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The Good, the Bad, and the in Between: The Effects of Covid-19 and Remote Learning

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Abstract

This Capstone Project delves into the perspectives of Bay High School teachers regarding the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and remote learning on students' education. Through a thorough analysis of interviews and relevant research, the study aims to address and mitigate the learning setbacks experienced by students during this challenging period. With a focus on the two-year learning gap caused by remote learning and school closures, the researchers highlight the significance of understanding teachers' firsthand experiences and insights. They argue that the implementation of effective tutoring programs emerges as the most promising approach to bridge the education gap and support students in their academic recovery. By recognizing the unique challenges faced by students and educators, this project emphasizes the importance of informed interventions and innovative strategies in fostering a resilient and effective learning environment for all stakeholders involved.

The Good, the Bad, and the in Between: The Effects of Covid-19 & Remote Learning

The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic was swift and unexpected, catching the world off guard. As a high school senior in March 2020, I was eagerly anticipating milestones like prom, playing softball, and graduation in just a few months. However, my world changed in an instant during an AP Government class, when the school secretary announced over the intercom that prom was canceled until further notice.

Confused and bewildered, I attended my after-school softball game, where we were informed that only players and coaches could be present – no parents allowed. Upon returning home, my mother told me that our spring break would be extended by another week. The surreal events of March 13, 2020, marked the beginning of a new, uncertain reality.

The pandemic and subsequent shutdown lasted far longer than any of us could have imagined. What was initially believed to be a temporary, two-week closure stretched into my first year of college. Though some establishments reopened, allowing me to start working, the education sector faced ongoing challenges. In-person classes were not an option, so my freshman year was spent entirely online.

The abrupt shift to virtual learning was incredibly difficult for everyone involved. Neither students nor professors had experienced anything like this before, making expectations unclear. The transition from high school to college was already challenging, but the additional layer of online learning made it even more arduous. I struggled during my first semester, finding it difficult to understand course material without the ability to interact face-to-face with classmates and teachers.

The COVID-19 pandemic brought unprecedented challenges to the world of education, disrupting the learning experiences of students at all levels. The first year of the pandemic was especially difficult, as schools had to rapidly transition to online learning and adapt to constantly changing circumstances. Even when schools started to reopen, things were far from normal, with students and teachers alike feeling the lasting effects of the disruption.

In my own experience, I found it difficult to adjust to in-person learning after months of online classes. I felt lost in some classes because I had missed important material from the previous year. To make matters worse, the ever-changing rules around mask-wearing and

quarantine protocols added to the confusion and uncertainty. It seemed like every week, there was a new set of guidelines to follow, making it hard to find a sense of stability and normalcy.

My service-learning experience in a kindergarten classroom further highlighted the pandemic's impact on students' learning. Many of the kindergarteners I worked with struggled to meet age-appropriate expectations, despite being in the right grade level based on their age. Having missed out on a full year of in-person learning, they were significantly behind in their development, facing challenges that would not have existed in pre-pandemic times.

This issue is not limited to kindergarteners or even to one particular subject. I have witnessed high school students grappling with gaps in their foundational knowledge, struggling with basic concepts that should have been mastered at their grade level. It is clear that the pandemic's effects on education are far-reaching and will continue to impact students and educators alike for years to come. As we move forward, it will be crucial to address these challenges and provide the necessary support to help students catch up and succeed in their academic journeys.

The COVID-19 pandemic has profoundly impacted every aspect of our lives, especially education. As we adapt to new ways of learning, resilience, perseverance, and collaboration are crucial in overcoming the challenges brought forth by this unprecedented event. Students, teachers, and parents must work together to navigate the ever-evolving educational landscape, ensuring that we not only recover from this crisis but also build a stronger, more resilient future for education.

Literature Synthesis

The COVID-19 pandemic has been a catalyst for significant changes in the education landscape, posing unprecedented challenges for students, teachers, and the education system at large. As schools scrambled to adapt to remote learning models, students faced numerous obstacles that impeded their academic progress and widened the education gap. This situation has brought to light important perspectives on history, equity, and law/policy that warrant closer examination.

From a historical standpoint, the pandemic has been a watershed moment, disrupting the traditional model of education and necessitating a shift towards online learning. The abrupt

transition exposed the digital divide, with students from underprivileged backgrounds lacking the necessary resources to participate fully in online classes. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on students, particularly those who were seniors during 2020 and 2021. The transition back to in-person learning after an extended period of remote learning posed significant challenges for many students, as evidenced by a quote from a senior who stated, "Some people couldn't do it. Some people couldn't focus. If you haven't been doing it in the last one and a half years, getting back into it is very difficult" (Lambert, 2022, pg.2). This highlights the difficulties students faced in readjusting to in-person learning after being away from the traditional classroom setting for so long.

Moreover, the pandemic has underscored the importance of equity in education. Students from diverse backgrounds faced unique challenges during the pandemic, including lack of access to reliable internet, inadequate space for learning at home, and increased responsibilities such as caring for siblings or working part-time jobs. According to research there have been studies that show, "students in majority Black schools ended the school year six months behind in both math and reading, while students in majority-white schools just four months behind in math, and three months behind in reading," (Dorn et al., 2021, pg. 4). This highlights the significant disparities in learning outcomes between students of different racial and socioeconomic backgrounds. These challenges made it difficult for many students to keep up with their schoolwork, contributing to the widening education gap.

To address these issues, some states, including California, have implemented policies to simplify graduation requirements. Lambert addressed some of these policies such as the, "Assembly Bill 104, signed by Gov, Gavin Newsom in July, allowed parents to request that D's and F's earned in the 2020-2021 school year be changed to pass or no-pass grades." While this may have provided short-term relief for students, it is not a sustainable solution. As we move forward, we must prioritize addressing the education gap by ensuring equitable access to resources, providing support for teachers, and exploring innovative pedagogical approaches that foster student engagement and motivation.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had far-reaching implications for the education sector, and its effects will be felt for years to come. It is imperative that we learn from this experience and work towards creating an education system that is resilient, equitable, and responsive to the

needs of all learners. By doing so, we can ensure that all students have the opportunity to succeed, regardless of their circumstances.

Why is it an Issue?

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted students' education, leading to decreased test scores and learning deficits due to remote learning (Dorn et al., 2021). As students transitioned back to in-person learning, it became apparent that the extended disruption had resulted in considerable learning loss, exacerbating the pre-pandemic summer learning gap (Evaristo, 2023). To address this pressing issue, educators, administrators, and institutions must collaborate to implement strategies that support students' academic progress and overall well-being. It is crucial to recognize the long-lasting effects of the pandemic on students and work towards solutions that bridge the educational gap, ensuring that the current generation does not suffer long-term consequences (Dorn et al., 2021). By developing targeted interventions and adaptive approaches, we can mitigate the impact of the pandemic and foster a resilient, equitable educational landscape for all students.

The pandemic has not only affected students' academic progress but has also taken a toll on their social-emotional well-being. As observed by Lambert, "social-emotional issues are the primary reasons students are struggling academically." (Lambert, 2022, pg.3) The lack of social interaction during remote learning has made it difficult for students to readjust to in-person learning, particularly for seniors who had to balance the demands of catching up academically with the pressures of preparing for Graduation.

To address these challenges, it is crucial to provide targeted academic support to help students catch up on missed learning, as well as social-emotional support to address the psychological impact of the pandemic. By taking a holistic approach that considers both academic and social-emotional needs, we can help students overcome the obstacles they face and succeed in their academic journeys.

What Has and/or Should Be Done?

In response to the educational challenges arising from the pandemic, schools have embraced innovative initiatives such as the "great catch up" project to help students regain lost learning (Hockstein et al., 2021). Teachers are instrumental in this process, employing a variety of effective strategies, including providing supplemental materials, focusing on critical subjects, and conducting small group instruction for extra support and individualized attention (Kamenetz, 2022).

High-quality tutoring, with an emphasis on specific subject areas, has emerged as a powerful tool in bridging the education gap (Evaristo, 2023). By offering tailored assistance and personalized learning strategies, tutoring enables students to recover lost learning and attain academic success. Implementing high-dosage tutoring can further enhance students' comprehension of topics missed during the pandemic, thereby facilitating their academic recovery and ensuring they meet essential learning milestones. By integrating "high-dosage tutoring," culturally and linguistically relevant instruction, as well as fostering strong relationships with students and parents, delivers significant gains for students," (Evaristo, 2023, pg.5). This holistic approach creates a supportive and inclusive learning environment that addresses the diverse needs of all learners.

The Lynwood Unified School District serves as an exemplary model in creating an improved environment for students, both physically and mentally, by addressing their needs beyond the classroom. As highlighted by Evaristo (2023), the pandemic has accentuated the pre-existing necessity for educators to support students outside of school. Low-income households, already facing significant challenges prior to the pandemic, encountered even greater obstacles during this period. Lynwood Unified School District took decisive action to address these issues, implementing initiatives that should have been in place earlier. By establishing a food bank, distributing computers, and providing WiFi hotspots, the district demonstrated its commitment to student well-being and academic success. These measures not only alleviated some of the immediate challenges faced by students but also set a precedent for other educational institutions to follow, ensuring that the well-being and educational progress of students remain at the forefront of educational strategies.

By adopting a comprehensive approach that emphasizes both academic recovery, food banks, providing computer and hotspot wifi, educators and educational institutions can empower

students to overcome the significant challenges brought on by the pandemic. By working collaboratively and providing students with the tools, resources, and guidance they need to succeed in their academic pursuits, we can help ensure that the current generation of learners is well-equipped to navigate the uncertainties of the future and achieve their full potential.

Conclusion

The COVID-19 pandemic has undeniably altered the educational landscape, presenting substantial challenges that require innovative solutions to address the learning loss experienced by many students. While the pandemic's impact on education has been significant, it is crucial to recognize the efforts being made to bridge the gaps in the system and develop effective strategies for academic recovery. However, it is equally important to acknowledge that not all schools have implemented these solutions, and there remains a need for further exploration of alternative approaches that educators can adopt to support students in their academic journey.

As we continue to navigate the aftermath of the pandemic and its effects on education, it is essential for schools, educators, and policymakers to collaborate in seeking out and implementing targeted interventions to help students catch up on missed learning. By doing so, we can ensure that the current generation of learners is well-equipped to face the uncertainties of the future and achieve their full potential, despite the unprecedented challenges brought on by the pandemic. Ultimately, ongoing dedication and commitment to addressing the educational gaps created by COVID-19 will be crucial in ensuring a brighter and more prosperous future for students worldwide.

Method

This Capstone Project examines the insights of Bay High School teachers on the effects of remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. Drawing from research and interviews, the study aims to address the education gap created by remote learning through collaborative efforts and informed interventions, fostering students' academic success and recovery in a post-pandemic world.

Context

Bay High School, located in downtown Bay, California, is an integral part of the community. Surrounded by diverse local businesses, the school offers a strong academic program with a focus on college readiness, extracurricular activities, and sports. State-of-the-art facilities and dedicated staff ensure an optimal learning environment for its diverse student body, with 49.5% coming from Latino backgrounds. Built in the 1960s, the school maintains its historical roots while providing modern resources. Nearby shops, museums, restaurants, and a library further enhance the student experience.

Participants and Participant Selection

Researchers interviewed six participants. Participants were chosen because they work for a high school and also taught during and after the pandemic.

A. Henderson. An ethnic studies teacher at Bay High School, who teaches ninth graders. Teach has taught overseas teaching from a variety of ages from 7 to 25 years old, teaching them English. Taught during and after the pandemic, experiencing both online learning and in person learning.

A. Grey. An Ethnic studies and world history teacher at Bay High School, teaches both ninth and tenth graders. Has a masters degree in administration. Taught during and after the pandemic, experiencing both online learning and in person learning.

E. Lammers. An English teacher at Bay High School, who teaches ninth grade students. Taught during and after the pandemic, experiencing both online learning and in person learning.

L. Graham. An English teacher at Bay High School, who teaches ninth graders. Is still in school getting their credential. Taught during and after the pandemic, experiencing both online learning and in person learning.

P. Stewart. A math teacher at Bay High School, who teaches ninth and tenth grade students. Has previously worked at an elementary school in Bay, California. Taught during and after the pandemic, experiencing both online learning and in person learning.

D. Clark. Science teacher at Bay High School for ninth graders. Worked before the pandemic as well as after. Taught during and after the pandemic, experiencing both online learning and in person learning.

Researchers

Below is each researcher and the reflection of how they relate to this topic.

Samantha Anastasio

This topic is personal to me because I work at Bay High and at other sites and I have noticed the education gap that has been happening in many different grades. I see students struggle and not get much help. I want students to understand what they are being taught and not always be behind in every single grade. I am similar to the participants because I know what it is like to be a student during the pandemic. I graduated in the year 2020 so my high school got cut short and my initial college experience was mostly online. I am different from the participants because I am not currently a teacher and I am unaware of what it is like to be in a classroom full of students that went through the pandemic or also teach during the pandemic. I need to be mindful of the teachers and what they go through as well as the students, putting myself in both the students' shoes and the teachers' shoes to be able to see both perspectives.

Samantha Rivera

This topic is meaningful to me because I used to work at a school where students faced the reality of coming back to school after the pandemic and remote learning and being behind because they did not learn remotely. Students in 4th grade were still not understanding topics they should have learned in second grade, but did not know because of the pandemic and remote learning. I am similar to the participants because I would see firsthand the impact the pandemic and remote learning had on students' learning. I am different from my participants because I graduated high school in 2019 which was the year before COVID shutdown schools. Moving forward with this project I need to be mindful of my tone of voice. I need to make sure that I am welcoming and kind. I also need to make sure that I show that I am understanding.

Semi-Structured Interview and Survey Questions

1. What do you know about the effects of the pandemic and remote learning on students' learning?

2. What are you most concerned about when it comes to the effects of the pandemic and remote learning on student's learning in the classroom?
3. What is currently being done to address the effects of the pandemic and remote learning on students' learning by whom and what are the strengths and weaknesses of these efforts?
4. What do you think should be done about the impact of the pandemic and remote learning on students' learning ?
5. What do you think are the challenges to doing something about the impact of the pandemic and remote learning on students' learning ?
6. Is there anything else that you would like to say about the impact of the pandemic and remote learning and the improvement of students' learning ?

Procedure¹

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 paper and pencil survey of the same questions. Face-to-Face interviews took less than one hour, were audio-recorded (with participant consent), and took place in Bay High School. A semi-structured interview format was used for face-to-face interviews, to allow for follow-up questions to unclear, interesting or unexpected responses. All interviews were scheduled at the convenience of the interviewee and took approximately 20 minutes to complete.

Data Analysis

Transcribed interviews were coded and analyzed for emergent themes.

Results

For this Capstone Project, six teachers from Bay High were interviewed to see what they think could be done to improve the impact that Covid 19 and remote learning have had on students' learning. This is important because students are behind in their learning and need help

¹ <http://my.ilstu.edu/~jhkahn/>

to close the education gap that has been created because of Covid 19. 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: additional classroom support; teachers technology workshop; and adaptive learning options. The importance of additional classroom support is that it helps students who are not understanding a subject or are behind in their learning. The importance of a teachers technology workshop is that it will allow teachers who are not tech savvy to understand and learn technology as well as students so that teachers can support students' learning. The importance of adaptive learning options helps students who are behind catch up to their peers. Adaptive learning options may include electives and summer school. Based on the evaluation of each Action Option an action will be recommended and justified.

Table 1

Evaluation of Action Options

	Effectiveness	Cost	Need
Additional classroom support	High	Medium	High
Teacher technology workshop	Medium	Medium	High
Adaptive learning options	High	High	High

Additional Classroom Support

The integration of additional classroom support, particularly through the inclusion of tutors, has become increasingly essential in addressing the learning gaps resulting from the pandemic. By providing an extra pair of hands to assist with classroom content, tutors can offer students individualized attention and help teachers manage their time more effectively. At Bay High School, an existing program that brings college students into classrooms has demonstrated the potential benefits of this approach; however, to maximize effectiveness, the program would need to be expanded to include more tutors.

Teachers have observed firsthand the positive impact tutors have on student engagement and learning, as students appear to engage well with these supplementary support figures. One of the participants states, “it seems like the tutors are able to offer a lot of support to the students, which I think is really nice,”(A. Grey, personal communication, April 5, 2024). This suggests that increasing classroom support could significantly improve overall student outcomes and help bridge the education gap exacerbated by the pandemic.

Although hiring additional tutors comes at a cost, the potential long-term benefits for students justify the investment. Tutors can provide students with personalized connections and foster an environment where they feel comfortable participating in classroom discussions. A participant shares that, “getting people to participate was probably one of the biggest struggles,”(A. Henderson, personal communication, April 5, 2024). This is particularly important as schools navigate the aftermath of the pandemic, during which students may have experienced heightened disengagement and disconnection. Given the significant need for supplemental classroom support, tutors can play an instrumental role in helping students regain their academic footing and develop a newfound sense of confidence in their educational journeys.

Teacher Technology Workshop

Implementing teacher technology workshops can play a pivotal role in helping educators stay up-to-date with the technological skills students have developed during the pandemic. As students became more adept at using computers and accessing technology, some teachers found themselves falling behind in their understanding of these rapidly evolving tools. By providing technology workshops for teachers, schools can offer them the opportunity to learn and apply the latest advancements, bridging the gap between student and teacher knowledge.

The effectiveness and cost of such workshops would be moderate, as they would require financial investment and depend on teachers' application of the skills learned. However, if successfully implemented, these workshops could offer significant benefits for both students and teachers.

The need for technology workshops is undeniably high, as educators recognize the value of technological skills students gained during remote learning. One participant comments, “I think that students benefited as far as using digital technology quite a bit during the pandemic,” (E.

Lammer, personal communication, April 5, 2024). By equipping teachers with updated technology knowledge, schools can improve classroom dynamics, enhance the overall learning process, and foster a more collaborative and engaging educational environment.

Adaptive Learning Options

Introducing flexible learning alternatives is essential in tackling the educational disparities exacerbated by the pandemic. Offering diverse academic recovery programs, including summer academies and specialized electives, can help students make up for lost learning and review key concepts in subjects with declining test scores, such as math and science. These tailored options can cater to individual student needs, ensuring they receive the necessary support to catch up and thrive academically.

While introducing flexible learning alternatives would be highly effective in promoting students' academic recovery and growth, it would also come with a high cost due to increased staffing and resource requirements. Despite the expense, the urgent need for these initiatives cannot be overstated, as the education gap continues to widen. As highlighted by a participant, "they missed algebra, they are now doing calculus, and they can't solve an equation, that's something that should have been corrected before they got into calculus," (P. Stewart, personal communication, April 5, 2024). By allocating resources to flexible learning alternatives, schools can empower students and teachers with the tools and support needed to close these gaps, fostering a successful educational experience for all.

Conclusion

Upon evaluating the available options, it is evident that providing additional classroom support is the most effective approach to address the current educational challenges. This solution will benefit both students and teachers by enhancing the learning environment and ensuring that students receive the support they need. Building upon the existing program at Bay High School and increasing the number of tutors will provide more opportunities for personalized attention and assistance during class periods.

By having tutors available in more classrooms, students will have more resources for asking questions, receiving help, and accessing additional resources. This increased support will lead to more individualized attention and time for each student, fostering a more effective and engaging learning experience. Overall, implementing additional classroom support through the expansion of the tutoring program will have a positive impact on students' academic progress and contribute to a more equitable and supportive educational environment.

Recommendation. The option that we chose is additional classroom support. The important factor of additional classroom support is that it allows students who are behind to have someone besides a teacher in the classroom that can help them. All teachers interviewed stated that more tutoring for students is needed for students to succeed. Tutoring helps students learn information that they did not learn during the pandemic due to school being online. Additional classroom support also helps teachers by having someone other than the teacher in the class who can help students. Teachers are expected to be able to help students who are falling behind as well as teach the whole class at the same time which is an impossible task. With the help of additional classroom support teachers will have extra support in the classroom to help everyone succeed.

Concessions. Some strength of teacher technology workshops is that it would allow teachers to become more tech savvy. During the pandemic when all students were learning online they became very good at using online technology for their schooling however when these students came back to in person school they had teachers who did not understand technology at all. This created an imbalance between teachers and students by the students not being able to learn how they have learned during the pandemic. It is important for teachers to know how to use technology for school so that the teacher may give assignments online. A technology workshop for teachers would allow them to learn how to use technology and close the imbalance that has been created. Some strengths of adaptive learning options for students would be helping students who have fallen behind in school catch up. These adaptive learning options include summer classes as well as maybe math, english, or science electives. Having adaptive learning options would help students who were in the pandemic when they needed to learn algebra but are now expected to know calculus. Adaptive learning closes the education gap which has been

created because of the pandemic. The education gap is when students who are in 11th grade do not know subjects from 9th grade because of the pandemic and are now struggling very badly in class.

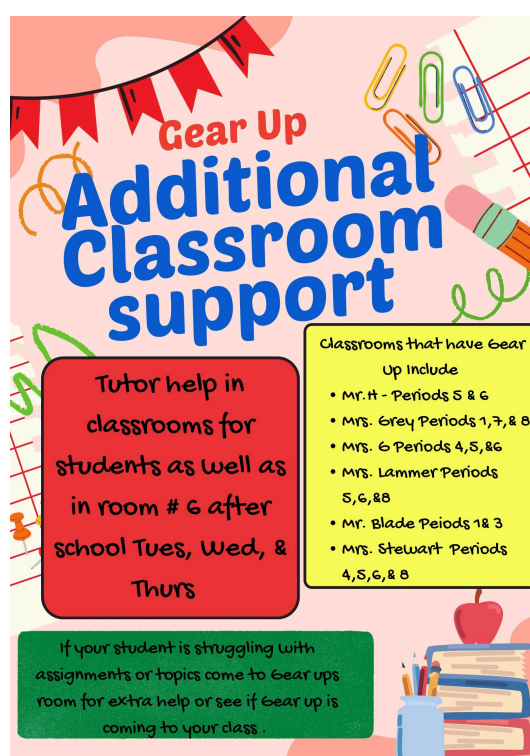
Limitations. It is important that people who are hired for additional classroom support are there to make a difference in students' learning. It is important that additional classroom support people are there to help and not just do nothing. It is also important that if a student is struggling that they are not afraid to speak up and ask for additional support.

Potential negative outcomes. Potential negative outcomes include students not taking the additional support seriously. If students do not take additional support seriously it would be hard for students to be successful. One other potential negative outcome is students can become dependent on their tutor to solve their education problems for them. This can happen by students starting to become unable to think independently because they believe that their tutors should solve their education problems for them and not try first on their own.

Conclusion. Additional classroom support is the best action option for students to be successful because it allows them to ask for help on areas that they are falling behind on. Additional classroom support helps teachers by releasing the heavy load they have of having to teach 25 or more at the same time and still trying to find time in their busy schedules to help students who are struggling because of the pandemic. Teachers are expected to somehow deal with teaching new topics and helping students who are struggling at the same time. It is an impossible task for a teacher and additional support is necessary for the success of all students. Some limitations like students becoming dependent on their tutor to solve their problems may occur however that is a potential negative outcome but only potential in the grand scheme of things. It is important that if a student is struggling in class that they are not afraid to ask for help and that these students do not limit themselves by thinking that they are already behind so why not give up? Technology workshops for teachers and adaptive learning options are both also great action options but at the end of the day the one that will have the most impact on students is additional classroom support.

Action Documentation and Critical Reflection

The focus of our project is to learn about the effects of Covid19 and remote learning on students' learning . To learn about the effects of covid19 and remote learning we interviewed six teachers at Bay High School to learn what they had to say about this topic. After interviewing all six teachers three action options emerged. The first one was additional classroom support to help students who have fallen behind in their learning because of the pandemic and to help teachers whose workload has become too much. The second action option that emerged was a technology workshop to help teachers become as tech savvy as students became during the pandemic . The third action option that merged was adaptive learning options that include summer school as well as electives to help students catch up on what they have missed during the pandemic. The action option that we chose to implement was additional classroom support. The reason that we chose additional classroom support is because students need more help in the classroom in order to catch up and build their understanding of topics that they are learning now. Additional classroom support helps students be able to ask for help in a classroom where there is only one teacher and 25 or more students.



https://www.canva.com/design/DAGESILVzKk/7m08ce7RSkk1uRsy9oph9A/edit?utm_content=DAGESILVzKk&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link2&utm_source=sharebutton

Action Research Project Documentation and Reflection

What we did to implement additional classroom support was create a flier to let parents know that additional classroom support is available for their children. Once we created this flier we then handed it out to parents and hung it up on walls around the school. To create this flier we used a website called Cava and then once we created this flier we then handed it out to parents and hung it up on walls around the school. Something that was surprising was how many parents did not know that dictionary support was available for their children. Some changes that needed to be made were not only making fliers in English but also in Spanish so that all parents are able to read the flier. The response so far has been great. Many more parents now know that additional classroom support is available and students now know that if they need help Gear up is here to help. Students and parents now know when Gear up is available and at what times. Something that we know now that we wish we knew from the start is how much teachers have struggled with getting students to want to learn for more than 30 minutes at a time. Additional classroom support will help students want to learn for longer periods of time as they start to understand topics they were supposed to learn during the pandemic and become more confident in their skills. Something that we both learned about ourselves is that in order to work towards change we needed to really talk to the teachers we interviewed and get down to what would help the learning gap that has been created because of covid19 and remote learning.

Critical Reflection

Throughout the development of my capstone project, I have gained invaluable insights that I aim to apply and expand upon as I pursue a career in education. It has become evident that many students struggle with foundational concepts and often slip through the cracks, lacking the necessary support to thrive academically. Additionally, the lack of self-confidence among these students in continuing their education may be attributed to insufficient individualized attention and guidance from their teachers. While it is not the fault of teachers that they cannot dedicate time to every single student, implementing additional support within classrooms is essential to address the diverse needs of each learner.

As I aspire to become an educator, I hope that schools will recognize the importance of incorporating more assistance, whether through tutors, parent involvement, or additional personnel in the classroom. Even if I do not have access to such resources in my future teaching career, I am determined to foster connections with each student. By dividing my class into smaller groups, I can closely monitor their progress and offer tailored support to ensure every student receives the attention and guidance needed for academic growth and success.

Synthesis and Integration

Through my time at California State University Monterey Bay in the Liberal Studies program, I have developed various skills that have significantly contributed to my professional growth and preparation for a career in education. Each class has played a crucial role in my development and has left a lasting impact on my journey as an aspiring educator.

One of the most valuable skills I have acquired is the ability to effectively communicate and present in front of peers and professors (MLO:1). Although I have always been comfortable interacting with people, these experiences have taught me how to control my speech, particularly when feeling nervous during presentations. As a result, I have learned to maintain a steady pace and project my voice clearly, ensuring that my audience can understand and engage with the content I share.

Several courses within the program have also expanded my knowledge of diversity and multiculturalism (MLO:2), deepening my understanding of historical experiences and challenges faced by various cultural groups within the education system. Recognizing the struggles encountered by non-white students and the diverse experiences of different cultures has made me more mindful and empathetic toward others. This knowledge will undoubtedly benefit my future classroom, as I strive to acknowledge and celebrate every student's identity and cultural background.

Additionally, I have developed essential technology skills that are crucial for modern educators (MLO:3). Despite initial challenges in navigating various digital tools and platforms, I can now create visually appealing presentations and effectively utilize technology to support teaching and learning. These skills will be vital in helping my future students become proficient

in using technology, and they will facilitate my ability to design engaging and meaningful learning experiences.

To become the professional educator I aspire to be, I will focus on advancing my education and obtaining the necessary credentials. This fall, I will attend CSU Stanislaus to pursue my teaching credential, which is a crucial step in my journey to becoming a teacher. The courses I will take are designed to equip me with the knowledge and skills needed to thrive in the classroom. An essential component of the credential program involves working with a mentor teacher, who will provide invaluable guidance and support as I learn to manage a classroom effectively. These relationships will help me develop the practical skills needed to create an engaging and inclusive learning environment. Additionally, forming connections with fellow classmates and mentor teachers will allow me to gain further insights and experiences both within and beyond the classroom. This network of support will be vital as I navigate the challenges and rewards of teaching, and it will contribute to my growth as an effective and dedicated educator.

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