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Stronger Together: Uniting Parents, Educators, and Professionals for Enhanced Social-Emotional

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Abstract

This Capstone project addresses the crucial issue of inadequate social-emotional learning in elementary schools, focusing on improving access and quality for students. It is essential to tackle this issue because limited access hinders the development of students' social-emotional skills, potentially affecting their long-term success. It is argued that integrating higher-quality social-emotional learning into education is necessary to foster lifelong skills. Three key stakeholders—two parents and one principal—were interviewed to obtain their suggestions for improving social-emotional skills. Analysis of the data revealed three potential action options: hiring more professionals; providing additional professional development for educators; and enhancing parental involvement. Of these, hiring more professionals is proposed as the most effective strategy to elevate the level and quality of social-emotional learning for elementary school students.

Keywords: Social-emotional learning, lifelong skills, quality access

Stronger Together: Uniting Parents, Educators, and Professionals for Enhanced Social-Emotional

As a shy student, I faced many challenges in my academic journey. I struggled to get the necessary resources and support to thrive in different environments. However, as I grew into adulthood, I took the initiative to improve my situation. Looking back on my experiences, I realized that my struggles were understandable, given my circumstances. Growing up in a low-income, violent neighborhood as a bilingual learner with parents who only spoke Spanish, I faced communication barriers that made it difficult to learn. Although I had to learn at my own pace and translate for my parents during parent-teacher conferences, I was eventually reclassified in second grade, which allowed me to communicate more effectively with my teachers.

Unfortunately, my family experienced two losses that had a significant impact on my social-emotional health. I received no support from my parents and was left to deal with my emotions alone. As a result, I lost my motivation and struggled in school despite being referred to group counseling sessions. However, I was uncomfortable sharing details about my personal life with others at school, and the experience was very distressing.

In high school, a counselor told me I would not amount to anything and should focus on the same careers as my parents and older siblings. This upset me, and I decided to prove her wrong by attending summer school and graduating with good grades. Despite my discouraging high school experience, I decided to pursue a college education and focus on my future. Over time, I realized that my true calling was to create a positive learning environment and support students

in their journey toward success. Pursuing this passion, I boldly decided to switch my major to Liberal Studies and transfer to another college.

Through my experiences with family members who face challenges in developing social-emotional learning skills, I have understood the transformative impact of social-emotional learning on their lives. Witnessing their growth and progress has convinced me of the importance of social-emotional learning in helping individuals overcome their difficulties and achieve success. Although there has been an increase in knowledge and resources for social-emotional learning, much work remains to ensure that all students receive the support they need to develop these lifelong skills.

Literature Synthesis

What is the focus issue?

Social-emotional learning is the development process through which people build their skills and knowledge on different components of self-awareness, self-management, responsible decision-making, social awareness, and relationships that connect with their environment through interpersonal relationships, practices, and opportunities (California Department of Education, 2024). Social-emotional learning, SEL, is a part of kindergarten through twelfth-grade education to help students engage with their learning experiences, environment, curriculum, and relationships and build life-long skills. As students develop their social consciousness, empathetic thinking, problem-solving abilities, self-awareness, and other interpersonal and emotional competencies, their academic performance and emotional climate at home and school improve (Bridgeland, Bruce, and Hariharan, 2012,p. 25). However, some

schools need more resources for students' social-emotional needs. Franklin Elementary has only one part-time professional, such as a psychologist or counselor, for every few hundred students (SARC 2023). Because of the need for more resources provided by schools for students in elementary school, those students are less likely to build lifelong social and emotional skills. They are leading to multiple deficiencies in their learning experience that affect equity in the classroom, environment, multicultural perspectives, and the policies implied by the state on social-emotional learning.

The state of California considers social-emotional learning an integral part of providing a quality education to students and educators. These help create a positive learning environment by fostering various interpersonal skills. The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) presents ideas to the California Department of Education to implement transformative social-emotional competencies (California Department of Education, 2024). The framework for social-emotional learning includes student's communities, families and caregivers, schools, and classrooms. Additionally, a student's surrounding environment influences and reflects their perspective on the interpersonal skills that contribute to their lifelong learning. Based on a review of the literature, graduating from high school within the expected time frame, obtaining a college degree, and acquiring a steady job are all important life achievements (Schonert-Reichel, 2017, pg 3). Students develop important skills through social-emotional learning instruction, classroom interactions, and school policies and practices. Non-academic factors, such as relationships and community learning opportunities, also influence their growth. It encompasses their interactions with peers and those who surround them.

Why is it an issue?

In California's state standards, students' and educators' social and emotional learning is equally crucial to a thriving learning environment. For instance, some educators observe that integrating SEL in their classrooms is less challenging when they increase their social and emotional abilities and master the accompanying vocabulary, enabling them to better model SEL positively for their students (Bridgeland et al., 2012, pg 35). The state ensures that social-emotional programs include these basic needs of building lifelong skills to increase their relationships while making emotional connections with their development. Because of these existing state education policies, the government ensures that students increase social awareness, relationship skills, and self-awareness from both teachers and students, including increasing academic achievement in students' academic success, behavior, environment, parental involvement, program development, teachers' professional development and knowledge, student engagement, and relationships. (Collaborative for Academic Social and Emotional Learning, 2024). Social-emotional learning is an important field of study because it significantly impacts students' overall achievement. The social-emotional program includes various factors, including multicultural and equity perspectives, such as low-income families, students with families that speak languages other than English, and other factors that influence the performance of students' emotional skills. At Franklin Elementary, over half of the students enrolled come from low-income households; 10% of students have disabilities, 70% are English learners, and 12% are migrant students. (Franklin, SARC 2023). Due to the higher percentage of disadvantaged students at the school, they face more challenges than those with more affluent backgrounds. These students require additional attention to specific life skills that may not be present in their daily environment. For example, research findings indicate that immersing students affected by poverty in high-quality programs that integrate SEL concepts is advantageous to their academic

achievement, interpersonal growth, crime reduction, and socioeconomic success (Bridgeland et al., 2012, pg 8).

Furthermore, Greenberg, Domitrovich, Weissberg, and Durlak (2017) extrapolated that students who experience hardships while in their developmental years, such as living in poverty, violent neighborhoods, trauma, and mental health disorders as well as substance use disorder, will face greater challenges in developing social-emotional learning. This results in further community and environmental issues that impact multicultural aspects, such as bullying. Because of the higher population of low-income families, Franklin students may have a higher probability of bullying because of low-quality interpersonal skills, increasing their likelihood of anxiety, low esteem, and poor communication skills (Cuocci & Arndt, 2020).

Furthermore, Franklin Elementary School has higher suspension and expulsion rates for students who receive migrant education services, come from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds, and have disabilities compared to other student groups (Franklin, SARC 2023). With a high percentage of Hispanic or Latino students, there are overlapping multicultural perspectives that can affect their learning equity, including their behavior. Encouraging students to participate in social-emotional curricula in the classroom leads to improved on-task behavior, motivation, and relationships with peers, teachers, and the community. Additionally, it decreases emotional distress, resulting in fewer instances of depression, anxiety, stress, and social isolation (Bridgeland et al., 2012, pg 27). Moving from the student's proximity to a distant community, the social-emotional skills students learn become part of their academic success. The appropriate collaboration between the district's administration, educators, and groups within Franklin Elementary School will improve the quality of resources and reduce deficits. The lack of mental health professional providers that include teachers, counselors, special needs teachers, and

psychologists to work collaboratively on students' learning plans that include social and emotional learning is nonexistent even more when looking for collaborating or coordinating with local mental health service providers. The availability of mental health professionals, such as teachers, counselors, special needs teachers, and psychologists, who can collaborate to create personalized learning plans that incorporate social and emotional learning for students is minimal. This lack of collaboration is even more apparent when coordinating with local mental health service providers (Greenberg et al., 2017, pg 15). Reassuring the importance of appropriate ratios of students' access and time to providers is integral to equity, policies, and multicultural perspectives within social-emotional learning skills.

By increasing social-emotional learning skills and resources at Franklin Elementary, the level of students' academic achievement, environment, teacher knowledge and development, relationships, and support, students are more likely to improve their interpersonal skills. In addressing the educator's knowledge and development, students will better understand and apply social-emotional learning. Improving teachers' social and emotional competencies and learning the associated terminology makes it easier for them to integrate SEL in their classrooms. They are more able to serve as positive role models for their students in terms of SEL (Bridgeland et al.,2012). In doing so, more students will connect better with their learning experience through the appropriate teachers, elevating their learning and the environment. Alongside school support for teachers' own social-emotional needs of feeling burned out; “The researchers found that teachers who reported higher levels of stress had more students in their classrooms with mental health problems. . . students exhibited higher levels of externalizing problems (arguing, fighting, impulsive behavior, and the like), interpersonal problems (for example, trouble expressing

emotions and resolving conflicts), and internalizing problems (such as anxiety, sadness, and low self-esteem)”(Schonert-Reichel, 2017, pg 6). Students' success is directly linked to the stability and health of their teachers; prioritizing their well-being ensures a thriving environment for social-emotional learning.

What Has and/or Should Be Done?

For many students at Franklin Elementary School, their recent development of social-emotional awareness requires more access and quality of these developmental skills for their students. Providing more quality resources, such as more professional development, psychologist, and parental involvement, could increase their current social-emotional level of quality by providing resources such as programs given by the state policies: CARE (Cultivating Awareness and Resilience in Education) and SMART-in-Education (Stress Management and Resiliency Training (Schonert-Reichel, 2017, pg 8). Students increase their mindfulness skills and build their interpersonal life-long skills. Access to better education begins with the teacher's knowledge, action, schoolwide collaboration, and parental involvement. Schonert-Reichel (2017) presents that a program focusing on student prevention can benefit teachers, mainly if it includes a social and emotional component.

Furthermore, incorporating equity ideas into teacher and student learning can successfully improve quality resources by providing effective professional development for teachers to ensure effectiveness and long-term viability as educators oversee students' learning environment. For instance, “To facilitate the creation of student-family-community partnerships, schools can create a position of SEL or SFP coordinator, who can be involved with program implementation and serve as a liaison with families and community partners” (Bridgeland et al.,

2012, pg 40). Specifically, at Franklin Elementary, the resources that, besides professional development, work alongside professional agencies in areas of social-emotional learning for student success are limited and could indicate a modified school structure according to the collaboration of the community, schools, and families.

Conclusion

As a result, recognizing social-emotional learning in Franklin Elementary School should increase the resources provided to students with the necessary tools to comprehend and utilize their interpersonal skills of social-emotional learning. As research on the benefits of social-emotional learning grows, it is critical to provide adequate resources for its implementation in schools. By investing in professional development, adopting evidence-based SEL programs, developing relationships between schools and families, and creating supportive learning environments, we can ensure that SEL is prioritized and improved in quality.

Method

Social-emotional learning enhances academic performance, mental health, and interpersonal relationships. Social-emotional learning establishes a positive learning environment by guiding students to manage their emotions, set goals, show empathy, build healthy relationships, and make ethical choices, leading to academic performance, better behavior, and outstanding lifelong skills. This Capstone Project delves into parents' perspectives on social-emotional learning and identifies potential areas for improvement. Through careful data analysis and pertinent research literature, the researcher leveraged their insights to develop an actionable plan that engaged, informed, or inspired a specific audience and fostered positive social-emotional learning outcomes.

Context

Located in Eastville, California, the school is situated in a community with many labor workers, particularly those of Latino heritage. Franklin Elementary School¹ has a student body of over 600 individuals. Over half of the students enrolled come from low-income households; 10% have disabilities, 70% are English learners, and 12% are migrant students (Franklin, SARC 2023). Despite being one of the oldest schools in Eastville District, the structural buildings have undergone minor changes.

Participants and Participant Selection

I chose Franklin Elementary School because of its proximity to my family's educational background and my past student experiences. I invited two parents and the principal to participate in this study. These individuals have been chosen due to their relevant expertise and experience in the field.

Parent 1: A Latina female parent of two children currently enrolled at Franklin Elementary School, ages 6 and 7. She was raised on the east side of Eastville, California, and her other children attended Franklin Elementary School. She is a single-parent provider in her family of six, including herself. She works in agriculture, specifically in a packaging warehouse.

Parent 2: A Latina female parent of one eight-year-old child currently enrolled in Franklin Elementary School. She has two other children who have attended Franklin Elementary School. She and her husband are involved in their student's education and have lived in the community for over 19 years. She works in agriculture as a strawberry field picker.

Principal P: A Latino male who has worked as an administrator for over nine years. He started working with Franklin Elementary School as a vice principal and was promoted to head principal in 2015. His culture and background as a teacher have made him more understanding and compassionate about education in the Eastville School District.

Researcher

This topic holds great significance to me as I struggled with my social-emotional health during elementary school. I strongly believe that schools should provide the necessary tools to

¹ The names of people, places, and organizations are pseudonyms to protect anonymity.

help students address these challenges. While I had access to a counselor who held group meetings once a week, I found it unhelpful, and it made me less inclined to open up. I empathize with the current students at Franklin as they, too, are facing a shortage of resources and attention toward social-emotional learning. However, being from an older generation, I understand that they require different resources and approaches. The action plan will focus on making social-emotional learning more accessible to students and their families, assuming that there is a greater need for these resources than not.

Semi-Structured Interview and Survey Questions

For the purpose of this project, I interviewed two parents and an educator to obtain their perspectives on Social-Emotional learning. The questions are shared below.

1. How do you define social-emotional learning, and how important do you believe it is for student's overall development and success at Franklin School?
2. What do you see as the challenges with social-emotional learning at Franklin? What are you most concerned about when it comes to social-emotional learning?
3. What is currently being done to address social-emotional learning at Franklin? - by whom - and what are the strengths and weaknesses of these efforts?
4. What do you think should be done about social-emotional learning at Franklin?
5. What do you think are the challenges to doing something about social-emotional learning at Franklin?
6. Is there anything else that you would like to say about social-emotional learning and/or the improvement of social-emotional learning at Franklin?

Procedure²

All participants were interviewed. All interviews were conducted individually. When it was not possible to interview participants in person, they were invited to complete a phone interview or paper and pencil survey of the same questions. Face-to-face interviews took less than one hour, were audio-recorded (with participant consent), and occurred in their homes. A semi-structured interview format was used for face-to-face interviews to allow follow-up questions for unclear, interesting, or unexpected responses. All interviews/surveys were scheduled at the convenience of the interviewee and took approximately 20 minutes to complete.

Data Analysis

² <http://my.ilstu.edu/~jhkahn/>

Transcribed interviews were coded and analyzed for emergent themes.

Results

For this Capstone Project, parents and a principal were interviewed to see what they think could be done to improve the level and quality of social-emotional learning for students at Franklin Elementary. The availability and quality of social-emotional learning in schools play a crucial role in shaping students' academic performance, mental and behavioral health, and lifelong skills that impact their critical thinking and comprehension abilities. Insufficient access to high-quality social-emotional learning programs can result in decreased student achievement across these vital areas, highlighting the importance of addressing this issue to support students' overall development and well-being. Based on an analysis of the data and the relevant research literature, three themes emerged: hiring more professionals such as psychologists, behavioral specialists, and counselors; professional development for educators and staff; and increasing parental involvement (see Table 1). Evidence-based decision-making requires evaluating each potential Action Option by the following criteria: cost, probability of impact, and time.

Table 1

Evaluation of Action Options

	Cost	Probability of impact	Time
Hiring more professionals (psychologists, behavioral specialists, counselors)	High	High	High

Professional development for educators and staff	High	High	High
Increasing parental involvement	Medium	High	Medium

Action Option 1: Hiring more professionals

Increasing the number of professionals in schools may enhance the workforce and kids' learning outcomes. Focusing on quality education is a significant part of access and quality and can only increase through the school's outreach and sustainability of resources. For instance, Principal P mentions, “We just don’t have the manpower; it's about the manpower” (personal communication, March 2024). Recognizing the issue of deficient resources that denies access and quality to students' learning experience, hiring more specialists will increase the amount of exposure and decrease further and more profound issues within the school for educational and lifelong learning. Similarly, parent one and parent two highlighted the idea of more resources based on social-emotional development specifically for younger students to increase their cognitive and motor skills to help motivate and increase engagement at home and school (personal communication, April 2024). Hiring more professional personnel potentially benefits Franklin students by improving their overall performance. Because of the higher population of low-income families, Franklin students may have a higher probability of behavioral challenges due to low-quality interpersonal skills, increasing their likelihood of anxiety, low esteem, and poor communication skills (Cuocci & Arndt, 2020). Increasing the number of specialists for

students can be challenging for schools' budgets unless districts provide accurate financial help to increase budgets for lifelong student support.

The first action plan includes hiring more psychologists, behavioral specialists, and counselors. This action plan proposes that the district give schools more financial resources to hire more employees, which will help decrease specialist-to-student ratios. Because of the school's high student enrollment, single specialists can not provide students with quality care. However, by increasing the school's funds, schools can hire specialists and reach more students, leading to more access to quality student learning. The hiring process and miscellaneous work could be time-consuming. However, the reach and probability of impact are very high.

Action Option 2: Professional development for educators and staff

Schonert-Reichel (2017) states that a social-emotional program focusing on student prevention can benefit teachers, mainly if it includes a social and emotional component. Professional teacher development sessions will take time to coordinate with other professionals' days that are already in high need of educators and will increase the cost for the school. However, the benefits outweigh the criteria, such as significantly enhancing school social skills: providing foundational knowledge and tools, support and resources, reducing teacher burnout, and improving social-emotional implementation and school climate. Encouraging students to participate in social-emotional curricula in the classroom leads to improved on-task behavior, motivation, and relationships with peers, teachers, and the community. Additionally, it decreases emotional distress, resulting in fewer instances of depression, anxiety, stress, and social isolation (Bridgeland et al., 2012, pg 27). Teachers with more knowledge and developmental skills have a broader range of implementation to keep students engaged and increase interpersonal skills with

social skills to benefit their lifelong learning skills. For instance, parent one shares that children must receive socio-emotional support given that mental health issues among youths have increased significantly in recent years, and they are caused by socio-emotional inadequacies such as deficiencies in school resources and awareness (Personal Communication, April 2024).

Professional development sessions encourage teachers to strive for improvement and knowledge and participate in discussions. They also provide a space for staff to process, reflect, connect, and create action plans specific to their schools. By investing in social-emotional learning and professional development for teachers, schools can create a supportive climate that nurtures both students and teachers social-emotional skills, leading to improved academic performance, behavior, and overall well-emotional learning.

The second action option in the evaluation is increasing professional development for educators and staff. This action plan includes a high cost, probability of impact, and time for this plan to be fully implemented and successful in the long run for students at Franklin Elementary. By implementing increased professional development on social-emotional skills and learning, educators and staff can appropriately assist and help develop these skills for students.

Particularly at Franklin Elementary, previous principals and staff did not prioritize social-emotional learning, leading to a deficiency in these skills. They increased behavioral issues, lack of motivation and engagement, and resource unawareness for students, families, and staff (Personal Communication, March 2024). This results in a shortage of physical resources, such as recognizing signs of mental and behavioral difficulties for students and teachers.

Increasing professional development has numerous benefits beyond just identifying struggling students and providing them with the necessary support to enhance their learning experience

academically and at home. It also helps improve teacher retention skills and strengthens the connection between their teaching performance and overall experience.

Action Option 3: Increasing parental involvement

Parental involvement is crucial for effective social-emotional learning, such as creating knowledgeable parents with better communication and awareness of social-emotional skills because they are ultimately students' primary responsibility to ensure their social-emotional learning. Increasing parental involvement efforts will increase both at-home and school environments and actively influence students to reflect on their interpersonal relationship skills. For instance, parent shares, "The district's approval, as well as parents' understanding that this class or resources exist for the betterment of students, will greatly benefit them since they will be able to focus more on learning, express and control their emotions, and communicate to individuals they trust and understand" (Personal Communication, April 2024). As awareness grows about the positive impact of social-emotional learning on children's development, parents and staff are increasingly eager to participate and support it. These efforts will extend social-emotional learning beyond the classroom and create consistent modeling and reinforcement of social-emotional skills at home and school, essential for students to develop these lifelong competencies.

The third action plan includes increasing parental involvement in schools, sponsored by initiatives to motivate parents to attend school meetings. Particularly at Franklin Elementary School, parents are notified of the school meeting through flyers and third-party apps where

teachers can send parents notifications. However, these efforts are insufficient for parents to attend schools and engage in their student's academic experience. Alongside a lack of parental involvement is insufficient awareness of existing resources provided by the school and community programs that work alongside schools. The cost of bringing more incentives for parent involvement may result in a high cost because of the monthly meetings by parent councils and other meetings bimonthly. However, the probability of impact is very high because if parents are involved, students are more likely to be involved in school activities and begin to see behavioral and mental changes quickly. These meetings are held monthly to recap the school's efforts and consider new ways to increase learning; the more parents, the more votes and attention to social issues that can make a difference in Franklin students' overall learning. Additionally, parents one and two and Principal P explain the benefits of attending the Cafecito meeting, which is held bimonthly, and encourage parents to come to two of the meetings offered to learn more about their student's learning. The parents know about the school budget use, parents' concerns, and more time to speak on students' behavioral and academic learning to Principal P in a setting where they feel heard and respected and share experiences and resources (Personal Communication, March and April 2024).

Recommendation. I recommend action plan three: increase parental involvement at Franklin Elementary to increase the current level of access and quality. The action plan includes increasing involvement by increasing incentives for both parents and students at participating schools' meetings and resources. It also includes expanding the resources for parents to encourage better knowledge and skills in social-emotional learning. By participating in these activities, parents will better understand the current stance on social-emotional learning and

advocate for further access and quality. Ultimately, I decided on this action plan because of the minimum cost, time commitment, and higher action probability through evaluating the criteria.

Concessions. Although action plan one, hiring more professionals, and action plan two, professional development for teachers and staff, are robust options, they are more expensive and time-consuming than action plan three, increasing parental involvement. However, they are great options for further inspection and implementation based on the high action probability of successful change in adequate access and quality. They will take more time to start the production process of hiring onsite specialists and developing a calendar that works with the school year to begin teacher and staff professional development. Despite both time and financial constraints from the district and government, these two options will significantly increase social-emotional learning at Franklin Elementary.

Limitations. Although parental involvement is a faster and more effective way to increase access and quality, it is also a limited plan because many parents still have difficulty engaging with their student's academic experience. Other factors might contribute to the deficiency of parental involvement, such as Franklin Elementary School, where 10% of students have disabilities, 70% are English learners, and 12% are migrant students (Franklin, SARC 2023). These limitations may result in families needing more resources and support to engage in these activities after or during school hours, ultimately limiting the proximity of access and probability of adaption based on more underlying social issues of Franklin elementary families.

Potential negative outcomes. One possible negative outcome of increased parental involvement is the insufficient professional-to-parent ratio. Because of the proposed increase, they have more coverage of parent feedback and concerns than initially, which the administration needs to respond to. However, this ties in with hiring more school personnel to help alleviate some of the pressure on the admin and educators. It may also increase parents on the parent council and create issues such as inexperience or lack of knowledge on specific social problems within the school, leading to inconsistent agreement. Overall, these potential adverse outcomes will be based on each possible outcome theory's level of cooperation and structure.

Conclusion In the final analysis, I believe that increasing parental involvement at Franklin Elementary will lead to more access to quality resources and knowledge of social-emotional learning. Because of the parent's awareness of resources and lack of professional help and personnel, they will ask for more support from the admin and district to increase the school's budgetary spending. Despite the concessions, limitations, and negative outcomes identified, students will benefit from increased parental and family involvement in their education. By seeing representation, they will better understand how to participate in their lifelong skills to help better themselves and those around them, creating more cognitive and emotionally ready individuals set up for success.

Action Documentation and Critical Reflection

This action research focuses on improving the quality of social-emotional learning and the access provided to Franklin Elementary School students. The resource deficiency, such as higher specialist-to-student ratios and informed parents on resources, persists throughout the school. Addressing parents' concerns to enhance students' learning experiences is important. The

parents' feedback was obtained through interviews, and pseudonyms were used to maintain confidentiality and anonymity. I also interviewed the principal at Franklin Elementary School to provide more information and insight into parents' concerns. After analyzing the data collected after conducting the interviews, it became evident that the top three action plans were hiring more professionals, providing additional professional development for educators, and enhancing parental involvement. The Action Plan I decided to implement is increasing parental involvement to reflect representation, connection, and interest in their students and community resources. By implementing increased awareness through sending flyers and digital flyers and calls to parents to remind them of school meetings and activities to be involved in and to voice their concerns about deficient social-emotional learning resources. Without parental input, the school's input is not as vital and valid if not supported by parents. I selected this option because it was less time-consuming. After all, the school already has these resources but needs to amplify them to reach more parents. The cost is low for schools with these resources, and the probability of success is high. Overall, Increasing awareness through implementing incentives such as afternoon meetings with dinner, prizes, Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) incentives for students whose parents attend, and much more benefits both parents and students. Increasing parental involvement will change the social and emotional quality of access at Franklin Elementary.

Action Research Project Documentation and Reflection (Group)

The action research project commenced with an email to the principal of Franklin Elementary School, Mr. P, introducing myself and the proposal. The focus was to identify social issues, particularly mental and behavioral health, which have significantly impacted my

education and family. However, the approach shifted after attending a Cafecito meeting, a platform for parents and community members to learn about school activities. The principal's insights and support were instrumental in shaping the research direction.

The meeting provided an opportunity for over ten parents to express their concerns about the lack of resources and awareness of mental and behavioral health issues. Principal P was formally interviewed, focusing on six questions about social-emotional learning, with parents' concerns in mind. Individual interviews with parents were also conducted, providing further insights into their concerns. The data collected highlighted the significant issues of deficient specialist help and onsite resources, particularly for students from disadvantaged backgrounds. This formed the basis for the subsequent action plans.

To narrow down my research project, I took bullet points of the main issues raised during the interview to reference after viewing my recordings and notes. My goal was to raise awareness among parents about the resources available and the importance of quality access to mental and behavioral health for students. Over six hundred students at Franklin Elementary School need more than one specialist in different departments, such as social work, psychology, and behavioral health.

My next step is to advocate for social change for students because they deserve a proper education that influences their social and emotional life skills. Educators need to inform parents and communities about important issues, such as the benefits of great social-emotional learning. This can enhance students' overall interpersonal and critical thinking skills beyond the borders of schools.

Critical Reflection (Individual)

Through this project, I have gained insight into the inadequate resources and awareness provided to students at Franklin Elementary School. The lack of knowledge among parents has created a gap in the success of all students. My data collection has taught me how to increase future students' social-emotional learning as an educator. I have also learned the importance of building relationships with students beyond their immediate families. As a teacher, I realize that self-care is crucial in providing an excellent example of healthy minds, feelings, and bodies. By modeling healthy behaviors, children can see the benefits of doing so. Teaching and learning extend beyond the classroom and into lifelong skills. While working towards changing the education system, advocating for students and empowering them to participate actively in their personal growth is important. As I share my findings with Principal P, I aim to increase awareness among parents through various media and suggest incentives and flexible time slots for those who need additional accommodations to be more involved in their child's academic life.

Synthesis and Integration (Individual)

After conducting thorough research and documenting my findings, I have learned that action research requires dedication and motivation to address significant issues within education, especially in the surrounding areas. The stakeholders were my primary motivation because they deserve quality education with available resources and awareness of those resources. Initially, meeting a community partner to work on a common issue was intimidating due to their level of expertise, which made me unsure of the seriousness of my topics. However, I found out that this was the biggest concern for parents: the lack of resources provided to students. Parents wanted more awareness, incentives, more hours of availability, and other resources provided. With a high population of Latinos in Eastville, California, I explored diversity and multiculturalism

through the educational practices provided, including language and bilingual integration. The school meeting I attended was conducted in Spanish as the primary language due to the high attendance of Spanish-only-speaking parents. I discovered that several students who attend Franklin face social issues that may affect their learning experience, including migrant students, those who are socioeconomically disadvantaged, and those with disabilities who are suffering from social issues. Working with parents and a principal exercised my social justice collaboration through interviewees and researching how their input would influence my action plans and call to action. I am researching and boarded greater accessibility to equity, justice, and awareness to advocate for better education and resources from Franklin Elementary School. My first step towards achieving this goal is to educate myself on the quality of education the school provides through the subject matter of California's social-emotional learning benefits. Ultimately, this led to developing my ideas and future practices as a future educator through increasing my knowledge and understanding of the importance of social-emotional learning in the classroom by actively advocating and including it in my lesson plans to ensure change for all students and communities, including their families.

As a professional, I am committed to advocating, asking questions, providing information, and investing time to enhance my students' education quality. It's crucial to lay a solid foundation for their growth and success by equipping them with essential knowledge and skills. Students require support and advocacy through various means to achieve their long-term goals. As an educator, I plan to stay informed about current social issues and provide resources to parents to help them enhance their children's educational experience. Ultimately, the parents have the power to bring about change in schools and ensure that all students have access to high-quality education.

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