do not just want to teach my students the curriculum; I want to teach them to be good people. I envision teaching at any and every grade level so my next step is graduate school to obtain my Masters as well as my credential. I also hope to be a well known community member to instill change and advocate issues I am passionate about. My minor is also in Environmental Studies, so I envision a sustainable classroom. These are all aspirations I will make realities, but the professional I envision being is who I am now: a girl who never gave up and works harder than anyone. As for the required coursework, I enjoyed every class I took and that’s how I know I picked the right major. The classes were mentally stimulating in that they were challenging and made me want to learn more. As for this project, I learned how much of a good writer I am, even though I criticize myself heavily. I also got to converse with professionals in the field and experience life in the world of education. I am so excited. I did it!

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Appendix

**Ms. Twogood**  
@ms\_twogood

Thank you so much for what you do @invisiblepeople for giving homelessness a face(s) which helps remove the negative stereotype. Please check out their YouTube!  
[youtube.com/c/InvisiblePeo...](https://youtube.com/c/InvisiblePeo...) #homelessness #homelesstereotype #teachers #homelessyouth

**Invisible People** > See. Learn. Take Action. @invisiblepeople  
We imagine a world where everyone has a place to call home. Until then, we strive to be the most trusted source for homelessness news, education and advocacy. [invisiblepeople.tv](https://invisiblepeople.tv)

3:12 AM · May 11, 2021

1 Copy link to Tweet

**Ms. Twogood**  
@ms\_twogood

Just donated to The Bridge for youth! Anything helps! Whether it's money, stocks, or in-kind donations, it's going to help shelter #homelessyouth #teachers #homelessness #leadwithempathy

**The Bridge for Youth** @BridgeforYouth  
The Bridge is retrofitting a bus & later this spring will begin mobile outreach & provide access to healthy food, gender affirming clothing, harm reduction & resources for youth currently or at risk of experiencing homelessness. [bridgeforyouth.org/donate/](https://bridgeforyouth.org/donate/) #homelessyouth



Youth in the community need YOU!

**Ms. Twogood**  
@ms\_twogood

I believe that all students deserve a quality education despite where they come from or what hardships they face. Did you know that the number of homeless students has increased 15% since 2015? Read for more:  
[nea.org/advocating-for...](https://nea.org/advocating-for...) #teachers #homelessness #leadwithempathy



'They're Invisible': Number of Homeless Students Reaches New High ...  
The number of students who have experienced homelessness during the last three school years has risen to 1.5 million - a 15% increase ...  
[nea.org](https://nea.org)

2:50 AM · May 11, 2021

1 Copy link to Tweet

**Ms. Twogood**  
@ms\_twogood

It's extremely difficult to do so during COVID-19, but schools can provide hotspots as well as we can provide resources! We can also incorporate socioemotional learning by incorporating a google form where students just check in and let us know how they're doing! ❤️  
#teachers

3:22 AM · May 11, 2021

1 ⚡ See the latest COVID-19 information on Twitter


**Ms. Twogood** @ms\_twogood

Thank you for sharing and all you do ❤️ calling all #teachers : what can we do to incorporate socioemotional learning into the curriculum and how can we connect with our #homeless /foster youth students?

**SIFA Fireside** @Sifafireside  
It's #MentalHealthAwarenessWeek

80% of individuals experiencing #homelessness reported some form of #MentalHealth challenges according to a survey conducted by @HomelessLink

We're proud to work with @bsmhft & @BirminghamMind ensuring our clients get the support they need. ❤️



3:20 AM · May 11, 2021

1 ❤️ 1 💬 Copy link to Tweet

**Ms. Twogood** @ms\_twogood

Everyone deserves a home ❤️ #teachers #endhomelessness

**Dr. Lisa Brown** @WAComDirector

\$1.4M in grants from our Office of #HomelessYouth will go to 10 #WAState organizations to help house young people. No person should spend a single night without a safe, stable place to call home. #EndHomelessness commerce.wa.gov/news-releases/...

3:30 AM · May 11, 2021

❤️ 💬 🔗 Copy link to Tweet

**Ms. Twogood** @ms\_twogood

I will definitely put this in my syllabus or on my classroom wall. How do you incorporate resources in your classroom? #teachers #homeless #homelessyouth #leadwithempathy

**Dallas ISD Homeless Education Program** @DallasISDHEP  
HOMELESS CRISIS HELP LINE : 1-888-411-6802

Cold weather and getting colder. If you need shelter, please call the hotline. #homeless #homelessyouth @dallaschools

3:28 AM · May 11, 2021

❤️ 💬 🔗 Copy link to Tweet