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## **Facilitating the Success of Students Transitioning Between Different Methods of Instruction**

Amanda Froberg

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Facilitating the Success of Students Transitioning Between Different Methods of  
Instruction

Amanda M. Froberg

Hamline University

Saint Paul, Minnesota

August 2022

A capstone submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master  
of Arts in Education

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## Chapter 1

### Introduction

#### Chapter Overview

There are many formats, settings and different methods of instruction. These methods change how students engage with the curriculum. Changes in the methods have adapted as knowledge is gained from the students and educators. Some students go through a “traditional” school format at an in-person school. Others might take an alternative route such as homeschooling or partaking in online learning. Students may transition from one method of instruction to another. In the Spring of 2020, during the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the majority of students in the United States changed their method of instruction from the traditional in-person schooling to that of an online format. These changes were faced with many challenges for educators and students while they tried to change methods of instruction. The question that needs to be asked is, *how do teachers successfully facilitate the movement back and forth between different methods of instruction for students?*

There are many factors that play a role in students changing the method of instruction that they experience. When seeking the answer to this question, teachers and educators must take into consideration how the student learns, student background, teacher resources and student accessibility. Typically, when students and their families consider changing the format that they are currently learning in, they have time to consider the decision. Some methods include, but are not limited to, in-person schooling, partial in-person schooling, online schooling, distance learning or homeschooling. These different settings will be referred to as “methods of instruction” throughout this paper.

This paper will look at research done involving student success, transitions made during the coronavirus pandemic and the strategies and steps that assist students in achieving success once the decision to change methods of instruction has been made. Once the student makes the transition to a new method of instruction, an educator must ask themselves how they can help their students when the students are changing from one method of instruction to another. This transition could be from in-person school to online school, homeschooling to in-person school or other forms of schooling. Though the movement of the transition may vary, the core model of how to facilitate this transition will share similarities. Many students and educators experienced the transition in method of instruction during the coronavirus pandemic.

### **Teaching Experience Before Pandemic**

Still early in my teaching career, my experiences consist of only one full year of teaching that was face-to-face. My first year of teaching contained its own stress that many new teachers face. The stress of scrambling with the tools that were provided from my college classes and then trying to stay afloat in a chaotic classroom. A classroom where the teacher tries every management technique with little success until a few weeks into the semester.

The second year of my teaching career was much more successful and filled with confidence and skills that I had learned from the year prior. Then the coronavirus pandemic occurred that Spring semester of the 2019-2020 school year. Minnesota schools received a message from Governor Walz that students would be learning from home for about two weeks.

## **COVID-19 and Distance Learning**

Spring 2020 brought many changes to school districts, with very short notice. Students were sent home without knowing how long they would be learning in an online environment. It was estimated to be about two weeks at maximum. This switch was due to Minnesota's state order that schools had to all switch to distance learning in the face of the rising numbers in the COVID-19 pandemic. But soon those two weeks became a month. Then that month became the rest of the semester.

On March 11, 2020 COVID-19 was declared a Global Pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO, 2021). And on March 12, 2020 Ohio was the first state that would announce that they would have a statewide closing. Within 24 hours, 15 other states followed in Ohio's footsteps (Decker, Peele, Riser-Kositsky, 2021). Schools in various states began with a soft closure where students and teachers learned in different locations (Marstaller, 2020). This then developed into various forms of methods of instruction depending on the school district and the number of COVID-19 cases that were being experienced in the area.

This was new territory for everyone, including students and educators. People were placed in a unique situation where the majority of students had to do something they had never done before, and that was to switch the method of instruction. Many changes occurred in schools with little preparation that first Spring semester. This resulted in educators and staff feeling unprepared (Sharp, Sims, Rutt, & NFER, 2020). Not only did schools need to figure out how to provide instruction during distance learning or online learning, they also needed to find out how to distribute physical resources to students, provide lunches to students, and daycare for essential workers too. Even getting WiFi to

students who did not have it, was put to the schools and families (Decker, Peele, Riser-Kositsky, 2021).

After my school received the notification that the school was changing to distance learning, the staff had one week to figure out how to complete all the tasks listed above. The staff did not know how long distance learning was going to take place. Schools and staff members tried their best and this resulted in many successful outcomes. But there was also room for improvement. After the Spring semester of 2020, schools now had the majority of the summer to prepare for the upcoming school year. But once again, it was unknown if the following school year would be in-person or distance learning again.

The majority of the following year, my third year of teaching, was distance learning but schools, teachers and staff were more prepared. After the stress and minimal success from the end of the previous 2019-2020 school year, the Fall of 2020 was a different beast. Schools and staff had spent hours during the summer making changes (such as increasing teachers' and students' technology access, better lunch access for students, young student childcare options, higher attendance and participation expectations for students, changes in student schedules for more “non-online time”) that would better support students during distance learning.

From September 2020 until the end of March 2021 many schools' methods of instruction took the form of an online format. Students worked from their homes and connected with teachers online (Decker, Peele, Riser-Kositsky, 2021). More information about what this looked like will be discussed in chapter 2 under the distance learning and COVID-19 section.

Prior to distance learning, many schools had online instruction occurring in the k-12 schools but not to this scale. Online learning during a pandemic held slight differences, mostly due to the stress that the pandemic was causing, from online learning that had been seen before and involved many challenges in relation to students changing their method of instruction on such short notice but also the emotional toll of the pandemic.

During the school year, I observed that group work and interaction between students also changed during this time. Students were placed in breakout rooms, where groups of 2-4 students could discuss questions in small groups online. Many students had their cameras off and this made discussion difficult for the group because they couldn't see each other. The limitations of online group work changed how students worked together and their perception of group work. It also made it difficult for students to achieve social success with their peers (Serhan, 2020). Social success for students is when students are able to successfully form and keep relationships, read social interactions and respond appropriately, be able to express themselves to their peers, and be able to handle stressful social situations when needed.

During the Spring of 2021 several schools, including my own, returned to partial in-person teaching, hybrid teaching, mixed methods, full face-to-face learning or some other format that had more in-person opportunities compared to online learning. For hybrid schools, it meant that a small portion of the teacher's class was in the classroom at one time and the other portion of the class was at home partaking in online education. Teachers had better support this year than the year before but they were without the tools or support needed to facilitate this transition between methods of instruction.

## **Teaching Experience After Pandemic**

Currently, the plan for the 2021-2022 school year is for students to be in-person. For some students, this will be the first time they enter a classroom since the early Spring of 2020. Even for students who were partial in-person at the end of the previous school year, this will be the first time they are in a full classroom.

This will be a huge transition for students and they will face many challenges and changes. One of these changes will be in the method of instruction. Educators being able to facilitate this transition in different methods of instruction will be essential to the success of students. The tools and suggestions to promote this successful transition will be observed and recorded throughout the year.

## **Summary**

The opportunity for students to change the method of instruction that they experience has always been an option. But, until the Spring of 2020, many students had not experienced this change. This change in instruction was occurring across the United States with very few tools available on how educators could best support students during this transition. The question being asked by many educators was, *how do teachers successfully facilitate the movement back and forth between different methods of instruction for students?*

My personal teaching experience has contained many changes. Changes that include the method of instruction, subject matter, age of students, school districts and cities. All these changes took course over the span of one and a half years. Of all these changes, the one with the fewest resources and the most challenging was changing the

method of instruction. The challenges occurred due to limited resources, time and past occurrences.

In chapter 2, previous literature will be viewed and analyzed on how to best help students transition from different methods of instruction and what this student success looks like. The methods of instruction will include, in-person schooling, partial in-person schooling, online schooling, distance learning, homeschooling and several others. There may be limited literature about distance learning and the transition that occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic due to this being so recent. But connections will be made with the other methods of instruction. The rest of the paper will look at the tools, methods and facilitation suggestions that will assist students in a successful transition in their method of instruction.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Literature Review**

#### **Chapter Overview**

This literature review focuses on the research and data collected in relation to the question, *how do teachers successfully facilitate the movement back and forth between different methods of instruction for students?* The research in this paper will focus on student success, COVID-19/distance learning, and transition in different methods of instruction. Student success, the first section of the literature review, will look at several aspects including academic, social and mental/emotional health. All of these will play a role in the overall success of the student. This holds true for students who are experiencing changes in instruction and those who are not. The next section, COVID-19 and distance learning, will consider the major wave of changes in method of instruction for many students that occurred during the coronavirus disease. Observations of different methods that occurred in schools during the pandemic such as completely online, dual classes and hybrid learning will be presented. Evidence on how schools returned to school will also be evaluated. The final section of transitioning will look at how students changing methods of instruction can find success. Both the steps and planning for instructors and students will be discussed. The paper will look at transitioning during the pandemic but also changes in methods of instruction that occurred for various reasons. This could include a student moving from face-to-face school to online learning. Or a student moving from being homeschooled to face-to-face. There are many other ways that students can change their method of instruction but the core steps and procedures for

success will remain the same. A transition that is deemed successful would show student growth and achievement in areas such as academic, social and mental/emotional health.

## **Student Success**

### *Introduction*

Student success can be broken down into three categories; academic, social and mental/emotional. Strength and development in all of these categories are necessary for the overall success of the student. This section will provide an overview of what student success looks like in these three categories and challenges that might be present. How teachers can best facilitate success in these three categories will be presented in the *transition* section of the chapter. The three categories of student success will be referred back to as the paper progresses into exploring how teachers can successfully assist students when transitioning from different methods of instruction. The factors, both positive and negative, that affect the three categories will also be observed and applied later in the paper. Understanding the various aspects of academic, social and mental/emotional success in students is important to the results of an overall successful student.

### *Academic Success*

The first component to student success is academic. This includes class grades, demonstrating their understanding of content/standards, and standardized testing. Academic success might look different depending on the location, student population, and subject matter. Overall, student success would be a student who consistently passes classes and is able to accurately explain the content from the course. The student would do well and pass class exams and standardized testing.

In the general education population of students, academic success has been linked to persistence (Roberson, 2020). The study done by Roberson provides steps to encourage persistence in a teacher's classroom and students within. One step is helping students observe and recognize their internal motivation when approaching questions and concepts (Roberson, 2020). This will be further explained in the *transition* section of this chapter. Persistence and perseverance is one part of a term known as grit. Grit is described as the combination of perseverance and passion (Duckworth, 2013). Both Roberson (2020) and Duckworth (2013), put emphasis on the importance of supporting students in the development of grit, which would lead them to academic success. Students with grit, will have the endurance and stamina to continually reach for academic success in their classes. Even students with disadvantaged backgrounds can show great academic success if they have grit (Duckworth, 2013).

When looking at academic success, there are many different factors that play a role. These factors might present different approaches a teacher might take and different resources the student has access to. Some factors include:

- economic disadvantages (Miesner, Packard, Laemmler, & MacGregor, 2020)
- students already labeled as at-risk (Cavner, Conley, Pavletic, & Weller, 2020)
- ethnic minorities (Atuahene, 2021)(Tomlinson & Jarvis 2014)

Academic success in economically disadvantaged students present a variety of challenges. A study done by Wisconsin Center for Education Research (2020) contained data from almost 3,000 teachers and principals, and asked the question: "If you could

make one change to educational policy to improve academic success of economically disadvantaged students, what would it be?” This study shows that schools are aware of the disadvantages tied to the students’ economic background and are working towards ways to provide support to the students. The results showed that two-thirds of the teacher respondents indicated that they would like changes that were academically oriented (Miesner, Packard, Laemmler, & MacGregor, 2020). The results, from Wisconsin Center for Education Research (2020), showed a wide range of what these changes might consist of: curriculum and learning, staff ratios, school-level structures and policies, additional academic support and time for targeted instruction, work and post-secondary education and testing. The study did not go into much detail of what these changes would specifically look like. But these results will be taken into consideration later in the chapter.

In addition to students with economical disadvantages, students who are at-risk present different challenges to achieve academic success. A study done with 1st year college students, who are fresh out of High School, describes at-risk students as students who are not currently qualified for entry to a degree program and/or low ACT scores (Cavner, Conley, Pavletic, & Weller, 2020). Even though these students graduated from high school, they were not prepared for further education. The results from the research focused on how many D’s, F’s and Withdrawal the students had and also their GPA. The question is, were these students successful academically during high school if they were not prepared for the next step in their educational career? According to the study, the answer would be no. These students had to put more effort and time into their studies to achieve the same results as their peers (Cavner, Conley, Pavletic, & Weller, 2020).

Academic challenges can occur in students with disadvantaged economical backgrounds and at-risk students. Students from ethnic minorities may also face challenges when it comes to academic success. Students who are from both ethnic minorities and economically disadvantaged groups are more commonly at jeopardy for showing low academic performance (Atuahene, 2021)(Tomlinson & Jarvis, 2014).

The study by Tomlinson and Jarvis found that effective teachers did not ignore challenges that students were facing, but rather acknowledged and adapted to the challenges.

“This research suggests that teachers do not have to be perfect to help students develop readiness to succeed. Teachers willing to invest modestly but overtly and consistently in minority and economically disadvantaged students can begin to have an effect (Tomlinson & Jarvis, 2014, p. 213).

These adaptations by a teacher could be beneficial for all students, regardless of what disadvantages they might have, when looking at academic success.

### *Social Success*

Social success is the second component of student success. What might social success look like in students? It could be a student being able to communicate with their peers during, and outside, of class. Another social success would be a student who is able to make, and keep, friends. Or the social success of having multiple moments of communication occur between the student and their teachers. And, with the rise of social media in younger students, being able to navigate the online social environment. Granted, there is a limited amount of opportunity for teachers to truly observe students in situations outside of school. But teachers are still able to make genuine observations

about a student's social interactions during the school day and gauge the success in these interactions.

For teachers to promote students' social success they need to know what skills the students should be trying to achieve. Five skills have been identified that contribute to social success. These skills are empathy, self-control, integrity, embracing diversity and grit (Hoerr & ASCD, 2019). Similar to academic success, social success is also dependent on grit, the mix of perseverance and passion. Hoerr also uses the terms tenacious, resilient and fortitude in relation to grit. These skills will be referred to more in later chapters.

When looking at adult success, many skills that are not academic are necessary. Skills such as, being able to get along with peers, being adaptive to changes in the world, and being able to take care of oneself (both physically and emotionally) (Balfanz 2019). These skills are typically not those that schools put emphasis on when compared to academic success. But these skills are heavily linked to social success. Studies have also shown that social and academic success are heavily linked. If a student has a weakness in a social skill, academic achievement is also affected (Balfanz 2019).

Social success does not only lead to academic success, but also supports brain development. When scientists looked at how the brain was developed over time, they found that academic, social and emotional development were all linked together and supported each other (Immordino-Yang, Darling-Hammond, Krone, & Aspen Institute, 2018).

### *Mental/Emotional Success*

The final component of a successful student is the students' mental and emotional success. In a study from Wisconsin Center for Education Research (2020), many teachers and principals mentioned the need for more tools and support for students' mental health through either counseling or other means. The survey indicates that students would be more successful and engaged in the learning process and content if they feel safe and secure (Miesner, Packard, Laemmler, & MacGregor, 2020).

What might mental and emotional success look like in students? It would be a student who has achieved, or is working on, emotional balance. This emotional balance is when a person experiences both positive and negative emotions in a healthy balance (Stewart & Maisonville, 2019). The key to emotional and mental success is to be able to recognize emotions and understand them. An example of emotional/mental success would be a student who is stressed for an upcoming test or sad after a break up and then the student would be able to move past these negative emotions. The student would feel the negative emotions but not have them negatively and uncontrollably affect their lives long term.

Other examples of achieving mental and emotional success is a student reaching out to professionals to gain help when they are not able to achieve emotional balance. Some of the main problematic emotions that might persist in students are anxiety, loneliness and depression (Stewart & Maisonville, 2019). The key to emotional/mental success is to be working towards this success. This success may also fluctuate depending on outside factors in the student's life.

### *Conclusion*

True student success lies in a combination of academic, social and emotional/mental skills and success. As mentioned in the social success section, academic, social and emotional development in students are all linked (Immordino-Yang, Darling-Hammond, Krone, & Aspen Institute, 2018). Various factors might affect a student's success in any of these categories but there are some overall trends that can be seen. One trend is the nurturing of grit in students. For academic and social success, grit was identified as a huge factor. It can also be concluded that grit would play a beneficial role in mental and emotional success too. Another trend for student success is to have teacher support, especially during unique and troubling times.

### **Distance Learning and COVID-19**

#### *Introduction*

Various methods of instruction have been options for students to find a form of instruction that meets their needs. Historically, one of these methods of instruction called distance learning, also known as distance education or remote learning, has been viewed as when the instructor and student are in separate places or times while instruction is occurring (Ives & Walsh, 2021). The method of instruction that students experience was drastically affected by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19). Many changes occurred for students inside and outside of the school setting. Many schools, during the spring of 2020, were “forced to move from face-to-face in-classroom to remote instruction” (Serhan, 2020). The change had some variety in terms of moving to be completely online, dual classes or hybrid learning. Regardless, the forced movement provided schools and instructors with many challenges and opportunities to explore.

*COVID-19 general*

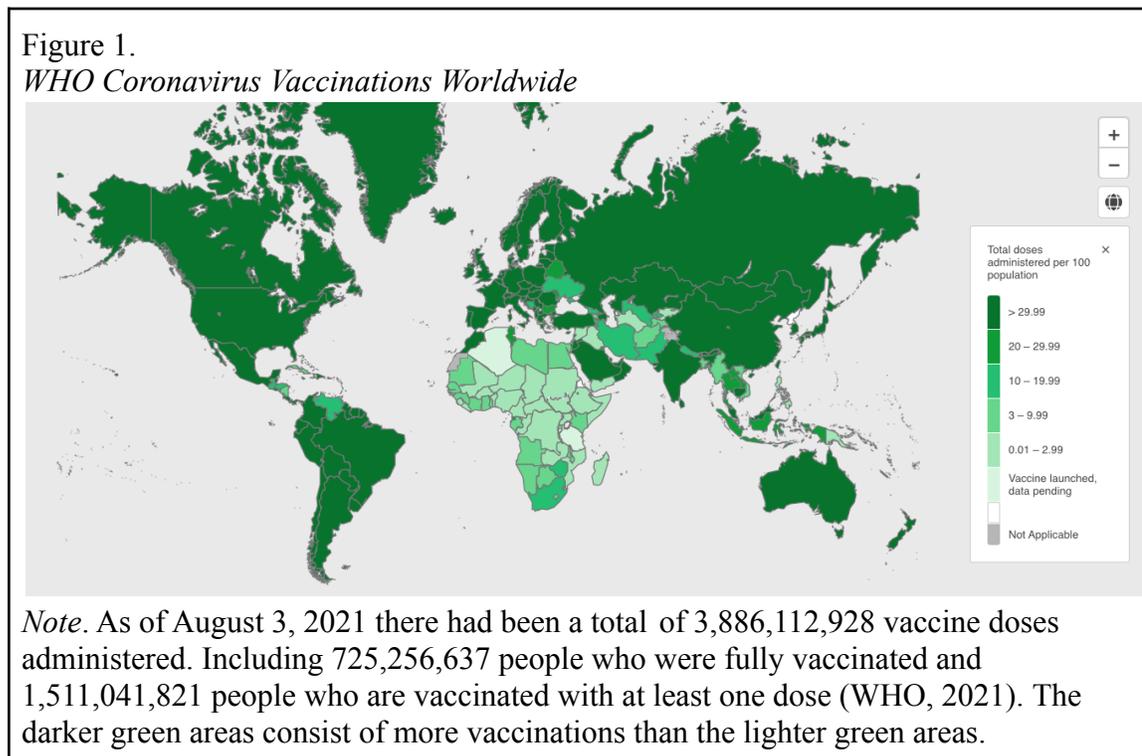
COVID-19, coronavirus disease, is an infectious respiratory disease caused by the coronavirus (WHO, 2021). The initial emergence of COVID-19, which was first identified in Wuhan, China, occurred in late 2019 and has continued to spread into 2021 (The College of Physicians of Philadelphia, 2021). It wasn't until March 11, 2020 that COVID-19 was declared a Global Pandemic by the World Health Organization, WHO, (WHO, 2021). Shortly after this announcement, the COVID-19 pandemic was beginning to affect many aspects of people's lives (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2021). The main way that COVID-19 is spread is through droplets of saliva/discharge from the nose of an infected person. Most commonly, this spread occurs when an infected person coughs or sneezes (WHO, 2021). According to the World Health Organization (WHO), as of August 3rd 2021, there were 198,778,175 confirmed cases worldwide of COVID-19 reported to WHO. There were also 4,235,559 deaths reported worldwide. Though it is assumed that there are many unreported cases.

On average, it takes about 5-6 days for an infected person to show symptoms. Though there are many cases where people did not show symptoms until 14 days after exposure. The most common symptoms consist of fever, dry cough and tiredness. Less common symptoms are aches, sore throat, diarrhea, conjunctivitis, headache, loss of taste, loss of smell, skin rash or discolouration of fingers/toes (WHO, 2021). Other symptoms can include trouble breathing, pain/pressure in the chest, new confusion, or troubles staying awake . The symptoms of COVID-19 are especially damaging to people with underlying medical conditions such as heart/lung diseases or diabetes (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2021).

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, preventative measures were taken. On January 30, 2020 WHO announced that the COVID-19 disease was a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (The College of Physicians of Philadelphia, 2021). A few days later, WHO released guidelines and a response plan. These guidelines were continuously updated throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. By now many people were looking for a cure for the coronavirus and misinformation was spreading quickly. On February 14, 2020 WHO met with several large companies, including Google, Facebook and Amazon, to identify steps to stop the spread of this misinformation (The College of Physicians of Philadelphia, 2021). Once misinformation was slowed, the proper preventative measures could be more easily shared. These measures included wearing a mask, staying 6 feet apart, avoid crowded places, avoid areas with poor ventilation, wash your hands frequently, cover your mouth/nose when coughing or sneezing, limit gathering sizes, clean and disinfect often touched surfaces, and get vaccinated (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2021).

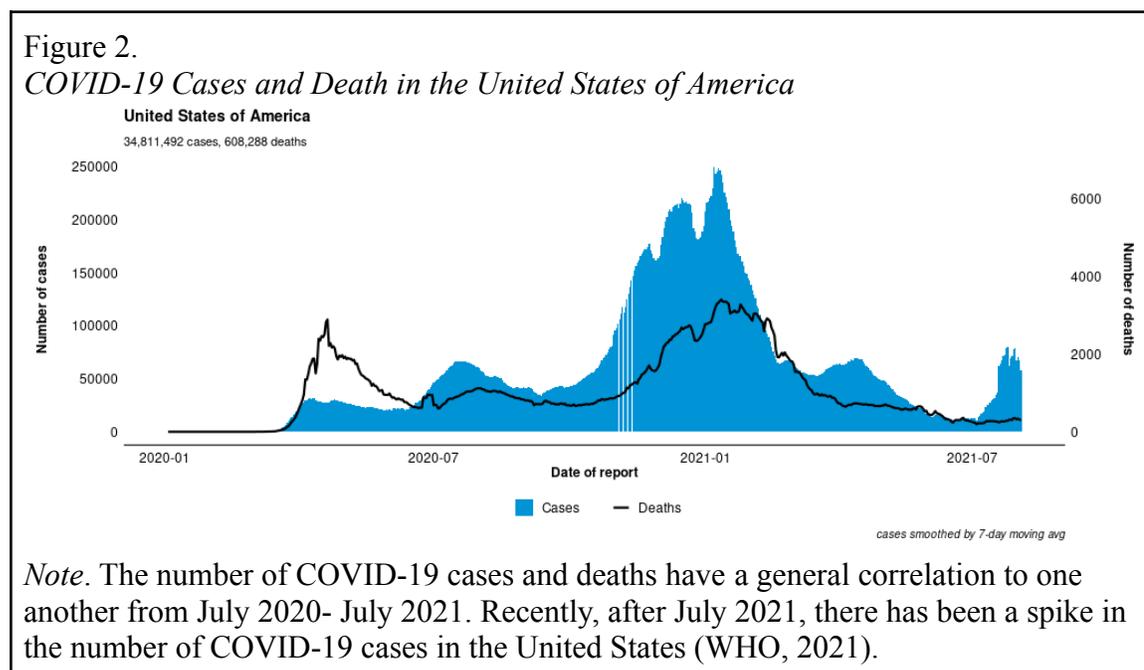
Vaccines were essential in slowing the spread of COVID-19. The vaccines were effective and reduced the severity of the COVID-19 symptoms. People 12 years of age and older were able to get a free vaccination (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2021). The three main types of vaccines in the United States for the coronavirus are Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna, and Johnson & Johnson's Janssen (WHO, 2021)(Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2021).

As seen in **Figure 1**, there had been a total of 3,886,112,928 vaccine doses administered (WHO, 2021). Typically, areas with a higher number of coronavirus cases and deaths had a higher number of vaccinations administered (**Figure 1**).



In the United States, the first reported case of COVID-19 was identified on January 21, 2020 (The College of Physicians of Philadelphia, 2021). On January 29, 2020 the President of the United States introduced the President’s Coronavirus Task Force which was led by the Secretary of Health and Human Services. During February and March of 2020, several guidelines were released in regards to the coronavirus. Many Governors of major cities, including New York and Philadelphia, begin to release Stay at Home Orders (The College of Physicians of Philadelphia, 2021). **Figure 2** shows the number of cases and deaths resulting from COVID-19. The results shown in **Figure 2**, are from July 2020-July 2021. Even without knowing this future data, at the start of

March of 2020, schools in 48 states had orders or recommendations from their Governors to have the school buildings closed for the rest of the 2019-2020 school year. It is estimated that these decisions affected at least 50.8 million public school children (Decker, Peele, & Riser-Kositsky, 2021).

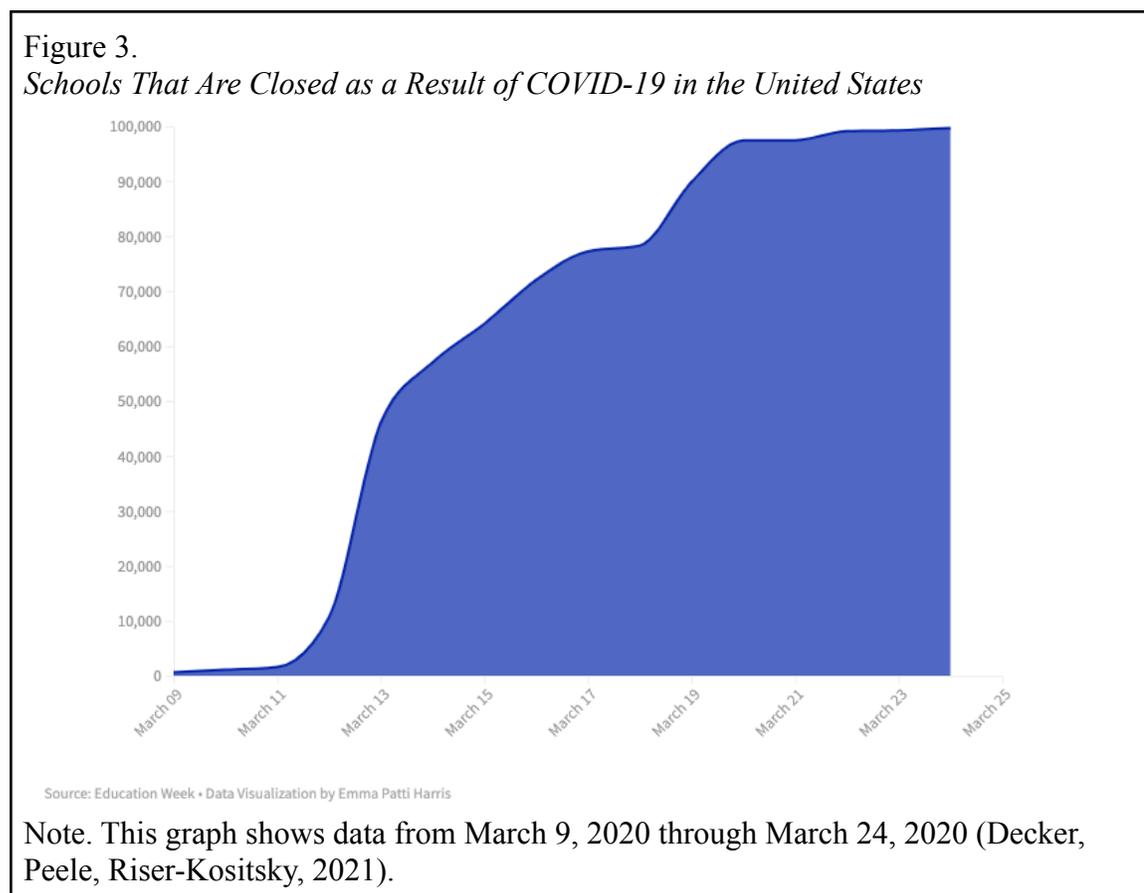


### *Schools and COVID-19*

The coronavirus pandemic took a large toll on school and affected many students worldwide. During February and March of 2020 many schools, in the United States, entered into a “soft” closure. This soft closure meant that students would participate in their education online in some form or another (Marstaller, 2020). Some common soft closure formats were distance learning and online learning. Distance learning can be described as when education takes place while the students and teachers are in different locations (Ives, & Walsh, 2021). Many schools had some form of online learning already in place, but never to the scale that the soft closure was demanding. With this large shift

of students changing their method of instruction, there were many challenges regardless of the form of online learning.

On March 12, 2020 Ohio was the first state that would announce that they would have a statewide closing. Within 24 hours, 15 other states followed in Ohio's steps (Decker, Peele, Riser-Kositsky, 2021). Looking at **Figure 3**, it can be seen the steep incline of schools closing, a soft closure, starting from March 11th to March 23rd. By the time of March 16, most students in the United States had their education impacted by COVID-19 (Decker, Peele, Riser-Kositsky, 2021). As time continues, with much uncertainty, it was in early May that many schools decided to remain in soft closure for the remainder of the academic year. For the majority of schools, this soft closure would continue into the 2020-2021 academic year as well.



Different types of methods of instruction took place during the coronavirus pandemic. At the start, Spring of 2020, many schools resorted to online learning, remote learning, or distance learning. The following year, 2020-2021, some schools changed formats to hybrid learning, mixed learning or blended learning. Though some schools did continue with the method of instruction that was installed in the Spring of 2020.

During these times many challenges were presented. And the challenges had some similarities and differences depending on if the education took place completely online, changed back to in-person learning or was a mix of the two (Han, & Ellis, 2021). One common challenge was that most school leaders and educators felt unprepared for the changes (Sharp, Sims, Rutt, & NFER, 2020). Another challenge that teachers specifically were facing was the huge burnout rate. Studies showed that when teachers taught a mix of online and in-person the burnout rate was higher (Sharp, Sims, Rutt, & NFER, 2020). There was also a huge concern for early childhood educators- specifically those working with multilingual students (Wagner, 2020). Some other challenges from a students' perspective were more distractions around their home, the low quality of interaction and feedback from teachers, poor education quality and technical difficulties (Serhan, 2020). Challenges outside of a school's control such as psychological stress and increased boredom due to quarantine also played negative roles in education (Unger & Meiran, 2020).

Many challenges were presented with the changes in the method of instruction that the students were receiving. But there were many positive outcomes as well. One outcome being that educators looked at new ways to view and approach assessments.

Some schools stopped having tests and others decreased the number of tests for students. (Wyse, Stickney, Butz, Beckler, & Close, 2020). These changes were not only occurring in the classroom but also at the state level. Standardized testing was greatly reduced during the coronavirus pandemic (Strauss, 2020). One reason for standardized testing being reduced was that the test was not designed to be taken at the student's home (Wyse, Stickney, Butz, Beckler, & Close, 2020). In addition to changes in assessments, another positive outcome was schools and educators being more willing to explore educational technology and having this technology more readily available (Wyse, Stickney, Butz, Beckler, & Close, 2020). Other advantages from the student perception would be the flexibility of some methods of instruction, smaller classes and more interaction, written communication without public speaking and being able to use multimedia (Serhan, 2020).

### *Conclusion*

The coronavirus pandemic affected the lives of many students and educators in relation to school but also their daily lives. Some of the most drastic changes occurred in the United States during February and March of 2020, one of those changes being that schools entered into soft closure. These changes occurred quickly considering it was until March 11, 2020 that the World Health Organization declared that COVID-19 was a Global Pandemic.

As of August 3rd 2021, there were 198,778,175 confirmed cases worldwide of COVID-19, 4,235,559 deaths reported worldwide and a total of 3,886,112,928 vaccine doses administered (**Figure 1**). Though it is assumed that there are many unreported cases of COVID-19. These numbers are staggering and this alone is enough to affect

students' academically, socially and emotionally/mentally. When you combine this with the many changes students found themselves during the school day, it is understandable that some students struggled and their "success" as a student was limited. And students were not the only ones who felt the struggle in the classroom, educators also felt the strain of different challenges they faced. These challenges might be working with new technology, limited resources and support.

Currently, changes to schools due to COVID-19 are still occurring for the 2021-2022 academic year. The question is, while these changes in the method of instruction are occurring, how do educators best facilitate and guide students to be successful? And how do educators support students academically, socially, and emotionally/mentally?

## **Transitioning**

### *Introduction*

The movement during the COVID-19 pandemic of students participating in distance learning is one example of changing methods of instruction on a massive scale. Changes in methods of instruction, that are not connected to COVID-19, also occur but on a much smaller scale. Regardless of why a change in instruction occurs, the process for educators to assist students remains similar. The National Center on Intensive Intervention recommends that "educators connect, screen, support, teach and monitor (2020)" students with various adaptations when needed. For successful transitions to occur, there are steps, strategies and planning that is necessary for both students and teachers. A transition that is deemed successful would show student growth and achievement in areas of academic, social and mental/emotional success. The question that

needs to be asked is, *how do teachers successfully facilitate the movement back and forth between different methods of instruction for students?* This question is necessary to answer in both COVID-19 and non-COVID-19 situations.

### *Methods of Instruction*

“Methods of instruction” is referring to how students participate in their schooling. Several methods of instruction were researched including homeschooling, in-person instruction, online learning, distance learning, mixed methods, and hybrid learning. Some of the data from the methods were collected during the COVID-19 pandemic and others were not. When looking at the findings and data from these studies there was a lot of crossover in steps that teachers and students could take to promote success. The only strong difference between in-person steps and online steps was communication. The majority of research talked about a need to increase in communication, regardless of the method of instruction, but there was a definite priority for increased communication for online learning (Unger & Meiran, 2020). Taking this into consideration, the information has been organized into teacher steps and students steps instead of being separated by the method of instruction that the research looked at.

### *Teacher Steps*

Within all the research of the different methods of instruction there are underlying similarities of the steps teachers can take to assist students in the transition. The main strategies can be categorized as communication, strategic planning, reflection and designing a safe and collaborative environment.

Communication is one of the most commonly cited strategies between all the different methods of instruction, though there was an emphasis in the need to increase

communication with students when participating in online learning. Research showed that students who were in online learning rarely had discussions that were in the realm of higher communication with their peers and instructor. (Chaaban, Qadhi, & Du, 2021). Many educators indicated that communication was important but, without student support, it was difficult to maintain (Nguyen, Rienties, & Whitelock, 2020). Some ways to increase communication, specifically for online formats, is to continuously check emails, make lectures available online and use a video conferencing of some sort to further communication (Unger & Meiran, 2020). Even though these steps lean towards online learning, they could also be applied to some in-person learning aspects as well. An increase in communication will also result in being more connected with the student which can positively impact their success (NCII & Technical Assistance Center PBIS, 2020).

Strategic planning was hugely emphasized when students were transitioning in their method of instruction. Studies showed that students appreciated and felt less stress when a clear plan was in place for them (Chaaban, Qadhi, & Du, 2021). This might include having a folder or “new student” guide where classroom norms, technology and expectations are all clearly listed. Success in students would also be increased if the educator is well organized in their instruction.

Along with communication and strategic planning, reflection was also a common factor with helping students. Educators are continuously asked to reflect on their teaching and lessons, and helping students transition is no exception. Educators who take time to reflect on how they assisted a student transitioning will have higher success with future students in similar situations (NCII & Technical Assistance Center PBIS, 2020). When

teachers have both awareness and knowledge in their reflection it leads to better understanding and outcomes. Studies have shown that teachers who practice, explore and reflect on various situations, both their own and others, have a better foundation to produce more insightful reflections (Lysberg & Rønning, 2021).

Designing a safe and collaborative environment and community for students will also help contribute to a more successful student (Banas & Wartalski, 2019). When there is a supportive environment, results showed that students felt more challenged and that they could support each other better (Banas & Wartalski, 2019). Some ways to promote the growth of a safe and collaborative learning environment would be to have routines for students, use positive expectations, provide specific feedback and make connections with both students and their families (NCII & Technical Assistance Center PBIS, 2020).

Communication, strategic planning, reflection and designing a safe and collaborative environment are all steps that teachers can take to improve the success of students' transitions in different methods of instruction. But what steps could be taken by students?

### *Student Steps*

When looking at the steps necessary for students to be successful during a transition in method of instruction, the steps are determined the nature of disposition of the student. The student's attitude will play a huge role in the success of the transition. Both are important when looking at how a student can promote a successful learning transition for themselves.

Some of the strategies would include remaining engaged, motivated, having mindfulness and trying to keep a positive attitude (Chaaban, Qadhi, & Du, 2021)(Hadar,

Ergas, Alpert & Ariav, 2020). This will help students be more willing to seek out help and guidance from the educator. It will also limit the amount of confusion that can occur when changing the method of instruction. For academic and social success of a student, grit was identified as a huge factor (Duckworth, 2013). Grit was mentioned in the academic success portion of this chapter. It can also be concluded that grit would play a beneficial role in mental and emotional success too. When students have grit, they have both the perseverance and stamina to face and overcome challenges without being overwhelmed with stress. They can continue to grow and develop their skills instead of spending time on recovery from a crash after a stressful interaction.

Where the previous steps and strategies might be harder, there are some steps that students who might have less motivation can take to be successful too. One of the steps that students can take is to embrace new technology and have a willingness to explore it (Chaaban, Qadhi, & Du, 2021). This would include students taking the time to learn about the technology and not try to avoid using it. Other steps would include a student staying organized, setting goals for themselves, and asking for help when needed (Chaaban, Qadhi, & Du, 2021)(Stark, 2019). Staying organized could include having different folders/notebooks for different classes, using a planner where due dates and important events are listed or keeping notes from class clear and precise. Setting goals could be created by the students alone or with guidance from a guardian, teacher or counselor.

### *Conclusion*

When trying to determine, *how do teachers successfully facilitate the movement back and forth between different methods of instruction for students?* Regardless of

which method of instruction occurs, there are many similarities on the steps teachers and students should take. Steps a teacher can take are communication, strategic planning, reflection and designing a safe and collaborative environment. There are many steps that a student can take to be successful. These include having grit, staying positive, being organized, asking for help, setting goals and being willing to explore new technologies.

### **Summary**

The focus of this literature review was *how do teachers successfully facilitate the movement back and forth between different methods of instruction for students?* This chapter focused on what are the components of a successful student, how did COVID-19 affects schools and assisting students in the transition between different methods of instruction.

A combination of academic, social and emotional/mental success is needed to create an overall successful student. As mentioned in the student success section, academic, social and emotional development in students are all linked (Immordino-Yang, Darling-Hammond, Krone, & Aspen Institute, 2018). One overlaying strategy for student success is the nurturing of grit in students. For academic, social and emotional/mental success, grit was identified as a huge factor. Another strategy for student success is to have teacher support, especially during unprecedented times.

These times would include the coronavirus pandemic. The coronavirus pandemic affected the lives of many students and educators with most of these changes occurring in the United States during February and March of 2020. As of August 3rd 2021, there were 198,778,175 confirmed cases worldwide of COVID-19, and 4,235,559 deaths reported worldwide. These numbers, along with the stress and boredom of quarantine, are enough

to affect students' academically, socially and emotionally/mentally. This is then combined with the changes students faced educationally. Educators also felt these changes and many had limited resources to help successfully navigate them while encouraging students' success.

When looking at how educators can encourage student success during a transition in method of instruction, many similarities were found regardless of the method of instruction. These steps are an increase in communication, strategic planning, reflection and designing a safe and collaborative environment. There are also steps for students to take but they tend to be much more motivated in practice.

With this literature review in mind, chapter 3 will look into specifics of how the research question will be investigated. The research question being observed is *how do teachers successfully facilitate the movement back and forth between different methods of instruction for students?* The project for this research is a professional development workshop that will be 5 sessions, each 2 hours long. The goal of the workshop is to give teachers time to reflect on methods of instruction and how the pandemic affects students and education. It will also give teachers tools to help assist students when they change methods of instruction. The project used to answer this question will be fully described in the next chapter.

## Chapter 3

### Project Description

#### Introduction

In this chapter, the research question that will be the prime focus is, *how do teachers successfully facilitate the movement back and forth between different methods of instruction for students?* Students may transition from one method of instruction to another at any time. In the Spring of 2020, during the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the majority of students in the United States changed their method of instruction from the traditional in-person schooling to that of an online format. These changes were faced with many challenges for educators and students while they tried to change methods of instruction. Some of these challenges include:

- School leaders and educators felt unprepared for the changes (Sharp, Sims, Rutt, & NFER, 2020)
- Teachers were faced with a huge burnout rate. Studies showed that when teachers taught a mix of online and in-person the burnout rate was higher (Sharp, Sims, Rutt, & NFER, 2020)

Regardless of which method of instruction occurs, there are many similarities on the steps teachers and students should take. Steps a teacher can take are communication, strategic planning, reflection and designing a safe and collaborative environment.

This chapter will include a project description that includes specific details and supporting literature for the project. The setting/audience will go into detail of who this project's data is meant to be presented to and who might benefit from this project. The timeline will give detail of the release of various components of this project and when

discussion of the project will take place. The effectiveness of the project will be evaluated in the assessment portion of the chapter. This chapter will conclude with a summary containing the main learning that occurred during the project and the data collected afterwards.

### **Project Description**

The project consists of a 5 day professional development workshop. This is done to widen the range of strategies and activities and to allow participants better access and to have physical activities and material to take with them into their classrooms. The goal is to provide educators with strategies and steps to help students when they transition from different methods of instruction

A professional development workshop was chosen as the best practice for the project. This claim is supported by *Effective Teacher Professional Development* (Darling-Hammond, Hyler & Gardner, 2017), and *Applying Principles of Adult Learning in Conference Presentations* (Knowles, 1992). When creating the workshop additional tools from “10 Survival Tips for a Workshop Leader” (Malik, 2015) and “Some Facilitation Tools for Workshops” (Seeds For Change, 2012) were used to help make the workshop run smoothly and keep participants engaged. Some of the key tips that were used from the articles were 1) create an agenda, 2) give people time to practice the skills you are sharing, 3) have many opportunities for participants to share (don't just lecture), and 4) create a safe space for participants. "It's a good idea to make sure that people move around every 90 min or so (Seeds For Change, 2012)." The workshop will be using projects, team building activities and reflection time to cover the topics.

The workshop will occur in five 120-minute sessions that will take place over the course of a week. This will allow the participants to discuss in depth with each other and have time to apply the strategies to their classrooms. During the workshop, educators would design specific strategies and materials that would work for them. They would then discuss this with others. Emails would be collected during the workshop and participants would be asked to complete a survey, via Google Forms, after the workshop to see what strategies were beneficial. The workshop will be catered to meet the needs of the audience it is meant to serve.

Session 1 of the workshop will focus on methods of instruction. This day will consist of introducing education podcasts, the first team building activity, notes of the different methods of instruction, an activity to engage students in explaining student success and reflection time. The instructor's main focus will be introducing the topic and building a safe and collaborative learning environment for this workshop.

Session 2 of the workshop will focus on how to assist student success. This day will consist of continuing with podcast engagement, the second team building activity, notes on how to assist in student success (both teacher and student steps), reading and discussion of virtual learning, an activity where educators increase communication/organization of their classrooms and reflection time. The instructor will continue to build on the community of the workshop and encourage participants to engage with what they learned during Session 1 and 2.

Session 3 and Session 4 will discuss connections between the COVID pandemic and methods of instruction. These sessions will continue to work on online communication through the use of educational podcasts and team building activities.

There will also be notes on COVID, teaching and methods of instruction. Participants will engage in readings/discussions on learning and teaching during the pandemic. There will also be two activities; one that allows participants to gain understanding of student frustration during online learning and the other to create materials for new students entering the classroom so they have everything they need. These days will also give participants the opportunity to reflect on their learning.

Session 5, the final session, will tie all the concepts from sessions 1 through 4 together and focus on communication and next steps. This session will start with communication via podcast and then a final team building activity. The session will then move onto notes, readings and discussions about the importance of communication in teamwork for students and educators. Participants will create their own team building activity to use that year in their classrooms. Finally, participants will reflect on the workshop.

### **Setting/Audience**

The intended audience of the project would be educators. The workshop would be held in an area large enough for movement and discussion. Around 20-40 people participating in the workshop would be ideal so everyone had chances to discuss with different people continuously. This will also allow for diverse discussion and reflection. Educators of any age range could participate but there would be a slight emphasis on secondary education students. The participants would also need to be available during the specific dates presented in the timeline.

## **Timeline**

The workshop would take place in-person at the end of August 2022. This would allow educators to immediately put to practice what they learn from the workshop. Feedback would take place directly after the workshop and then an additional survey would be sent later, early November 2022, to gain information after participants have had longer to reflect on the workshop and engage with the information provided.

Data will be collected throughout the workshop during discussions. A specific Google Form will be used to collect feedback after the workshop and be available on the website.

## **Assessment**

During the workshop, feedback will be collected during discussion of both small groups and large groups. There will be a series of questions presented to the participants, but many of the discussions will revolve around the questions, thoughts, and discussions that the participants have.

The survey, via Google Form, will be available for participants from the workshop and it will be on the website. The form will consist of the following questions:

- How many years of teaching experience do you have?
- Have you taught students who were transitioning in their method of instruction?  
Explain the experience.
- Before this workshop, have you had any training with assisting students who were changing their method of instruction?
- Did you teach during the COVID pandemic? If yes, did you have to change the method of instruction that you were teaching in? Explain the experience.

- What strategies or activities do you think will be the most effective when helping students transition in their method of instruction?
- Do you find podcasts a good tool to engage in teacher/teacher communication? Explain.
- How might you use team building activities to engage your students and build a safe and collaborative learning environment?
- After the workshop what further questions do you have?
- Do you have any further thoughts that you would like to share?

This would be the initial survey. An additional survey would be sent with these additional questions.

- After trying the strategies and activities, which ones were helpful in the successful transition of students?
- Were there student strategies that seemed more beneficial? How about teacher strategies?
- Now that you have had time to engage with the strategies and activities, are there further thoughts or questions that you have?

The surveys would then be analyzed and common trends or similarities in responses would be noted.

### **Summary**

The goal is to provide educators with strategies and steps to help students when they are transitioning from different methods of instruction as outlined in Chapter 3. And to answer the research question that will be the prime focus is, *how do teachers successfully facilitate the movement back and forth between different methods of*

*instruction for students?* Not only will this research question be discussed but educators will take away specific activities and materials to use with students and in their classrooms. The strategies and activities learned during the five professional development workshops will assist educators in helping students as they move between different methods of instruction.

After the findings from the research project, the data was reviewed and analyzed. The next chapter, Chapter 4, reviews the data in connection to the research question, *how do teachers successfully facilitate the movement back and forth between different methods of instruction for students?* After the workshop is completed, limitations and outcomes will be discussed, as well as, how the project will continue on and benefit educators.

## Chapter 4

### Reflection

#### Introduction

A professional development workshop was created to answer the question, *how do teachers successfully facilitate the movement back and forth between different methods of instruction for students?* The workshop consisted of five 120-minute sessions that covered topics such as COVID and teaching, methods of instruction, and teacher/student steps that help students successfully transition from different methods of instruction. The form of instruction varied from lectures, readings, discussions, team building activities, projects and reflection.

After teaching during the COVID pandemic, I became curious about how teachers and educators could help their students transition from in-person instruction to online learning. The spring of 2020 was when my school had to quickly switch into online learning and it was extremely difficult. I felt overwhelmed and not prepared for this transition. It held additional challenges for teachers who didn't have a strong background in technology. Even when our school slowly transitioned back to in-person instruction, there were challenges present too. At the start of the 2021-2022 school year, I had students in my classroom who hadn't been in a classroom setting since that spring of 2020. At the time I was working with 7th and 8th graders, which meant many of them had not been in a classroom since elementary school. These students had faced different challenges than previous students their age, and these challenges needed to be addressed and supported. But I found very few usable tools for teachers to help their students.

In this chapter, I will go over the major learnings and those I gained while creating this project. Then I will return to the literature that was described in Chapter 2. Afterwards I will discuss limitations and the benefits of the project. Finally, I will describe future projects and my final thoughts.

### **Major Learnings**

This project contained many new learning experiences for myself. Never before have I created a professional development workshop. Especially one that was 120 minutes in length for five sessions. I tried to apply my experiences in previous workshops where I was a participant. And tried to include what I would have liked to learn or spent time on. The main learnings were; how to successfully keep educators engaged, provide meaningful activities and create a workshop that would contain components that educators could take back to the classroom.

The question of how to keep professional adults engaged with the material was a constant question that I asked throughout this project. Most people have been to a workshop that never starts on time and, when it starts, it is a two hour lecture that passes by the glazed eyed participants without anything being retained. This is not the experience I wanted for my workshop. I used the first 15 minutes for participants to listen to podcasts and other media to allow them to start when they arrived and socially engage with the content via social media. This also allows for all participants to arrive without feeling like they are interrupting or making other participants wait for their arrival.

In addition to keeping participants engaged at the start of the workshop, I also wanted them engaged throughout the workshop. To do this, I kept that lecture in the style of the New American lecture (Silver, et al. 2007), where there are questions embedded

throughout the presentation. I also made the workshop heavily interactive with discussion questions and various useful activities and projects.

Keeping participants engaged was huge, but I also wanted the projects and activities to be meaningful. I wanted participants to walk away with material that could be used immediately in their classrooms. This is why the workshop contained easy-to-use team building exercises that teachers could use with their students. Participants also had time to create their own projects, such as the welcome kit for new students, a survey for students' goals for success, and an item to increase communication with their students. Participants walk away from the workshop with these supplies already made, this prevents participants from feeling overwhelmed and having “homework” when leaving the workshop.

Having participants engaged and having meaningful activities was a huge importance for the workshop. And having items that they could bring back to the classroom with them was also important. This allows the participants to engage with the research question and engage with the literature of this project.

### **A Return to Literature**

As previously mentioned in Chapter 2, the focus of the literature review was *how do teachers successfully facilitate the movement back and forth between different methods of instruction for students?* There was a large focus on what can lead to a successful student, how did COVID-19 affects schools and how educators can assist students in the transition between different methods of instruction.

The aspect of student success discussed was a combination of academic, social and emotional/mental success. As mentioned in the student success section of Chapter 2,

academic, social and emotional development in students are all linked (Immordino-Yang, Darling-Hammond, Krone, & Aspen Institute, 2018). A huge strategy for student success is to nurture grit in students. This showed to be successful for academic, social and emotional/mental success. Another strategy for student success is to have teacher support, especially during times such as the COVID pandemic or other stressful situations.

The coronavirus pandemic affected the lives of many students, educators and their families. As of August 3rd 2021, there were 198,778,175 confirmed cases worldwide of COVID-19, and 4,235,559 deaths reported worldwide (see **Figure 1**). Staggering numbers such as these combined with the stress and boredom of being in quarantine can easily affect students academically, socially and emotionally/mentally. Educators also felt these changes and many educators had limited resources to help successfully help their students, and themselves, while nurturing students' success.

Several steps that educators can use to help their students' success were discussed in Chapter 2. These steps are an increase in communication, strategic planning, reflection and designing a safe and collaborative environment for students.

The literature review was focused on answering the research question and the steps that students and teachers needed to take to assist in student success. This connected with the goal of the workshop. The goal was to give teachers time to reflect on methods of instruction and how the pandemic affects students and education. It also gave teachers tools to help assist students when they change methods of instruction. Even with the literature review being used to support the professional development workshop, there were some limitations.

## **Project Limitations**

The professional development workshop consisted of five 120 minute sessions that connected with the research question, *how do teachers successfully facilitate the movement back and forth between different methods of instruction for students?* This question was heavily connected with the COVID pandemic that is a recent event that is still present and affecting the student population. That being said, the main limitations of the project were limited previous research, and limited research on long term effects.

Since it has only been two years since the start of the pandemic, in the spring of 2020, there is limited research about the subject of changing methods of instruction in relation to the pandemic. Most of the research focused on students transitioning methods of instruction in non-pandemic settings or from educators' personal experiences of teaching during the pandemic. There is also limited research on this topic that is non-pandemic related. Most previous research also heavily focused on students going from in-person instruction to homeschooling or vice versa.

In addition to the research being limited because of the “newness” of the topic, there were also limitations in the long term effects of this massive wave of students who had to change their methods of instruction. Since the pandemic is still going on, there is little research about how the change in method of instruction might have long term effects. Depending on the long term effects, this might change or create additional steps a teacher or educator can take to help students successfully transition their method of instruction.

## **Benefits and Project Impact**

Even with the limitations of the project, it still has benefits with or without the connection to the COVID pandemic. The goal of this project is to assist educators in helping students transition from different methods of instruction. This is extremely relevant in the face of the COVID pandemic but it also has uses that are non-pandemic related.

With the COVID pandemic being so recent, there are limited resources to assist educators in how to help students. Especially students who are struggling with going from online learning to in-person learning. The hope is that this project would help educators feel more prepared to help their students and give them tools to assist with the transitioning of different methods of instructions. As a teacher, I was at a loss of how to help my students who were clearly struggling. There were not many resources available and any that I found seemed to not give specifics but more general ideas. This project provides steps that teachers and students can take to lead to student success about changing the method of instruction.

There are benefits of this workshop in relation to the pandemic, but there are also uses outside of the pandemic connection. Whenever I have new students enter the classroom, I want to make sure that I am prepared to help the student. The steps listed for teachers will be helpful for students who are transitioning in their method of instruction but also students who are changing schools or classrooms. Teachers can also use these steps to assist students who are entering the classroom during the school year. The welcome kit/folder project is a great way to help students entering the classroom to feel prepared and assist in their success.

## **Future Projects**

The benefits of this project are great but there are some limitations as were mentioned before. To minimize some of these limitations in the future, I would want to collect data after the COVID pandemic is over and see how helpful the teacher steps were. I believe that future projects could provide additional teacher and student steps to assist in the transition in changing methods of instruction.

Another future project would be to create a website to share the research and resources of this project to assist teachers and students. Having a website would allow a larger range of participants and would not be limited to the location of the workshop. It would also allow participants to work at their own pace and connect with others to discuss how to best use this information.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter was a reflection on the capstone project. The start of this chapter focused on the major learnings of the project, then the paper reconnected with the literature from Chapter 2. From there, the chapter looked at the limitations and the benefits of the project. Finally, future projects and research were discussed to continue answering the question, *how do teachers successfully facilitate the movement back and forth between different methods of instruction for students?*

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